

# Honi Soit

WEEK 11, SEMESTER 1, 2021

FIRST PRINTED 1929



**What is love in these theatres of cruelty? / P 14**

**Gadigal to Gaza / P 4**

**To all the books we  
loved before / P 16**

**Manufactured fun: theme  
parks in the Stans / P 13**



# Acknowledgement of Country



*Honi Soit* is published on the sovereign land of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation, who were amongst the first to resist against and survive the violence of colonisation. This land was taken without consent and sovereignty was never ceded. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all Indigenous students and staff at the University.

As a team of settlers occupying the lands of the Gadigal, Dharug, Wangal, Bidjegal, Kuringgai and

Wallumedegal people, we are the beneficiaries of ongoing colonial dispossession. The settler-colonial project of 'Australia' and all its institutions, including the University, are built on the exclusion of First Nations peoples and the devaluation of Indigenous knowledge systems. Beneath the sandstone buildings of USyd lie thousands of years of Aboriginal history.

Colonialism is not a one-time event that occurred in the distant past; it is an ongoing structure. The genocide

of First Nations people is perpetuated and enabled by the government, who push ahead with the forced removals of Aboriginal children from their families, their Country, and their cultures. Aboriginal peoples are the most incarcerated on earth, and there have been over 474 documented Indigenous deaths in custody since the 1991 Royal Commission.

We pledge to actively stand in solidarity with First Nations movements towards decolonisation through our editorial decisions, and

to be reflective when we fail to do so. We commit to being a counterpoint to mainstream media's silencing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We remain cognisant that *Honi's* writers and readership are predominantly made up of settlers, and aim to platform Indigenous voices in our paper.

There is no justice without Indigenous justice.

Always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

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Juliette Marchant.

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Xanthe Muston

# Editorial

Last year was a year defined by distance. Far from our friends and family members, we turned to other sources of comfort to keep us going. I turned to reading. Reading extended my world when it felt so small, gave the monotony of quarantine a sense of variety, made me laugh, cry and feel every emotion in between. But I am not alone in my appreciation of the humble book, magazine, or even campus rag... So, now that we are able to reconnect, it only seems appropriate to relish in the joy that reading has brought so many of us, not only in the past year, but throughout our lives so far.

Beyond the stunning 'bookish' cover painted by the very talented Xanthe Muston, Isabel Freudenstein takes us for a walk down memory lane, reminding us of the books that are woven into the fabric of our childhoods (p. 16). Veronica Lenard tracks the highs and lows of reading challenges (p. 21), Thomas Fotiou considers the intersection between

fashion and literature (p.19), and Matthew Kelleher defends a literary genre close to his heart (p. 19). Casey Zhu contemplates why we should boycott the works of male writers (p. 17), and Noah Corbett uses a series of predominantly male writers to convince us that not understanding is part of the joy of reading (p. 17). Finally, I, your humble editor, contemplate how the works of Maggie Nelson have shaped the way that I perceive the knotty subject of cruelty (p. 14).

I am left in awe week after week at the quality of submissions that fill this paper, and am indebted to the people that have given up their time to make this edition one that I absolutely adore. I am also appreciative of the diligence of my editorial team, who care about this paper enough to come back to the editing dungeon week after week for another round. But I am most grateful for you, dear reader. Thank you for supporting the works

of student writers and artists, for keeping this paper in circulation, and for indulging my periodic ramblings.

I spent my primary school years sitting beside my father on the train as he struggled with a print newspaper the size of a small tablecloth. He was not alone in this battle, around half the carriage was filled with similarly avid newsreaders, sections of the paper flying as they partook in a chaotic form of origami to engage with the day's headlines. Today, I board the train and there is not a newspaper in sight — just faces buried in various devices.

Perhaps my affection for print media is clouded by nostalgic delusion, but as I observe its slow death, my heart is warmed an irrational amount by the continuation of the print circulation of *Honi Soit*. I cherish the ability to hold this edition in my hands, and hope that you enjoy reading the insights within these pages as much as I have.

*This edition is dedicated to the memory of Sam Langford, a former editor whose work and spirit inspired many.*

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# What's On?

## Voting for the USU election

Monday 17 May 9am - Friday 21 May 5pm Online

The time has come to exercise your democratic right (and hide from campaigners on Eastern Avenue) by voting for new USU Board Directors! Eligible members have been emailed a voting link and can choose between 10 "enthusiastic," "dedicated" and "qualified" candidates. Results on Friday night.

## PhilSoc x SULS: Truth, Proof and Decision-Making

Wednesday 19 May 6pm USyd Law School

As part of PhilSoc's Philosophy on the Ground series, this in-person event will run as a moderated conversation between Professor Mark Colyvan (Dept of Philosophy) and Professor David Hamer (Sydney Law School), covering the unique overlap between law and philosophy on issues of proof and courtroom decision-making. Register online.

## SUDS Film Festival Awards

Thursday 20 May 6:30pm Palace Cinemas, Central Park

The main event is finally happening; the student-made films are in, which means it's time for a screening! Pre-event drinks and chat begin at 6:30pm at the Palace's Prosecco Bar - so come along for a jam-packed night of film and friends! Along with a plethora of weird and wonderful films, we also have plenty of awards and prizes to give out! \$10 entry.

## Sydney MAY 21 #ClimateStrike

Friday 21 May 12pm Town Hall

We have a chance to create a sustainable recovery from Covid-19, but instead the Morrison Government is handing out billions of dollars of public money in subsidies and funding to dirty climate-wrecking gas projects. Join us on May 21, to call on the Morrison Government to invest in renewable energy and First Nations solutions that care for country, not dirty gas projects. #FundOurFutureNotGas

## Archaeology Society Symposium

Saturday 22 May 10am-4pm Town Hall

Join Archsoc for our annual symposium event! There will be speakers from within academia and consulting archaeology, so drop by whether you're an archaeology student or simply interested in all things ancient. Cost is \$10 for Archsoc members, \$15 for non-members, and the event is catered. Check out the Archsoc Facebook event for more details!

# Letters

## Statement from the editors

We, the editors of *Honi Soit*, stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people in their 73-year-long struggle against the apartheid regime of Israel. We remember Al-Nakba in 1948, and recognise how the colonial occupation, land theft, and ethnic cleansing in Palestine mirrors the violent invasion of Australia by British colonisers in 1788.

We condemn the use of euphemisms by mainstream media in reporting the brutal ongoing violence in Palestine. Israel's actions cannot be justified as those of peace or self-defence. The colonisation of Palestine is not a two-sided 'conflict.' The airstrikes on civilian areas, the homes turned to rubble, the police raids of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and the lynch mobs hunting Palestinians in the streets are not 'clashes.' Describing the violence as 'rising tensions' does not accurately reflect the forced expulsion of Palestinians from their homes, which continues an historical pattern of dispossession.

It is irresponsible to ignore the long history of Israel's brutal apartheid regime. Gaza has been under siege since 2007, while Israel plunders Palestinian land with the financial support of countries around the world, including the United States, which contributes \$5.8bn a year. Australia expanded cooperation with Israel in 2017 on matters of "national security, defence and cybersecurity," according to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Israel country brief.

The role of journalists is to inform the public in a fair and accurate manner, and to expose injustice and wrongdoing. Israeli attacks in Gaza have caused over 180 Palestinian deaths, including 41 children, with over 1000 injured. Towers housing Palestinian and international media organisations have been destroyed in airstrikes. This is to say nothing of the countless buildings and homes lost since the escalation of Israel's attacks on Palestinians in the beginning of May. Attacks on the free press in Gaza mean fewer people will learn the extent of Israeli war crimes.

## More USU op-ed discourse

Dear Editors,

I was heartened by the recent publication of two articles in two successive editions of *Honi Soit* regarding the value of involvement in the University of Sydney Union's annual elections. As Sangavarapu, Chaffey and Haghighi rightfully point out, the USU is not a 'corporation' (or even a body corporate): it is an unincorporated association and a charity registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (like the SRC).

Whilst charity status forces the USU and SRC to be significantly less political than a non-charitable political advocacy group (e.g. GetUp!) or a trade union, it provides the USU and the SRC with valuable charity tax concessions to assist each organisation to further their educational and social welfare purposes (I am sure that neither organisation would wish to give up these concessions).

Notwithstanding the above, some may suggest that the USU looks too 'corporate' whilst functioning as the

University's campus guild, compared to the SRC's role as the University's students' association. These critiques are fair — for one, I acknowledged that the USU's public presence does not necessarily scream out 'charity' to the untrained lay observer (in a 2017 *Honi Soit* article, no less).

However, the Australian charity sector benefits from good governance of individual charities (which the USU has in spades). Notably, the SRC has also acknowledged the importance of good governance — many SRC office-bearers have considered (and in some cases, implemented) positive reforms to the arcane governance structure of the SRC in recent years. Anyone that wishes to defend the interests of students would do well to engage with this reality going forward.

Yours faithfully,

Samuel Chu

## Crazy Zionist

You are the most poisonous snake, spreading lies and hatred!!! We, Israel, cherish life more than everything and we are doing as much as we can to avoid civilians casualties which is very difficult since Hamas is using them as human shield.

#ISRAELFOREVER

From Yoni Goshen

## USU op-ed comment (sigh) go to fb for similar

I think this whole discursive project is kind of conducted in bad faith tbh. Like one person writing a short piece about the USU gets dunked on by three people, two of whom I know are debaters, who seem to have engineered this whole thing to glorify their own political project because the results it seems don't speak for themselves. Anyway, I digress. Pushing anything to the left, be it an organisation, campaign or broader social movement doesn't come from having people in positions of authority telling everyone to think of the workers, (especially when the org has direct hiring and firing power as the USU does). It comes from external political pressure from people, which is achieved through grassroots organising. Workers and activists make things more 'left wing' because left wing politics is about organising around issues of inequality and injustice, not infiltrating bureaucratic structures that serve the people who have already monopolised power. These structures are created to give people a sense of being able to change things while consolidating the power of those who have no interest in letting that change happen. I'm not advocating for left wing people not to vote in regular elections or whatever but I also want to note that we don't see progressive policy changes without mass struggle—that is where our power lies.

Honey Christensen



# Miss Soit

Sydney Uni's SAUC IEST socialite!

Dear plumptious beauties,

I had to absent myself early from in-person gossip-getting early this week, as my ruby red high heels were in an *absolute state* after *pounding* the pavement of Eastern Avenue on day one of campaigning! To be honest, I was happy to escape that avenue of arseholes and have instead spent the rest of the week *relaxing* on my chaise lounge and being *attended to* by angelic eunuchs. Happily, the camarilla of curious kinky clerks I contracted to help fulfil my legal duties to Masc Mickie have been employing the most advanced techniques of spycraft (but not Datamir!) to keep me *abreast* of all of Sydney Uni's most sordid secrets.

## Canoodling Cole

Cole, you innocent inscrutable engineering enigma, you might be an *attractive* candidate, but make sure you check your thesaurus before you *nut* out your preference deals! My slippery sources tell me that Hole Cock-Curwood asked Electable Isla to "*canoodle*" at *Taste* cafe, when in fact he wanted to ensure these two alpha animals were "in cahoots"! You stupid scatter-brained STEM sinner! The handsome *Honi* editors *munching* on their *big baguettes* were certainly interested to see this meeting *go down*. Cole, I don't know your *preferences*, but I'll canoodle with you any time...

## Horny Hines' Du Du as David delivers Immense Love

My incognito informants spotted some cretinous candidates conspiring with Bad Boy Ben 'Horny' Hines *after dark* on the big *bench* at Courtyard. Delectable David Zhu, Delicious Du Du and Yummy Yiman '*Immense Love*' Jiang were seen *deep* in conversation, which makes me wonder how independent these political pretenders really are...I've been spurned too many times by greedy gigalos claiming they weren't *in a relationship*, so I can only hope that sincere students aren't duped by these duplicitous dicks *in the polling booth*. Horny Hines you fucking cunt, stop pretending you're *single*. I know where your bodies are buried...

## Students eat free muff

My gorgeous darling Magnanimous Marlow 'High Society' Hurst (that selfless angel) ensured that Courtyard Cafe customers had access to warm, *moist muffins* after shaming the shitty students' union in these very pages! I've been telling this to Abe for years, but it turns out *shaming* really does make *muffs* moist!

## Ass-ass-ination attempt

My eyes and ears inside the fugly mural at Holme *bore* witness to a series of shocking scandals at the USU *soapbox*. Despite being non-sentient, my sources

told me that that *orgy* of *soapy* solipsistic *self-satisfying* sermonising was the most soul-destroying event they have ever seen! It turns out that there is no low to which stupol *hangs-on* will not stoop! Long-legged Lanky Lauren 'Looming' Lancaster had the temerity to interrupt Necro Nick 'Acasio Cortez' *Cumino*, which really hurt his feelings! *Shame!* But that wasn't the worst of it...An Alabama oil baron tried to *ass-ass-inate* Jiggly Joe 'Fuckable' Fidler! Thankfully, Jaunty Joe is *quick-fingered* as well as quick-witted, whipping out a pistol to scare off his would-be *ass-ass-in*. Joe — my heart is *pumping* just reading about your brave exploits. I can't wait to meet you *first-hand*.

## Cheer, cheer the...pink and the white!

Necro Nick 'Nadia Comeneci' *Cumino* turned Eastern Avenue *upside down* with an elaborate *extended* cheerleading routine on the law lawn! Let's hope Nick has got his fill of backlips before he gets on Board! While it was a nice change from lecherous leafletters, this *double pike* certainly raised some eyebrows, with accusations that Naughty Nick has been *prodding* the USyd Cheer Squad for campaigners! This prompted an important clarification from the churlish cheerleaders that "the cheer club is not affiliated with any campaigns and should not be seen to be"! Stop hanging around cheerleaders Nick you weirdo!!

## BDS(M)

My bubble-butt *Honi* editors (who are above criticism) were subjected to a *spanking* in the comment section of Naughty Nick Riemer's op-ed on Palestinian solidarity. Several IDF (Israeli Dick Folds) supporters *let loose* and commented: "Do Israeli lives not matter?" and "I stand with Israel." I can't help but remember my *prime years*, fighting in the First Intifada. A Palestinian prince taught me how to throw rocks at those dirty Zionists (remember to put the weight on your *rear* leg!). Free Gaza, girlies!!

## Grassroots Ganagbang

Some *harsh words* were flying in the comment section of Ogling Oscar Chaffey and co's optimistic op-ed calling for left-wing participation in the USU elections. Marxist Maddie Clark led the charge, with some grumbling Groots *falling in behind her* and daring to criticise Supreme Leader Swapnik's stance. My sources tell me there's some serious *beef* going down in Grassroots right now, although I don't really care. Wake me up when people stop referring to "discursive projects" and definitions of unincorporated organisations. I don't have time to read your essay length comments. I'm going back to my chaise lounge.

# “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free”: Thousands commemorate Al Nakba

Amelia Raines reports.

Thousands gathered outside Sydney's Town Hall on Saturday amid a sea of red, black and green to condemn the colonial subjugation of Palestinians, and to advocate for their right to self-determination.

At least 145 Palestinians, including 41 children, have been killed in the Gaza Strip since Monday while at least 10 people in Israel have also been killed.

Protests were held in major cities across the continent, marking 73 years since Al Nakba, or the 'day of catastrophe,' which marked the forced expulsion of Palestinians from their land.

Advocates united with flags and placards to condemn Israeli violence towards Palestine. In the past week, Israeli airstrikes and attacks have resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians, several of whom are children.

Israeli military attacks in the Gaza strip persist as the UN reports 10,000 Palestinians being forced out of their homes in Gaza, as well in the occupied West Bank. Forced evictions in Sheikh Jarrah are also occurring in the wake of a comprehensive report by Human Rights Watch, accusing Israel state of "systematic domination" and apartheid against Palestinians.

Chants could be heard ringing through Town Hall before the rally's commencement, including:

"Gaza, Gaza don't you cry — Palestine will never die"

"Free, Free Palestine"

"From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free"

Vanessa Turnbull-Roberts, a Bundjalung woman and Palestinian advocate, delivered an Acknowledgement of Country, speaking to the shared struggle of Palestinians and First Nations peoples against settler colonialism. Turnbull-Roberts called for protesters to "continue resisting colonial forces."

The crowd also heard from Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammed, the Grand Mufti of Australia. A translator voiced his speech, expressing "The people of Palestine are people. They are not numbers or statistics. And for as long as they are deprived of their basic human rights ... they will continue to resist."

The Grand Mufti criticised the political silence on the issue: "What a shame it is ... to hold our tongues and mute our voices from condemning the aggression," he said.

NSW Greens Senator, Dr Mehreen Faruqi also expressed solidarity with Palestinians.

"First Nations people understand more than most the pain, trauma, and the loss of stolen land. They have been targets of colonialism, violent theft and

dispossession, for more than 200 years. It is not okay [here] and it is not okay in Palestine."

Fouad, a Palestinian refugee, gave his account of having to flee Palestine when an Israeli state was declared.

"I witnessed the massacre with my eyes but this determination within myself will never die," he said.

Dr Faruqi called for a robust political response to this issue: "I want to call upon politicians to speak out against the oppressive Israeli regime. I want to express solidarity with the Palestinians."

This comes after Faruqi spoke to the NSW Senate, stating that "politicians have a responsibility to speak out" about the issue.

Human rights activist, writer, and poet, Sara Saleh, then spoke to the crowd. Saleh asserted a sentiment of unity in her address, voicing: "We must understand that our anti-colonial anti-imperial struggles ... are linked. They must be grounded in anti-racism. There is no room for islamophobia or anti-blackness or anti-Semitism or any type of xenophobia or discrimination."

Saleh criticised the international military funding of Israel, as a number of countries, particularly the United States, are complicit in the occupation. "We must oppose state sanctioned violence," she said.

Randa Abdel-Fattah, a writer, scholar, and activist spoke to the crowd. She acknowledged that the Nakba is an ongoing, rather than a historic event: "[This is] a 73 year catastrophe that is happening in real time. It is not a memory — it is not a history."

"We demand Israel and its allies — stop killing us. Stop oppressing us. Stop occupying us now," she said.

Protesters moved through George Street, as a police helicopter could be heard overhead. Chanting continued as the massive crowd marched through King Street and Castlereagh Street, circling back to Town Hall.

Yesterday saw the destruction of the Al Jazeera and Associated Press building by Israeli airstrikes. The 13 floor building was toppled after journalists were warned to escape. The attack has since been condemned by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

The International Federation of Journalists has called for accountability from Israel, for "deliberate targeting of journalists and the media."

Honi is signatory to an open letter pledging to report openly about Palestinian issues after extensive omissions in the media of these struggles.

The next rally for Palestine is happening on the 22nd of May at Hyde Park at 1pm.

# Casual academics are having to choose between working from a hospital bed or missing out on pay

Claire Ollivain reports.

Denied access to paid sick leave, casual academic staff on precarious incomes at universities across the country are often faced with the choice to forfeit their pay or teach while ill, sometimes from a hospital bed.

Last week, this was the case for a casual academic in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Sydney, who taught from hospital after developing pericarditis — an illness which is life-threatening if left untreated.

The academic, who did not wish to be identified, described the pain as so intense he felt like he "had been hit by a car."

"Still in pain and still finding it difficult to speak, I decided that I would go ahead with teaching from hospital, complete with tubes coming out of me," he said.

"With the attacks by University management to my already meagre income, a week's pay was not something I could afford to lose."

Casual staff are paid at a piece rate, where payment is tied to the number of tutorials taught and assessments marked. Universities estimate the amount of time to complete each piece, though casuals have said this model is exploitative and leads to wage theft.

"If we are too sick to do the preparation or the class, we do not get paid. If we are too sick to teach, we do not get paid. For casuals, if it is a choice between paying rent that week or not working while sick, we will choose to be able to pay rent almost every time,"

a spokesperson for the USyd Casuals Network said.

While there is a clause in the Enterprise Agreement which says casuals are eligible to make a claim to be paid for other work even if they miss the face-to-face component due to illness, casuals have said that none of them have received partial payment or even knew it existed.

"The failure to communicate or enforce this clause is a glaring omission on the University's part and I would say it is unlikely that this is merely an oversight given management's track record of obfuscating our payment conditions in order to engage in more wage theft," the casual FASS academic told *Honi*, suggesting that the NTEU should be more closely looking out for its casual members.

A University spokesperson told *Honi* that "this provision ensures casual staff are paid for work that has been completed; it is not 'sick pay', or payment for non-attendance." Casuals can file the claim by putting it in a timesheet to be processed by the supervisor, the spokesperson said.

A tweet with almost 600 likes and over 100 retweets has drawn attention to the casual FASS academic's situation, attracting replies from others who have had similar experiences. This started a conversation about systemic exploitation in universities across the country.

Casuals have even brought the inequity of sick pay to Parliament. At a 13 April Senate Select Committee, a casual academic at the University of

Newcastle, Dr Elizabeth Adamczyk, said that she was hospitalised during the teaching of a course she was solely responsible for delivering and faced a serious loss in income, while struggling to navigate finding a replacement.

Similarly, Morgan Jones, a casual at the University of Melbourne, lost months of pay while recovering from a bad back injury that ensued from being overworked.

"Whichever choice we make, we lose. The tutors lose, the students lose, and the only ones who gain from this arrangement are the villainous senior management group who have never had to balance on such a knife's-edge of income precarity," the casual FASS academic said.

Emphasising that this is not an anomaly, he said: "It is, like most of our suffering, by design — part of the university business model — where the responsibility for such a scandalous state of affairs lies squarely at the feet of managers."

The USyd Casuals Network spokesperson said that this poses a health risk to staff and students: "The refusal of management to pay sick leave for casuals, a year into the global pandemic, is shocking. One of the first lessons of the pandemic is that there should not be any disincentive for staff to stay home and isolate when sick. [This] is precisely such a disincentive."

"The University of Sydney management care very little about the health and safety of staff and students if it means a marginal increase to their cost-base."

# University funding to decrease by 9.3% over next four years

Jeffrey Khoo reports.

Funding for higher education will decrease by 9.3% in real terms over the next four years, according to Federal Budget documents released tonight.

The drop is attributed to "lower costs" under the Commonwealth Grant Scheme as a result of the Job-ready Graduates package, passed in October last year. The package, aimed at redirecting incoming students towards certain degrees, saw the cost of humanities degrees double, with significant increases to fees for law and business. USyd's 2021 Semester 1 census results indicate that the package was unsuccessful in changing USyd's most popular courses.

The Government has also signaled that international students may be able to return to Australia soon, with the Government trialling "small

phased programs" in late 2021, ahead of borders potentially opening in mid-2022. However, Universities Australia chief executive Catriona Jackson said in a statement that waiting until mid-2022 would "pose very serious challenges for the nation's universities," and cause "serious damage to national productivity and the country's knowledge base."

International students seem to be a key part of the Government's fiscal strategy, with projections for several Budget estimates dependent on "education exports" bouncing back to near pre-COVID levels.

Elsewhere in the budget, the Government has slashed \$1.3 billion in "student assistance" in the form of "temporary COVID-19 support measures", and \$1 billion in temporary

funding for higher education research on COVID-related issues.

The government's FEE-HELP loan fee exemption will be extended until the end of 2021, but only for students at private education providers.

Successive Australian governments have not increased funding for universities in proportion to enrolments. Although domestic student enrolments increased by 33% from 2009 to 2019, government funding for higher education, as a proportion of revenue, steadily declined during that time (from 55.8% to 48.7%). Vicki Thomson, chief executive of the Australian university lobby Group of Eight, previously said that it "confirms that we are being asked to do more with effectively the same amount of money."

# University "disappointed" in budget as private providers prioritised

Maxim Shanahan reports.

The University of Sydney has criticised the Federal budget for its failure to "address the serious challenges facing the [university] sector." The news comes as the Liberal government announced a \$53 million boost to for-profit private tertiary education providers. By contrast, universities will experience a 9.3% decrease in funding over the next four years.

A University spokesperson told *Honi* that they were "concerned the extremely welcome Research Support Program emergency funding has not been renewed, particularly given the extension of border closures well into 2022, limiting the ability of our international students to enter the country."

The spokesperson continued, "the longer this situation goes on, the riskier it becomes — for Australia's sovereign research capacity, the next generation of researchers, our students and the economy."

The University did not adopt the more forthright language of Australian National University Vice-Chancellor Brian Schmidt, who said the university sector had been "left to bleed" by the budget, instead choosing to praise the "funding for soil sciences...Digital Economy Strategy...and investment in women in STEM scholarships."

Meanwhile, for-profit tertiary education providers will receive a \$53 million funding package to help them survive after the pandemic saw a drastic drop in international student enrolments. Such providers will be eligible for grants to help develop online short courses targeted at the international student market. Private tertiary colleges received JobKeeper, while universities were deemed ineligible.

National Union of Students President Zoe Ranganathan described the scheme as a "quick cash grab from a Government that has no plan to give international students the quality of education that they deserve."

"These changes are targeted at raking in money from international students... using students as cash cows and poor quality online learning won't save Higher Education."

NUS Education Officer Chris Hall said that "The idea of online short courses is for the benefit of saving money and has never been to develop students and their skills. It is disappointing to see the government trivialise the benefits that education can provide."

Universities will not be eligible for funding under the scheme.



Photography by Aman Kapoor

# Students protest privatisation of public housing

*Alana Ramshaw reports.*

On Tuesday, the University of Sydney Welfare Action Group attended a rally in Martin Place held by Hands Off Glebe, Friends of Erskineville, and Shelter NSW. Community groups and nonprofits came together in protest against the privatisation of public housing in Franklin St in Glebe and Explorer St in South Everleigh.

The rally was chaired by Genevieve Kelly, a member of Hands Off Glebe. The acknowledgement of country was given by Carolyn Ienna, a First Nations hip-hop artist and Wentworth Park Rd resident who spoke on her experiences of failings within the system. “Public housing is far from perfect as it is very manipulative in its structure, but for many of us it is the only option apart from rough sleeping ... By taking away our only flawed safety net, which sounds like an oxymoron, we will be further disenfranchised.”

Ienna also pointed to the exploitation of marginalised peoples both within the public housing system and at the hands of private developers, “Developers have no interest in my welfare, and no interest in my needs as a disabled woman. They will have less interest than the system that allows them to cause harm and further trauma to marginalised people.”

Emily Vallentine, a Franklin St resident and member of Hands Off Glebe, spoke to the NSW Government’s \$22bn Communities Plus project, which aims to privatise 70% of inner-city social housing. She

noted that the removal of working class people from the inner city will only serve to increase the class divide in Sydney, “Moving the poor away from communities and the facilities makes the disadvantage deeper”.

Housing NSW CEO John Engeler addressed the federal budget released on Tuesday night, stating that “We have the opportunity here in NSW, given the failure of the Commonwealth to commit to this last night, to show leadership the way forward. We need more, not less public housing”. Engeler pointed to the significant decrease in unit size within new developments. “You don’t have to be Einstein to add it up on the back of an envelope and realise that’s not a good idea.”

Judy Munday, feminist activist and former President of the Communist Party of Australia spoke on the growing issue of homelessness in Sydney. Munday declared “this housing crisis will not be solved by relying on the private sector”. She delivered a history of public housing in Sydney, including the Sirius development, which was built in 1980 and sold to private developers in 2015. “The fate that befell Sirius and its residents appears to be planned for public housing elsewhere”, Munday observed,

“We need the government to accept its responsibility and make provision for what is, after all, no more than a basic human right”.

Protesters marched from Martin Place to the top of Djarrbarrgalli, also known as the Domain, where Eveleigh

resident Louisa Binnington spoke on the negative stereotypes often associated with public housing. “We’re all trying to have a life, raise our children, living honestly and working hard, but it seems we’re being punished for it now”, noted Binnington. Greens MP Jenny Leong addressed the NSW Housing Strategy released last week by the state government, “their headline ticket item was to put every piece of public land on an accessible website to assist property developers to pick and choose which bits they would like to develop”.

Former Sydney University lecturer Rose Wiss spoke of the eviction notice she and her neighbours had been served before Christmas last year, and the challenges of living in public housing through the COVID-19 lockdown. Wiss described the evictions as “adding suffering to suffering.”. “We need people to know, in our suburb, that they are going to lose the light. They are going to lose the sense of community”, Wiss declared.

Housing is an intersectional issue that is deeply and inseparably intertwined with other movements for social justice and change. As long as privatisation and overdevelopment of housing remain the norm, working class, LGBTQIA+, POC, and disabled communities will remain disproportionately impacted, and community groups such as Hands Off Glebe and Friends of Erskineville will continue their fight.

# Staff and students speak out against campus surveillance

*Jayfel Tulabing reports.*

Protestors took to campus on Tuesday to express their rage towards a series of documents revealing extensive surveillance of campus activism by the university and police.

Lamenting the brutal treatment and mishandling of students and staff at education protests last year, Former SRC Education Officer Jazzlyn Breen said “it’s clear that, in management’s eyes, the duty of care to protect students ends when those students’ political interests do not align with the profit-making interests of the university.”

She also noted that police officers that come onto campus don’t just do the bidding of the University, but “the bidding of the racist, colonialist state of Australia”.

Mikaela Pappou, of the National Union of Students (NUS) Executive, reflected on how a riot squad broke up a small organising meeting of less than 20 students last year, despite minimal advertising on social media platforms.

Pappou said that education activists will “not stop until education is free again”.

Nick Riemer from the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) commended students and staff for taking a stand against the “outrageous and unacceptable” collaboration between University and police.

“At the moment, the university is engaging in intrusive, unnecessary and racist action and surveillance against staff members who are

working on China, under the pretense of an interest in national security.”

Concerningly, Riemer spoke of how his own students were “terrified” to come onto campus last semester because of the intense police presence that was on-campus.

Riemer congratulated both the SRC Legal Committee for undertaking the investigation and the EAG and student activists that continuously put work into organising and campaigning.

Then a march kicked off from outside the Anderson Stuart Building to F23, where a series of chants were heard and Daeglan Godwin, SRC Environmental Officer, told protestors to “trust in the collective action of staff and students.”

# Protestors commemorate Tamil genocide

*Elizabeth Noonan reports.*

On Sunday afternoon, a rally against the genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka took place at Town Hall with about 100-200 protesters in attendance. The rally was organised by the Tamil Refugee Council and the Tamil Coordinating Committee of Australia.

In May 2009, during the Sri Lankan Civil War (1983-2009), tens of thousands of Tamils were massacred in Mullivaikkal. Tamils are an ethnolinguistic group in South Asia, who continue to face persecution in Sri Lanka for their calls for self-determination and for the independence of their homeland, Tamil Eelam, in the north-east of Sri Lanka.

The organisers demanded an end to the military occupation of Tamil homeland, recognition of the Eelam Tamil’s right to self-determination, the release of prisoners of war, freedom of speech for journalists in Sri Lanka, and for the Australian government to stop aiding genocide and discontinue their military and naval support to Sri Lanka. The calls come as the Australian Joint Agency Task Force Operation Sovereign Borders gifted 5 aerial surveillance drones to the Sri Lankan police in April.

Uncle Bruce Shillingsworth gave the acknowledgement of country, and highlighted the common struggle between First Nations people in Australia and the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Following this, there were two minutes silence for reflecting and remembering the genocide.

Kathrini spoke next about her experience living through the war as a child, and then coming to Australia as a Tamil refugee. She recalled the Sri Lankan air force dropping bombs “like rain drops” on her, her family, and other displaced Tamils. Kathrini said “All that wasn’t just my past, it was my childhood. Every single one of us wants to remember my childhood but I don’t.”

The rally also featured support from socialist movements such as the Socialist Alternative, with speakers like Damien Ridgewell and Hersha Kadkol talking respectively about the Australian influence on the genocide and its connections to what has been occurring in Gaza.

Ridgewell said that “the Australian government has been absolutely implicit in the genocide and repression of Tamils”, due to their ongoing support of the Sri Lankan government and military. He also clarified that it was “not just the Liberal government but the Labor party,” given that Kevin Rudd was Prime Minister during the 2009 genocide.

The rally concluded with a march through the Sydney CBD, where protestors chanted “I say Eelam, you say freedom!” and “Scott Morrison open your eyes – acknowledge Tamil genocide.”

# Library staff left in the dark about University’s plans

*Jeffrey Khoo and Alice Trenoweth-Creswell report.*

Months after libraries were reopened to students, library staff remain unsure about whether the University will restore opening hours and staff numbers to pre-COVID levels.

USyd library staff were told at a meeting last Friday that the University lacks a strategic plan for the future of USyd’s libraries.

“Staff have been happy to support the community in beating the pandemic,” says Jen Harrison, USyd NTEU Vice President (General Staff). “But it now seems like management is taking advantage of the flexibility shown by staff.”

## Consultation on opening hours shelved

Normally, significant changes to staff arrangements at the University, such as changes to working hours, must undergo a formal consultation process.

But when COVID-19 forced opening hours to change to 9am-5pm, those plans were shelved.

Staff did not receive an assurance at the start of the pandemic that opening hours would return to pre-COVID levels when Public Health Orders were lifted, and have not been assured to this day.

The continued uncertainty has affected staff morale. According to Harrison, for many staff, returning to pre-COVID hours would be “the

difference between a liveable wage and struggling to survive.”

While a University spokesperson said that “key safe library spaces” have resumed 24/7 access, including the Fisher and Law Libraries, staffed hours – including at library information desks – have not been restored.

The University has instead focused on virtual support, including their Chat Now service.

A library staff member, who did not wish to be named, told *Honi* that their working hours “have been reduced in an ongoing way post-COVID without consultation or even any reasons being given.”

## Staffing cuts and paper cuts

Earlier this year, 22 library staff members took voluntary redundancies across the Site Services and Academic Services divisions.

The University will hire 7 new positions including 3 Student Experience Advisers. Other new roles will support digital learning initiatives.

“Not only are long-time friends and colleagues saying goodbye, and a huge load of vital institutional knowledge marching out the door, but the phantom of increased workload is leading to much uncertainty and anxiety,” said Grant Wheeler, President of the CPSU USyd branch.

With approximately 22% of roles becoming redundant, staff assume

# Boredom: USU campaign week 1 wrap

*Marlow Hurst and Maxim Shanahan report.*

It was a quiet week on Eastern Avenue, with the return of in-person campaigning failing to bring back the bustle of past Board elections.

Attempts at activation, such as Isla Mowbray’s Dua Lipa flash mobs and Nick Comino’s perilous cheerleading routines, flopped. It was those two candidates who were most prominent on the campaign trail, with only occasional sightings of David Zhu, Telita Goile, Yiman Jiang, Du Du, and Pablo Avaria-Jimenez campaigners. Cole Scott-Curwood didn’t stray from his base at PNR, while Ruiqi Jia was unseen. On some days, evangelicals

outnumbered campaigners – a sad time for stupor.

The soapbox was the week’s highlight though. While most questions and answers were reasonably uncontroversial, Comino’s exasperated “I was so nice to all of you!” following a question about his membership with the Liberal party was a bright spot. Pablo stumbled in his response to a question about in-camera transparency, appearing to suggest that in-camera meetings are filmed. And to top it all off, audiences were treated to some political theatre. Someone who definitely wasn’t

# Students eat warm, moist muffins

*Marlow Hurst reports.*

Following *Honi*’s publication of an investigation into Courtyard’s absent microwave and cold muffins, the University of Sydney Union, through their Instagram story, made a promise: if the article’s petition reached 200 signatures, they would install a microwave in Courtyard Cafe and offer all signatories a warm muffin on May 13th.

The rally concluded with a march through the Sydney CBD, where protestors chanted “I say Eelam, you say freedom!” and “Scott Morrison open your eyes – acknowledge Tamil genocide.”

as May 12th. This was later confirmed by *Honi* the next day.

On Thursday, the people rejoiced as they got their complimentary warm muffins and were granted full access to the democracy microwave. Two types of muffins were available: chocolate nutella and caramel. While most patrons were satisfied, one customer we talked to said they burnt their mouth on the molten caramel center, while another said theirs was cold.

Courtyard did not fully respond to the demands of *Honi*’s article, however.

there will need to be a substantial reshuffle to compensate for the losses.

University management told staff they have no strategic planning nor minimum staffing level for the libraries.

“If this is true, then students and staff should be very worried – our library is in the most incompetent hands ever. If this isn’t true, then library management is denying staff and students essential information,” said Harrison.

“We don’t know how the Library can cut staff when it has not developed an understanding of the minimum resources required to keep it operating at a fundamental level,” said Wheeler.

Library staff said they were not adequately consulted about how the library will operate going forward.

Wheeler contined: “The paucity of mitigation measures indicated as part of that process fill us with confidence that the Library will not function in a manner that services students well, or avoid placing unhealthy pressure on remaining staff.”

A University spokesperson told *Honi* that it is in the consultation phase of a Final Change Plan for the library. The University’s Central Project Office is developing detailed project plans, timelines and communication plans to ensure an orderly and smooth rollout.

Fidler manager James Wiley made an attempt on the decency candidate’s young life, as he pummelled the stage with nerf darts. Truly gripping stuff.

Tucked into the corner seats of cozy cafes, candidates have been hammering out backroom deals. Telita, Isla, and Cole have worked out a three way preference deal. Comino will be preferring fellow Liberal Zhu second, Yiman third, and Pablo fourth. While Pablo leaves Zhu off his preferences entirely. There are still more how-to-vote cards to come, and they’re sure to be telling.

While they did install a microwave, the microwave is not in Courtyard but in the room adjacent. Furthermore, patrons must warm up their own muffins rather than being warmed up by Courtyard themselves. While this is obviously not ideal, the article’s author still considers this a win.

“Anything which allows the further proliferation of warm muffins is a victory. This fight is not over, it never will be. As long as there are muffins going unwarmed, there is something that needs to change.”

# Board candidate survives assassination attempt

*Samuel Garrett reports.*

University of Sydney Union Board candidate Joe Fidler survived an assassination attempt by a Nerf-wielding top-hatted assailant in the Holme Building on Wednesday.

Harrowing footage showed Fidler addressing the audience of the USU Election Soapbox yesterday, before a top-hatted figure interrupted Fidler’s response to a panel question. The man, known to Fidler as “Mr Pennyworth,” lambasted him as “not worthy” and “undecent,” before drawing a Nerf blaster and shooting Fidler at close-range.

Despite taking a foam dart to the chest, Fidler was able to return fire with a Nerf weapon of his own, wounding the assailant, who fled the scene.

“Decency doesn’t die that easily,” Fidler told the audience to applause.

Sources close to Fidler praised his “steely resolve” and “deadeye shooting.”

“He’s the fastest man on Eastern Avenue,” said one admirer.

In a statement to *Honi*, Fidler said he had “many enemies in this sewer of a campus,” but that the dart “hit my copy of *The Barefoot Investor*, which I carry everywhere in my suit jacket pocket [...] I’m mainly concerned how this will look on my LinkedIn.”

“If the USU give me a plaque next to Gilgamesh, we can call it even due to their subpar security.”

The attacker’s condition and current whereabouts are unknown. Eyewitness testimony suggested “Mr Pennyworth,” who Fidler described as “my campaign patron, an oil baron from Alabama,” bore a strong resemblance to Fidler campaign manager James Wily. *Honi* makes no allegations of wrongdoing against Wily.

Fidler has promised a “return of decency” to campus, with policies including the fracking of the Quadrangle and the introduction of a USyd uniform. He has strongly denied claims he is a joke candidate, telling the Soapbox he would not “let these baseless allegations burn me down.”

Little else occurred at an otherwise uneventful USU Election Soapbox.

*Voting for the USU Board elections opens 17 May.*

# Advanced Studies degrees mired in confusion and uncertainty

Amelia Raines reports.

Advanced Studies students are concerned about a lack of clarity and communication from their department about their degrees.

Initially being told they would have internship and honours opportunities in their fourth year, students in the Politics and International Relations stream have voiced concerns regarding a lack of transparency about their degree progression.

One student, who took to the USYD GOV & IR Students Facebook page, was left confused about the advertised internship program and whether this would conflict with the honours program.

"I don't feel like we get enough [information]," they wrote after contacting several stream staff members.

Other students felt as if the advertised opportunities — which made the degree desirable in the first place — were misleading.

First year student Gian Ellis-Gannell was taken by surprise when she found out she could not do honours if she took up an internship.

"[I] feel disappointed," she said. "The internship was one of the major factors in my choosing the degree."

Out of frustration, another student transferred out of the degree into a regular Arts/Advanced Studies course, saying: "I realised that there wasn't any benefit of staying."

Furthermore, staff redundancies and cuts to courses have meant that students' course offerings are completely different to what they signed up for.

Several elective subjects that were offered last year have been discontinued in 2021, including GOVT3652 - Environmental Politics in Australia, GOVT3901 - Digital Politics, and GOVT3998 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Politics and Policy.

Jaspar McCahon-Boersma, a fourth year student in the International and Global Studies stream, said that several students "have had their graduation pushed back by six months or longer" due to incorrect information being provided and units "completely vanishing in new handbooks."

Due to the overwhelming student concern, student representatives for the Politics and International Relations Advanced Studies stream Jamaica Leech and Nicole Pan met with members of the Government and International Relations faculty.

They were told that only "80% of students will be able to do either honours or placement in the future years" due to "staff redundancies and excessive demand."

For the 20% of students that miss out on honours and placement, they will still be able to complete

their degree, but will just do so with "conventional units of study."

"The current movement to have student voices heard within the Advanced Studies degree structure is an extension and expansion on its origins in 2019," said McCahon-Boersma, who has previously been involved in petitioning for clarity regarding the International and Global Studies stream.

While he says that the issue was originally a small cohort of students seeking clarification on specific issues, it's now grown into a faculty-wide issue.

"Our teachers are doing

significantly more work than they're paid for, and the transition to the Advanced Studies system has meant that they're putting in significant amounts of unpaid administrative time to help us deal with issues that they're not adequately supported to handle."

"It's become quite clear now that the bulk of the authority to rectify these issues lies with the Faculty (FASS)."

Politics and International Relations Advanced Studies students can anticipate further updates from their student representatives in the coming weeks.



# May it please the court: the weird world of mooting

Jeffrey Khoo wants you to know he studies law.

USyd students are very good at pretending to be lawyers. In April, Robert Clarke, Shruti Janakiraman, Jake Jerogin, Hae Soo Park and Sarah Purvis were crowned world champions of the Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition, beating out over 500 teams. (Jessup bills itself as "the world's largest and oldest international moot"; think of it as like the Olympics for law students.)

But it didn't come easily. The Jessup team spent six days a week for six months, researching niche areas of international law, writing submissions and preparing oral arguments. "It was brutal," says Clarke. "I knew, intellectually, what [the commitment] was going to be ... but I didn't expect to feel so drained." For Park, who did a clerkship while doing Jessup, "I was working 10-day weeks ... I had to manage my time efficiently."

The world of competitive mooting - where students argue cases in a simulated courtroom - has a reputation for being formal and ostentatious, made for students who enjoy dressing up in suits and talking in legal jargon. In a sense, learning how to moot is not just about making watertight arguments, but also about playing the role of barrister.

At USyd, it's a rite of passage for every first-year law student to try a moot and be promptly eviscerated by a judge. "Facing a scary bench for the first time is terrifying," laughs Janakiraman. "Judges will try to throw you off course."

Given this likelihood of humiliation, and the preparation that goes into high-level moots, why do students dedicate their time to this singular pursuit?

Purvis says that as far as a practical learning experience goes, "this is as good as it gets." In a law school infamous for its harsh marking and its

penchant for old-school, 100% closed-book exams, mooting challenges students to apply their knowledge in a near-real-world scenario.

It also dispels assumptions about the profession. For example, winning a case, while it involves rational argument, also rests on making a personal connection with the judge and understanding how to persuade them. "The stereotype of a mooter is assertive, coldly rational, able to

Part of mooting's popularity is because USyd is a renowned training ground for aspiring mooters. It holds the record for the most Jessup titles (six), and the Sydney University Law Society's (SULS) student-run mooting program is by far its most well-resourced and highly-attended portfolio. For Purvis, who was SULS' Competitions Director in 2020, watching a USyd moot in Year 12 was why she wanted to study at USyd.

barristers are predominantly old, white and male, some argue that assimilating into those conventions may not help students critically reflect on their role in the profession, or advance justice for minority groups historically dismissed by the legal system. "There's a certain way of conveying that you're knowledgeable and authoritative in a moot," says Janakiraman.

While the majority of this year's Jessup team are women of colour, which is no mean feat, the team agrees that privilege in mooting can operate through structural barriers "in a self-exclusionary way." USyd's success also comes from its institutional backing; not many other universities can say they recruited 30 volunteer judges, academics and barristers to judge Jessup practice moots.

It's also no secret that performing well in a moot looks good on a resume. Experiencing the prestige that comes with being a seasoned mooter, however, requires an immense time commitment. For students who work long hours or who live far from university, it's just not a viable option, which further reinforces structural barriers.

SULS has introduced mooting programs for women, queer students and international students, who remain severely underrepresented in the law. And for those who delve into this rarefied world, they seem to come out of it more confident. "It's easily the biggest thing I've done at uni," says Janakiraman, who has already signed up to another moot with her Jessup teammates. "I still find it really enjoyable."

Art by Deandre Espejo



remove themselves from a situation," explains Jerogin. "But it's really an EQ thing [to] maintain control against a judge and know what they want to hear."

The team recalled a low point when they placed in the bottom half of teams at the national finals, unexpected for USyd. "It really was a wake-up call, to build the resilience to come back stronger," says Clarke. He says mooting requires you to question your own assumptions and think quickly and logically. "When a judge hammers you with questions and you're contorted ... you have to work it out as it's happening."

Since SULS revamped its mooting program a decade ago, a supportive community has formed to mentor younger students. Purvis points to Alyssa Glass, best oralist in 2017's winning Jessup team and a legend in USyd law circles, who established the Women's Mooting Program, which has led to more women participating in and winning moots. (Glass was often the first, after their coach John-Patrick Asimakis, to call the 2021 team after moots, offering encouragement and advice.)

There are valid criticisms of mooting, however. As it tries to replicate conditions at the Bar, where

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## UNIVERSITY

# An introduction to FASS1000

Iris Brown was pleasantly surprised by this new compulsory FASS unit.

Core: FASS1000 Studying Arts and Social Sciences.

I remember my heart sinking when I read that on the degree handbook. I was prepared for a unit of boring tasks and mind-draining lectures. I imagined sitting through classes which, on paper, seemed useful, but in reality, were tedious and ultimately worthless.

But instead, I found myself pleasantly invited into a world of the critical: critical thinking, critical reading, critical feeling. A world in which everything was up for questioning, examining, overturning. So to future first-year Arts students, here's a reassuring outline of what to actually expect from this single compulsory unit across all FASS degrees.

The unit began by reflecting on why the Arts and Social Sciences matter. Other than allowing for perfect comebacks at students and

unforgiving parents who smirk at your 'useless' degree choice, and justifying your massive student debt (made larger by fee increases this year), understanding how the Arts and Social Science disciplines are interdisciplinary is remarkably comforting. In the first podcast of the unit (yes, this unit has podcasts) Sarah Barnett, a graduate of USYD, explained how she worked in the health industry with a communications degree, demonstrating how arts and social sciences can take a person into any field they want to delve into. There is no matter that the Arts and Social Sciences can't be used for - and I will bet on that.

The unit then critically examined critical thinking. Can one think through their emotions? What does it mean to read 'critically'? Can creativity be 'critical'?

We then used these 'critical' skills to deeply explore issues that are

plaguing our world right now. What should be done with historical statues that perpetuate colonial narratives? Is cancel culture helpful or hurtful? Should Universal Basic Income become universal?

It's not often we get to step back and consider how we think. Especially in what has been dubbed an 'unprecedented' era, with the emergence of a post-truth world, knowing how to think critically, and applying that to the world, is an invaluable skill.

The unit coordinators, Alix Thoeming and Bruce Isaacs, said that FASS started this year as the result of a long-term discussion. They wanted to provide a supportive unit for new students in the arts and social sciences disciplines, helping them navigate university life and discover how their discipline can be applied in the wider contemporary world.

Of course, there are some

# University expands its offshore learning centres

*Khanh Tran analyses the University's activities in Asia.*

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Australian universities have constantly wrestled between the need to offer interactive learning experiences whilst mitigating the educational barriers posed by offshore learning. Indeed, it was recently found that new international student enrolments in Australian institutions have halved, owing to the country's stringent border restrictions amid ongoing negotiations on quarantine quotas and arrangements. In response to these challenges, The University of Sydney has been expanding operations in its overseas Centre in Suzhou, China, to cater to its offshore Chinese international students.

Opened in 2016, the University states that the Centre in China was founded to foster 'research and industry collaboration,' as well as 'facilitate work placements, internships and other learning experiences for Australian students in China.' To this end, it has signed four Memoranda of Understanding to strengthen USyd's research partnership with three Chinese/Hong Kong universities — Fudan, Tsinghua University Graduate School (Shenzhen), and the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Since last year, the Centre has expanded its offerings to allow interested offshore students in China to participate in online classes together in an in-person setting. The USYD Study Centre was officially launched on 21st March 2021 in Suzhou by Michael Milne, Executive Director of the Centre in China, Dan Li, Business Consul of the Australian Consulate-General

in Shanghai, and Juan Sun, Vice-President of the Suzhou Dushu Lake Entrepreneurship University.

According to a University spokesperson, the Study Centre offers a 10-week academic Peer Studying Program (PSP) that 'provide[s] some of the University's Chinese international students who are studying remotely from China with an opportunity to meet their peers and access additional support programs.' The focus of the PSP is to bring together those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to rooms available for remote classes, the Centre organises study skills sessions, workshops, cultural activities, corporate visits and other social opportunities. As of 2021, approximately 350 students are regularly using these services.

Although the Centre provides classroom spaces, it performs no formal teaching roles. There are no accommodation arrangements at the Centre, however the University has advised that students can access apartments and rooms provided by Dushu District's local government, which has rental options 'similar to Sydney [University] Village.'

When asked about the USyd Study Centre's engagement with student organisations such as the University of Sydney Union (USU) or the Student Representative Council (SRC), the Centre's representative noted that it has reached out to the USU Debating Society and Chinese Debating Society to run workshops catered to students in Suzhou, and has also provided information about SRC services via its 'Student Life WeChat' account.

Furthermore, the Centre in China indicated that it is open to being approached by interested USU clubs and societies.

The precinct that USyd's Centre in China is located in is Dushu Lake Science and Technology precinct — a designated zone facilitating research collaboration primarily between the National University of Singapore (NUS), the Singapore Government, and Suzhou's local government. USyd is not the only institution to occupy Dushu, with Oxford's OSCAR (Oxford Suzhou Centre for Advanced Research) institute, UCLA's Institute for Technology Advancement amongst some other 30 institutions also based in Dushu.

USyd's arrangement aligns the university with other GO8 institutions such as Monash, UNSW, and UTS, where comparable overseas study centres were also established in China. Within the wider context, USyd's move reflects calls from the Federal Government for universities to adopt permanent blended learning options. For instance, in April 2021, the Federal Government laid out a consultation paper for international higher education where it advocated for a conscious move towards offshore/blended delivery over the next decade: "We have learned that Australian education, research and training are not dependent on students or research partners being in Australia."

USyd also has an arrangement with Taylors College Sydney, a private education provider operated by Study Group Australia, with their overseas studies centre in Shanghai

running the University's Foundation Program — an alternative pathway for international students. USyd clarified that the two institutions are entirely separate; however, it is aware of Taylors' arrangements due to their collaboration. Taylors' Shanghai Centre embraces a fully hybrid online learning environment. For instance, at Taylors' Remote Learning Centre, according to Study Group Australia's CEO Alex Chevrolle, accommodation is provided through a contract with Airbnb. Meanwhile some of its premises are rented from the Shanghai Institute of Technology and WeWork — a co-working space whose founder famously exited the company following steadily declining profits.

Other than USyd, grassroots initiatives have burgeoned in response to travel restrictions imposed owing to the COVID-19 pandemic with groups such as UAVS-NSW (United Associations of Vietnamese Students - NSW) organising scheduled study group sessions using commercial office spaces to connect offshore Vietnamese students with one another. According to Nhi Bui, Vice President of VISUS (Vietnamese International Students at the University of Sydney), these facilities provide 'canteens [and] projectors' in addition to academic support.

It is expected that the USyd Study Centre will operate for the foreseeable future given recent announcements from Federal Treasurer Josh Frydenberg during Budget 2021 that Australia's current border restrictions will be maintained until at least mid-2022.

# Studies in Religion is worth far more than a financial surplus

*Ranuka Tandan warns against the Department of Studies in Religion's closure.*

With only a month left until I finish my undergraduate degree, the Studies in Religion department — which made my experience at USyd what it was — is at risk of closure, and it's worrying and anger-inducing.

The idea that every department in the university needs to be constantly turning over a profit to be worth keeping is utterly ridiculous. It is the small departments dealing with niche subjects, particularly in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, that make the university what it is. Arts is the drawcard to USyd and there isn't another university in New South Wales that offers such a comprehensive academic and historic look at religion. Theological departments have never been at risk of disbandment, because they've always been profitable, but if we continue along this trajectory and end up at a place where the only kind of study of religion available at universities is theology, we'll be forced to deal with social problems that can't be easily addressed or reversed. If the academic literature we produce loses the benefit of the secular, outsider perspective, our ability to fight against misinformation and misinformed beliefs is made more difficult, and the class of religious people in power grows stronger.

The weaponisation of religion by our federal leaders sets a dangerous

precedent and the way it informs our parliamentary decisions is worrying. A video of Scott Morrison telling the Australian Christian Churches conference that he believes he was chosen to do God's work, and the potential for Mark Latham's *Parental Rights Education Bill* to be ratified, are just a couple of recent examples that show religion's paramount role in our supposedly secular society. There is such a dissonance between the people who can decide what is worth learning at school and university, and those who teach and study it.

After first year, my Studies in Religion courses never had more than 15 people in them, and this is part of what made them so valuable. Intensely interactive lectures and tutorials happened in the same classroom, one after the other. When I studied witchcraft and paganism, my classmates brought in their crystal balls, tarot cards and Ouija boards. In my subject this semester on the birth of Christianity, we have debates about whether Manichaeism was the first world religion. My classmates on Zoom actually have their cameras on every week, and contribute to discussion, because it's one of the most interesting and worthwhile majors that the university offers, and we have so much to learn from each other. In the last four years I've learned about the importance

of Australian secular and civil religion like ANZAC Day, about postcolonial critiques of Western Esotericism; I was taught about how Harry Potter was demonised by conservative American Christians long before everyone realised J. K. Rowling was a transphobe and how the Bhagavad Gita problematises Upanishadic thought.

Agnostics and atheists do these courses to attempt to understand the ways religion operates around the world, to learn how it has grown to occupy and influence every aspect of our legal system and our lives. Religious people do these courses to learn more about their own religions, to challenge themselves in their faith, and to come out stronger on the other side.

When I went on exchange to London, I was taught by some of the best historical Jesus and historical Paul scholars in the world. My lecturer told us that this course had made people lose their faith, and warned against doing it if you weren't ready to be challenged. I remember bristling with excitement at this; as an annoyingly atheist second year student, I wanted to learn what didn't add up so I could win the arguments against my religious friends. But that isn't what happened, and my understanding of religion became so much more holistic. You're forced to think about why religion

impacts society in such a broad way, what historical events have entwined to give us the religious landscape we have, how it changes lives, how it gives people hope. I entered my Studies in Religion major with an awfully patronising view of religious people, thinking that I would be validated in that, and I came out with a far more nuanced perspective.

With the budget this week came the announcement that university funding will decrease by 9.3% over the next four years, a move which was as horrifying as it was unsurprising. It's just another chink in the armour of a university system that doesn't value any form of education that challenges capitalist structures, and it aligns with the hostility that university management has shown towards its staff and students throughout the pandemic. It shows how far Australian universities have strayed from the idea of learning for learning's sake, where the pursuit and sharing of knowledge was worthwhile, and where academics and students could together conceive and work towards a better educated, more open society. Studies in Religion is one of the most unique and interesting departments at the University of Sydney, and it is imperative that it is not shut down.

# “Studying performance was a critical moment for me as an artist”

*Deaundre Espejo spoke to USyd alumna Rachael Swain about the value of her performance education.*

At an outdoor theatre in Broome, a dancer paces around a restraining chair in a lifelike prison cell. CCTV video projections paint the stage, evoking harrowing images of Don Dale Youth Detention Centre.

*Jurrungu Ngan-ga* — a Yawuru kinship concept meaning 'Straight Talk' — is a hybrid work of contemporary dance, spoken word and multimedia. Through its chilling performances, it defiantly confronts Australia's crises of Indigenous incarceration and offshore detention.

"We wanted to create a conversation about Australia's incredible capacity to lock up that which it fears," says Director Rachael Swain.

Having completed a Master of Arts in 1999 at the University of Sydney, Rachael is one of many alumni of the Theatre and Performance Studies department, which is currently in danger of closure.

"Studying performance was an absolutely critical moment for me as an artist," she says.

"I was exposed to a whole lot of writing which allowed me to connect our work to Indigenous scholarship, and to help understand my own position as

a settler working in this space."

Rachael took her newfound knowledge back to her dance company Marrugeku, which platforms Indigenous and intercultural performance and explores ways of decolonising contemporary art practices.

With Yawuru/Bardi woman Dalisa Pigram standing beside her at the helm, *Jurrungu Ngan-ga* is the latest of their many works.

"We had a lot of conversations about how we could embody cruelty on stage — not through a position of victimhood but through imagination and inquiry," Rachael says.

"Rather than asking performers to 'be afraid,' they were asked to improvise 'that which they are afraid of,' allowing them to present their own explanations of fear."

By being responsive to the dancers, audiences, and the political context of the performance, Rachael says their work challenges the "objectivity" of modern dance.

The dance company also embraces an experimental art-making process — one involving close collaboration with Indigenous people who have cultural authority over the content explored.

"Working closely with cultural custodians enables freedom in the exchange of knowledge systems and the meeting of traditional and contemporary understandings about performance," Rachael says.

Some of the people the company has worked with include Elder and artist Thompson Yulidjirri, as well as Yawuru man and former Commissioner into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Patrick Dodson.

"Audiences aren't just seeing the end product — they are feeling the intercultural processes involved in the

making of that work."

For Rachael, it is precisely this social impact that necessitates the survival of the Theatre and Performance Studies department and the creative industries more broadly.

"Performance allows us to interrogate the world we live in," she says. "Because of its ability to reach a wide range of audiences, it often moves faster than activism or political rationalising."

"I really feel it can cross all sorts of boundaries politically, both within this country and around the world."



*Pictured: Rachael Swain. Courtesy of Marrugeku*

# Op-ed: Academics and students must show solidarity with Palestine

*Nick Riemer makes the case for why we should boycott Israel.*

In the last ten days we've seen a chilling escalation of the murderous apartheid violence Israel inflicts on Palestinians. In the West Bank, Palestinians already live under Israel's illegal military occupation. Those in Gaza are subject to a vicious blockade. Now, Zionist settlers, with the backing of the Israeli state, have been home-invading Palestinian houses in East Jerusalem in order to ethnically cleanse Palestinians from the city. In Israel, extremist mobs are lynching Palestinians and firebombing their property. Palestinians have been attacked and tear-gassed while praying at Jerusalem's Al Aqsa mosque. Israeli bombs are flattening Gaza into rubble, forcing 10000 people out of their homes. Amidst this horror, people of good conscience in universities, whether students or staff, are likely to be wondering if there's anything effective they can do.

An answer isn't hard to find. In 2005, 173 organisations from the breadth of Palestinian society appealed to the world to support BDS — the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign — and boycott the forces that continue to rob Palestinians of their land and freedom. There are many ways to

implement the boycott. For consumers, boycotting Israel means refusing to buy goods from Israeli and other companies, like HP and Puma, that support Israeli crimes. For students, it means not participating in university exchange programs with Israel, like the ones Sydney University has with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. For academics, boycotting means rejecting collaboration with the official activities of Israeli academia.

Israeli universities deserve to be boycotted because they play a central role in the maintenance, planning and justification of Israel's permanent anti-Palestinianism. Israeli academia is joined at the hip to the country's military — which, on Saturday, had already killed more than 130 Gazans and maimed and wounded almost 1000 others. Through their collaboration with the Israeli Defence Force and weapons manufacturers, and their political support for Zionism, Israeli universities are responsible for the destruction of Palestinian lives. They should be made accountable, yet most Israeli academics are silent. This silence is especially serious given that Israel is crippling Palestinian universities in

Gaza and the West Bank. Yet, a few years ago, the Israeli academic Chen Misgav wrote that 'it seems oppression and the egregious violation of the freedom of Palestinian academics produce mainly yawns' from his colleagues.

When Palestinians ask academics and students to boycott Israel, they're not asking us to do anything unusual. Political boycotts are a regular feature of university life, like the popular boycott of panels and conferences which underrepresent women. There are many other examples. Following Trump's election in 2016, thousands of academics called for a boycott of international conferences held in the US. In 2018, UCLA declared a travel boycott for its employees on the state of Oklahoma after it passed anti-LGBTQ adoption laws. In 2021, the World Health Organisation refused to fund research at the University of Melbourne — in other words, boycotted UoM — because of Melbourne's collaboration with the weapons manufacturer Lockheed Martin. If these are reasons to boycott, then Israeli universities should be boycotted too.

Palestinian society is among the most strangled and oppressed on

the planet. When an oppressed political community asks for solidarity and tells its supporters what it wants them to do, there's every reason to do exactly as it asks. That's especially true if, as is the case with the boycott, there's no alternative strategy remotely on the horizon that's as effective. Boycotting is strategically effective because it pressures Israel and Zionists, and directly undermines institutions — Israeli universities — which facilitate crimes against Palestinians. The fact Israel spends millions of dollars annually countering boycott efforts is an indication of the power BDS has. People who reject it are turning their backs on the unison request of Palestinian civil society.

At the University of Sydney, more than seventy staff members have signed a pledge to uphold the academic boycott until justice for Palestinians is restored. Many more need to join us.

*Nick Riemer is a senior lecturer in the English and Linguistics Departments at the University of Sydney.*

# Tapping beneath the surface

Patrick McKenzie is topping up his knowledge card.

**Opal** / noun: An amorphous, iridescent gemstone, deposited at a relatively low temperature. Background may be nearly any colour of the visual spectrum, but, in the rarest cases, is black.

**Opal card** / proper noun: A plastic smart card, measuring approximately 85.6mm x 53.98mm; the ID-1 international standard card size. Background may be black, green, gold, light blue, or silver. Probably toxic if eaten.

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In first year, I lost my Concession Opal card after a few months.

The next one lasted over two-and-a-half-years.

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On Sunday, January 17th, I board a 440 bus to Leichhardt at 8:55am. I take my grey Concession Opal card out of my pocket and press it against the card reader at the front of the bus, hearing the anodyne chime confirming the success of my tap-on. The trip costs 39 cents. When I catch the bus home at 2pm, I repeat the process. Yet, no chime comes. Not even the harsh, slightly humiliating buzz suggesting failure. I try the other readers to no avail. Were all the readers broken? Was my card broken? Can Opal cards even break? The Opal website tells me I had used the card 7806 times. I tap my debit card instead and pay the full fare.

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I spend a week or so in mourning and order the next card. It arrives within 5-7 business days. At 3:40pm on Friday, February 19th, a journey to work aboard a 370 is my last. After a mere 179 uses, it, too, unceremoniously refuses

to tap-on when I try to go home. What the fuck?

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My tribulations have scarcely afforded me the certainty of an error code. The readers have shown me neither an Error 90 (digital seal is corrupt) or Error 93 (card contents corrupt). Opal doesn't respond to my email enquiry about the apparent lapse in the reliability of their machines and cards.

Research leads me to @TheOpalUser, a transport aficionado, Opal blogger, and proud owner of the 273rd Opal card ever issued. Sadly, he is unable to comment due to his proximity to Transport for NSW. I try emailing Transport for NSW directly, to see if they can explain themselves. They never respond. I wonder whether the ISO/IEC 7810:2019 Identification cards — Physical characteristics global standard could shed some light on this malfeasance. A PDF copy costs 58 Swiss Francs — around 80 Australian Dollars. Stonewalled at every turn.

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I wait almost a month before ordering my next card. I dutifully log in to the Opal website and name it 'Patty's Card IV.' I've gone from putting the card in my pocket by itself to returning it to my wallet every time it gets used, sandwiching it between several other cards — its fallen brethren among them. One day, I ask a bus driver at Central whether there's something wrong with the readers when my card doesn't seem to work. He answers with a perplexed look and an uncaring "Nah mate, have a go with the one further back." 'Patty's Card IV' lasts just over a month.

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The tyranny of the Sydney public transport system is well-documented; the (potential) virtues of fare evasion, extolled. International students can't even use Concession cards, for reasons known only to the decrepit overlords of Transport for NSW. But, could the apparent unreliability of Opal cards actually be the linchpin of a larger conspiracy? A planned obsolescence scheme in which faulty readers eventuate in a scenario where commuters must pay a greater fare lest they risk feeling the wrath of...

**Transport officers** / plural noun: Veritable mall cops of the Sydney public transport network, identifiable only by their perplexingly-small shoulder-hung satchels and four digit badge numbers.

Or maybe I'm just really sick of having to order new cards.

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It's been proven that Melbourne's Myki readers can run DOOM. So why can't Opal readers seem to work? I surreptitiously record the sounds of strangers tapping on and off the bus after noticing the slight variation in the pitch of the chime depending on which type of card is used. My calculations and limited knowledge of music theory leads me to discover that a tap-on with an Adult card chimes at A5 (or 880Hz), while a Concession card chimes at G#5 (or 830.61Hz). A mere half-step difference in Western music theory. I do not know what to do with this information.

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'Patty's Card V' arrives in due course. I treat it very carefully and don't even peel off the activation sticker. I hold my breath every time I use it.

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Art by Shania O'Brien



# Ramadan, zombies, and deadline bugs

Nafeesa Rahman addresses the struggles of juggling multiple commitments.

Your tutor's voice echoes ominously inside your head: "Remember, the assignment is due tonight." Duh, you'd thought to yourself, but it doesn't seem so obvious now. Your fasting stomach rumbles quietly in protest against the assignment, and the four hours of sleep you had last night shows in the haphazard sentences you form. In the background, you start to hear the low buzz of people filtering into the house for *Iftar*.

Bang! The door bursts open and in come a horde of children — nephews, cousins, cousins of cousins — and whatever momentum you had is lost with the cacophony of shrill demands. In the end, you do hit the submit button, but you can't shake off the feeling that you could've done better.

In Ramadan, *Iftar* gatherings are a staple phenomenon. From the art of distributing food equally, to taking that first sip of chilled orange cordial after hours of no food or drink, the whole experience is so unique. The

communal vibes are unparalleled, and you wish you could prolong the moments of gratitude and utter bliss, encircled by those whom you love most.

That is, until you're greeted by the deadline bug — the pesky little arthropod inside your head that injects an unending dose of worry, stress, and anxiety into you, as if you didn't already know that the deadline for that assignment is so close, you can almost smell it. Suddenly, spending those extra hours with the family is impossible because if you don't start that assignment now, you won't be able to wake up before sunrise for *suhoor*. And if you don't get enough sleep after *suhoor*, you'll show up to uni looking like a total zombie. Unless you're going for that all-year-round Halloween look, nobody wants that.

Few can master the art of staying productive while juggling religious commitments, work, family time, and university assignments. Not everyone is an Ali Abdaal or Matt

D'Avella. Things can get hectic, and that ruthless productivity guru buried deep within may not immediately come to life, especially without the necessary doses of caffeine throughout the day.

But for me, this year was going to be different. This semester I grit my teeth, assembled an arsenal of stationery, binge watched 'How to stop procrastinating' videos on YouTube, downloaded the 'Forest' app to keep me off my phone, and went completely military mode in preparation for Ramadan. I wouldn't let the deadline bug overwhelm me, and I certainly would not burn out just because I was fasting for twelve hours a day.

This dedication lasted about a week. After that, my sleep schedule went out of whack, my energy levels plummeted, and my motivation hit rock bottom. Procrastination was my best friend, and the deadline bug, my greatest enemy.

But it would be wrong to say that I didn't learn anything about

myself during this time. I'm more convinced than ever that everything I set out to do was indeed possible, all while fasting and setting time aside for faith and family. I learnt about University support services like the Learning Centre, and SUMSA (Sydney Uni's very own Muslim student's association) which host tons of events to make students feel safe and included during the Ramadan period. And if things aren't looking up, the options for special considerations, simple extensions, or even just knowing that there are understanding tutors around, is always reassuring.

As always, this Ramadan was interesting, challenging, draining, but above all, rewarding. At the end of the day, fasting students may well need to compromise, and prioritise, but we're in luck, because that's exactly what Ramadan teaches us. Like me, maybe next year you'll finally learn to strike a deal with the deadline bug, or otherwise swat it out of your life altogether.

# Manufactured fun: theme parks in the Stans and their Soviet design

Ben Levin stans theme parks.

In the USSR, having a city meant having a theme park — no exceptions. Opened in 1928, Moscow's Gorky Park amazed spectators with rides that showcased the epitome of Marxist-Leninist mechanical ingenuity whilst familiarising the masses with proletarian recreation.

Prior to the ascendancy of the Bolsheviks, parks were meeting places for 'undesirables,' but the regeneration of public space was so lauded within the Communist Party that similar projects began appearing everywhere from Estonia to Tajikistan.

The revolutionary zeal, however, didn't necessarily translate into good theme parks in their backwater republics. The rides at these glorified community fairs were mass-produced out of scrap metal and often shaped like rocket ships to applaud the achievements of the Soviet space program. Their jagged angles and harsh lines evoke some kernel of their constructivist roots, but it doesn't make them particularly comfortable to sit in, as I soon discovered during my journey to Central Asia. The whole endeavour appeared to be imagined by elderly hardliners in the nomenklatura who could only interpret fun through the praxis of Marxist ideology.

One benefit of the great merrymaking plan is that the rides are insanely cheap. A cable car ride in Almaty still only costs two dollars,

allowing the working class to unite with their gondola comrades through leisure. There's also a sort of self-congratulatory spirit imbued into the parks. As with the space-themed rides, most larger parks house a tiny building that offers 5D, 6D, and even 10D movies. I couldn't figure out what exactly these multi-D cinemas entailed but was assured they were far superior to the 3D or — God forbid — 2D cinemas of the decadent West. And an entertainment centre on the outskirts of Ashgabat hosts the largest (enclosed) Ferris wheel in the world.

Even the less ostentatious rides have propagandistic potential by eliciting emotions antithetical to the new way of life (fear, nausea, etc.) within the confines of state property, which can subsequently be purged (sometimes quite literally), opening you up to the possibility of more communism. But the fear is justified. Public safety was never high on the politburo's list of concerns (see: Chernobyl) and amusement parks were no exception. Just a month after I left, a flying saucer ride in Jizzakh snapped in half mid-ride, killing one person. I should be thankful that the rollercoaster operators in Turkmenistan were kind enough to test the machine to "make sure it works" before letting me jump on.

Lurking amongst the breakless dodgem cars and tetanus-infested

umbrella rides, there's nearly always one or two nightmarish creature statues from local folklore, made from leftover concrete and given a cheap paint job; a sort of lip service to the purported, yet never properly realised, autonomy of the individual Soviet republics. To emphasise this point, many parks hosted socialist realist monuments of fallen socialist heroes that overshadowed their mythical counterparts. Most of these Bolsheviks were toppled in the years following the dissolution of the USSR, but some states still enraptured in communist nostalgia haven't felt the same burning need. In Kyrgyzstan's Panfilov Park, you can still see a 10-metre bronze effigy of Vladimir Lenin keeping watch over the rides with his heavy, judgemental eyes, prompting you to stop playing and get back to work for the good of your country.

In other Central Asian states, the role of the theme park has since been appropriated to suit a more pressing concern for national identity out of the crimson rubble of the Soviet Union. An amusement park I visited in Nukus was renamed after Amir Timur — Uzbekistan's newly instated national hero, and the guy responsible for killing 5% of the world's population in his lifetime — who is synonymous with fun and good times.

In the more eccentric republic of Turkmenistan, the World of

Turkmenbashi Tales (colloquially, Turkmen Disneyland) is supposedly based on local mythology as espoused from the mouth of the late-President for Life Saparmurat "Turkmenbashi" Niyazov. A more accurate description, however, would be Disneyland as imagined by someone who has never seen a Disney film and had the concept of fun lectured to them in a re-education camp. Despite it being 1 p.m. on a Saturday, it was completely empty when I arrived. I followed off-brand 8-bit music, past waterless water rides and animatronic penguins in top hats, until I found a bored woman behind a ticket booth who was genuinely surprised that the park had any visitors.

Predictably, international theme park aficionados aren't huge fans of the offerings available in the Stans, often describing them on TripAdvisor as "awful," "the worst," or "total disgrace[s]." But there's something strangely beautiful about Soviet and post-Soviet demonstrations of public entertainment. The awkward attempts at recreating recreation all lay in varying states of disrepair as if they were relics of dreams that could never properly materialise. In any case, they're something to do in a region notorious for poor internet speeds. As one local guide said of Dustlik Park Razvlecheniy in Tashkent: "Better a poor horse than no horse at all."

# The healing of community for survivors

Laura Bancroft finds comfort online.

For most of my life I have suffered in silence, left to wilt underneath the weight of life's most unimaginable trauma. As a sexual assault survivor, I was taught by society and those close to me, to remain quiet about the trauma that almost killed me. I felt isolated within my own mind, trapped in a feeling that saying something would break me. But the hardest thing was not having my pain understood — a feeling that most survivors can share.

When you utter your darkest trauma, the fear that lines your stomach is one of indescribable proportions. The quivering of your lips, the tears that numb your face, the hands that never seem to stop shaking.

I can still remember the day I told someone for the very first time. It took nine years. No one prepares you for the feeling of intense loneliness when you utter those words "I was sexually assaulted." Looks of pity and attempts to discredit your story all add to the intense social isolation that your trauma immerses you in.

Unfortunately, this is a common

experience. I just wanted someone who could tell me I was going to get through this and to say it wholeheartedly with truth. I needed someone who had walked this twisted path before, and to hold my hand throughout. But sadly, not all survivors are met with that type of warmth.

This feeling endured for three years, until I stumbled upon an Instagram page named 'Pieces of Marcelle.'

I remember flicking through her stories for the first time, in awe of her courage. She had found a way to regain the autonomy she had lost, through sharing the worst days of her life with her audience. Marcelle's openness to show her emotional scars allowed me to feel that what I went through was real, that I as a survivor was allowed to tell my story.

In the months that followed, we began interacting. It started off with a few story replies, and messages of gratitude. These turned into in-depth conversations, supporting each other on our road to recovery, offering words of comfort that finally felt authentic.

The kindness, empathy and warmth Marcelle extended to me, helped me conquer the silence that mired my heart. It was through this compassion that I began to speak on what happened to me.

While I will always carry the inconceivable trauma of sexual assault, are shared, and no one is silenced into remission. It is through this community, that part of the weight I carried in silence began to ease.

During the recent disclosures of sexual assaults that have plagued Australian politics, I felt compelled as a survivor to provide my perspective, to identify to the people in my life the lingering effects sexual assault had on me. For the first time I had the confidence to tell more than just close friends and loved ones, that I was a survivor of sexual assault, that my story mattered. And there was Marcelle cheering me on throughout it all.

'Pieces of Marcelle' is not just a one-sided Instagram page. It is a safe space where the voices of all survivors

are shared, and no one is silenced into remission. It is through this community, that part of the weight I carried in silence began to ease.

While I will always carry the inconceivable trauma of sexual assault, are shared, and no one is silenced into remission. It is through this community, that part of the weight I carried in silence began to ease.

and there are some details I will perhaps never be able to utter, I now have a space where I belong. A space where I can share those details if I am ever ready to.

For any survivors out there, who feel alone in their grief, in their agony, I promise you, you are not alone. While there are days it seems like we are screaming just for someone to believe us, remember that there is a community waiting to help you heal.

And if you are reading this Marcelle, thank you.

# What is love in these theatres of cruelty?

*Juliette Marchant contemplates the influence of Maggie Nelson on her understanding of cruelty.*

I remember sitting in the back of my uncle's car, my younger brother and cousin sitting on either side of me. I was twelve and it was the first time that I had travelled overseas without my parents. We had just crossed the border into Northern Ireland and the radio was trying to acquaint itself with the UK's FM waves, a haunting crackle broken by the odd word in an accent that was thicker than what I was used to hearing. I don't know what it is about the radio, but my brain is like a sieve for that form – I could probably count on one hand the stories that have stuck with me. But for some reason, the tinny voice that came through the car's speakers on that day is still scorched into my memory with a burning sense of clarity.

A murder trial was about to commence. The victim was an elderly woman, alone on Christmas Day at her home in Newry, too frail to visit her family. The accused was her next door neighbour, a middle-aged mother delivering a gift on Christmas morning. The facts of the case were particularly gruesome. The victim was sexually assaulted and later, bludgeoned to death with the wooden crucifix that she kept by her bedside. Her body was found with internal bruising, bleeding and fifteen broken ribs. An imprint of the crown of thorns was deeply embedded in her chin, the Christ figure detached from the cross, lying beside her.

When in Ireland, I stay in my mother's childhood home. It is an unavoidably warm place. The fire is always blazing, the living room always filled with relatives and friends. But on that night, I didn't sleep a wink. I lay in my bed, mistaking my rapid heartbeat for feet clambering upstairs, holding my breath as I watched the cinema of shadows created by the headlights of passing cars. I could feel every kilometre of distance between me and my parents. I

worried how long it would take for me to get to them if anything were to happen. But most of all, I was transfixed by the crucifix that was hanging above the door. A staple in the Catholic Irish household, so long a symbol of sacrifice and devotion, now a lingering figure of cruelty. I had almost convinced myself that I could see and hear blood dripping from its outline. It was really nothing but shadows, and Irish rain.

Of course, my adult brain is starkly aware of the fact that most neighbours are perfectly sane people, and that most people are not bludgeoned to death at all, let alone by a crucifix.

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Upon reading *The Argonauts* in the summer break after my first year of university, I fell hopelessly in love with Maggie Nelson's writing. This passion manifested itself in the decision to purchase her entire catalogue of books, which arrived on my doorstep in the middle of the second week of semester. However, as the story of impulsive online shopping inevitably goes, the semester passed, then the next, then the next, and I hadn't read a single word of any of them.

I was sitting in my criminal law class, pondering the absurdity of how it is considered normal to contemplate the facts of six brutal murders before breakfast. I assumed that it took a certain person to be able to mull over these things in any sort of detail, and gathered that I was obviously not one of them – my only contribution to that class being the observation that the victim in a cannibalism case shared the name of the tiger in *The Life of Pi*. With this conviction in mind, and my penchant for topical distraction, I took to scaling lists of isolated lines from great texts and thinkers

*The fantasy of knowing is intoxicating. The belief that every action and every thought can be justified so long as we devote enough attention to it.*

concerning cruelty, in the process of which, I stumbled across a familiar name – Maggie Nelson.

2011's *The Art of Cruelty* is a meditation on the relationship between art and cruelty that consciously assaults the increasingly feeble barriers between representation and reality. Each essay reads like a palimpsest of ideas, with Nelson's incisive vision inscribed atop the musings of a rich index of philosophers, theorists, writers and artists. This is, at the best of times, an intimidating trope. I for one, nearly threw the book at the wall when the first line of the first essay in the collection was a direct quote from the knotty and bizarre mind of Friedrich Nietzsche. But one of the things that I most persistently admire about Nelson, if not envy, is her ability to make reading feel like walking through an expansive forest of familiar names and ideas, whilst being guided by a compassionate friend that is familiar with the route. Casting aside any semblance of certainty or truth that I had previously grasped, I took Nelson's hand and trampled into the forest of cruelty – a journey defined by three books, countless minds and endless questions.

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"With this mania we all have for depreciating everything, as soon as I have said 'cruelty,' everybody will at once take it to mean 'blood,'" wrote Antonin Artaud in *The Theatre and Its Double*. *The Theatre and Its Double*. In this preface to his theory of the 'theatre of cruelty,' Artaud attempts to counter the societal assumption that cruelty is unavoidably physical and visible. The great irony of this stance is that Artaud himself succumbed to the trope that he so passionately wished to sidestep, with much of his theatre representing a very literalist interpretation of cruelty, capitalising on gore.

But despite Artaud's theory in many ways manifesting as a regrettable lexical error, I can't help but think that there is some merit to his idea. The world is

routinely swallowed by darkness, humanity the largest existential threat to humanity. Perhaps the theatre of cruelty is not a literal theatre, but rather the world around us.

When we are confronted by cruelty, we become drunk on the need for justification. Why would someone do this? How could they think such evil thoughts? The criminal law is literally hinged on this principle, as the severity of punishment is qualified on the basis of a justificatory logic – connecting mens rea to actus reus. Nelson unwittingly effaces the supposedly impermeable rationality of this system, considering cruelty not just in terms of what can be seen, but as a means of structuring thought. In this task, she is aided by a careful interweaving of the theories of Elaine Scarry and Emmanuel Levinas.

Scarry contemplates vulnerability with a sense of child-like optimism, imploring that the natural response to beauty and fragility is the will to protect. This notion is perhaps best conveyed by analogy – when a child finds a ladybird on a petal, they have the compulsion to guard it. They let it scurry across their little hands, watching in awe as it defies gravity and disappears onto the underside.

Nelson problematizes this position, borrowing from Levinas' perception of the schizoid nature of human responses. In this version of events, the child realises that they are more powerful than the beetle, and their admiration turns into a volatile cruelty that sees the poor insect reduced to little more than a pile of guts and fragmented exoskeleton ground into the pavement.

The fantasy of knowing is intoxicating. The belief that every action and every thought can be justified so long as we devote enough attention to it. But still, I picture the elderly woman from Newry, who like the ladybird is gentle and harmless. In my mind, she sits in her armchair with her crucifix, rosary beads and bible – her frail fingers moving across the beads, keeping count of her

*The discourse of cruelty, like the lover saying "I love you" is volatile. With every utterance, the emotional tone, the justification, the act, transforms to create a concept anew.*

devotions.

Perhaps what I fear most about cruelty, is that no matter how hard I try, I don't know where it comes from. But then again, I don't think Scarry, or Levinas, or even Nelson, know either.

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In my mind, all great writing allows the reader to glance into the inner-mind of the writer. This voyeuristic position rides on the assumption that the most interesting part of reading is seeing the author in conversation with themselves on the page. This can be seen quite literally in many works of philosophy, where the writer will disagree with and respond to their own arguments in pages bound by a single cover, as though they are their own most virulent interlocutor. However, in Nelson's work, this interaction is much more subtle, as Nelson the writer blends with Nelson the character, attempting to piece together disparate memories and theories into a perfect tapestry of edification. However, whilst Nelson is unavoidably at the heart of most of her books, her 2005 poetry collection, *Jane: A Murder*, speaks with a different voice, as she composes works of poetry from a combination of her own cogitations and the diary entries of her Aunt, Jane, who was murdered at the age of 21 in 1969.

It is easy to fetishize victims of cruelty – to position them as martyrs, eternally wrapped in the story of their demise rather than the stories of their lives. Nelson is supremely conscious of this, articulating that *Jane* is about "identification not fusion". In view of this, she allows her Aunt to speak for herself through diary entries – giving vitality to the life that came before the murder, not just the murder itself.

In *The Phaedrus*, Plato asserts that writing is an act of mimesis – that language itself is to blame for the distance from reality often reflected in literature. Whilst *Jane*, a collection that is predominantly fashioned from the private musings of a dead woman, appears to be mimesis in the purest form, I contend that Nelson manages to breathe life into a topic that has been waterlogged by taboo and

sensationalism. The prose is bare, the number of words on a page sparse, the gaps left to be filled, immense.

But Nelson's unique, personal voice slaps the reader into a state of attention in 2007's *The Red Parts*, which focussed on the re-opening of the trial of the 1969 murder of Jane, depicts an emotional navigation of how human beings come to terms with cruelty when the concept itself is naturally unintelligible. Blending true-crime drama with memoir, Nelson commits to contemplating the question of proximity to cruelty – forced to struggle with the reality that she never knew her aunt Jane, whilst also being acutely aware that the victim of the brutality that was being detailed in the courtroom was someone that shared her DNA. As a reader, this reality made the image of a young woman with a stocking embedded in the skin of her neck, and a blood turning her auburn hair an even darker read, all the more resonant.

Re-reading *The Red Parts* in 2021, a year that in many ways, exists under the shadow of cruelty, is almost sickening. I scroll through my Twitter feed and see an update from @DeadWomenAus that 11 women in Australia have lost their lives to violence so far this year. I think about the names that, unlike Jane's, are erased from public consciousness, and I think of the project of wilful ignorance that bears its ugly head in the form of political rhetoric day after day. "Anger is a terrible thing, it causes hate," says Jane. "I wish I could talk this over with someone." The greatest cruelty of all is the silence.

Whilst a consistent theme in all of Nelson's work, vital to *The Argonauts* is a contemplation of the role of language. This is perhaps most poetically expressed in Nelson's invocation of Roland Barthes, that just as the Argo's parts may be replaced over time, but the boat is still called the Argo, when the lover utters the phrase "I love you," its meaning must be renewed by each use. *Jane: A Murder* and *The Red Parts*, whilst one a book of poetry and the other a quasi-memoir, are bound by a similar consideration of the value, and even more importantly, the limitations of language. The discourse of cruelty, like the lover saying "I love you" is volatile. With

every utterance, the emotional tone, the justification, the act, transforms to create a concept anew. Nelson references Joan Didion's essay *The White Album* to contemplate this idea further. "We tell ourselves stories in order to live," says Didion at the start of the essay, only to end with the line "writing has not yet helped me to see what it means". I came to Nelson with the hope that my understanding of cruelty would be clarified. Nonetheless, I still don't know what cruelty means. And for that, I am indebted to her.

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Williams Carlos Williams in 'The Ivy Crown' wrote;

*"The business of love is Cruelty which, By our wills, We transform to live together."*

But in these theatres of cruelty, I am left empty, searching for love I cannot find.

*Art by Eleanor Curran*



# To All the Books We Loved before

Isabel Freudenstein pens an ode to childhood reading.

My biggest indulgence as a reader, is reading about books. I can't resist the temptation of a title containing the words 'booklover,' 'library,' 'ex libris.' So, given an opportunity to write about the books I loved growing up feels like a pure, confectionary, indulgence.

When I think of my own childhood, the remembering always hones in on the books I read at the time. I think it's easiest to picture it in the form of a neatly segmented orange. Each vesicle, as Anne Fadiman puts to us, works as a chapter, made up of all the books we accumulate over the years. Soon, without knowing it, the story of who we are becomes a collection of all the stories we've loved over the years.

Readers and bibliophiles aren't just born; they're made. They're made in each visit to the library, taking out as many books as they can at one time, or, in sneaking in a few more chapters after lights out. It starts with one quick story before bed and then, before anyone can curb the addiction, you're out of shelf-space to store all 60 of the *Rainbow Fairies* series. And for my parents at least, it was an addiction they were happy to feed.

But, these stories do more than just keep us entertained and quiet. The value in children's literature is in its ability to spark an imaginative streak and provide a wide-eyed kid with their first experience of things outside of their own realities and knowledge. This was my own experience, and I can track the development of my love of art and history to books I read as a child, like *Chasing Vermeer* by Blue Balliet. A stolen painting, with two outcast kid protagonists, and riddles to solve along the way? Sign. Me. Up. Incidentally exposing kids to the

value of museums, a love of learning and art history along the way? A luxury of kid's fiction: lessons are neatly wrapped in the narrative arc of a protagonist that we imagine as ourselves.

The joy of reading when you are young is that so much of it is uncritical. You, as a child, are unanalytical of the world around you, and unaware of the lenses through which to deconstruct text and their meaning. It's this simplicity that brings pure joy to the experience of reading. Everything is new, each thought you have feels like your own. This feeling, the wild vulnerability felt when being

*When people say that we are made up of the friends we keep and the family we have, they neglect to mention that we are also made up of every book we have read and loved.*

recognised for something you thought particular to you, is why, for so many young readers, there is an element of comfort in books.

This was absolutely the case for me when I recovered from my precocious 5-year-old, fairy-loving self and became a cripplingly shy 7-12-year-old. Too nervous to talk to strangers or answer the home phone, I was the kid in the corner tucked up with a book full of adventurous protagonists. I took a book with me almost everywhere I went – the dinner table, family friend's houses, school – a habit that I am yet to shake.

These were the years of Enid Blyton, pure escapism in pretending it wasn't so much the *Famous Five*, but instead, the *Super Six*. I spent years of my life solving riddles with

Trenton Lee Stewart's *Mysterious Benedict Society* and climbing through cupboards with Lucy, dreaming of something so tempting as the White Witch's Turkish delight. The books came in phases; historical fiction, like every 'Royal Diary' in the series, or *Code Name Verity* by Elizabeth Wein was followed quickly by high fantasy. If I wasn't part of the *Chronicles of the Imaginarium Geographica* by James A. Owen, then I was surely at Hogwarts, or along for the ride with Pseudonymous Bosch's *Secret Series*.

It was these characters, Darrell from *Malory Towers* (another Blyton special), Louise Fitzhughes'

Harriet, from *Harriet the Spy*, Gregor from Suzanne Collins's criminally underrated first series, *Gregor the Overlander*, who became my friends in childhood. The best sort of friends, that gently guide you towards forming a sense of self. By defeating the evils in their own stories, the trope of having the good guys win provides in its own way, a version of morality that shapes a young person's own moral code. Who knows what sort of ankle-tattoo having, arsonist, orphan-stealer I would have been without the warning contained in Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events*.

Kazuo Ishiguro, at this year's Sydney Writer's Festival, made a point about the best books being the ones that stay with us afterwards. In my own life, this is felt in how often when

sick or miserable, I turn to rereading old favourites. In particular, Rebecca Stead's *When You Reach Me* never fails to bring me a cathartic cry at the end of the book. Her book, a homage to Madeleine L'Engel's *A Wrinkle in Time* is the perfect example of the role that formative books play in our lives. Had Stead never read the infamous, 'it was a dark and stormy night,' she might never have written a novel. And had she never explained 'why do we yawn?' I might never have loved reading as much as I do now. It is this cyclical relationship that I think provides the most comforting form of familiarity in rereading, the ability to recognise in familiar pages our younger selves, like old acquaintances, and the inner kid who is amazed by discoveries that we take as given facts now.

I am who I am, in part, because of what I read when I was too young to worry about much else except when I was going to have an opportunity to go back to the bookstore. When people say that we are made up of the friends we keep and the family we have, they neglect to mention that we are also made up of every book we have read and loved.

I started this love letter to kid's books with a clumsy metaphor about an orange. It is only fitting then, to return to this with Wendy Cope's poem, 'The Orange,' which ends with some of the most tender words I could use to sign off in this ode to all the books we've loved before.

'I love you, I'm glad I exist' (to be able to read you).

Art by Ellie Stephenson



# Against Interpretation

Noah Corbett abdicates from reading in a foreign language.

I

Kafka's Odradek is a strange creature. He looks like a "flat star-shaped spool for thread" and yet is not, for despite the fact that there are old, broken-off pieces of thread wound on it, a small wooden crossbar sticks out of the middle of the star, which, due to another rod joined to the crossbar at a right angle, allows him to stand upright as if on two legs. Despite his awkward appearance Odradek is nimble and apparently sentient. When asked where he resides, he simply says "no fixed abode." He laughs without lungs, a sound "like the rustling of falling leaves." Even his name is ambiguous, whether it comes from the German or the Slavonic is unclear. Kafka's narrator thinks that it is unlikely that Odradek can die, as everything that dies has a purpose, which Odradek lacks. The thought that Odradek will outlive him is almost a painful one.

Little seems more useless, confusing, or even painful at first glance than reading a text in a language one barely understands. The task is alien to the purpose of reading as it is commonly conceived. Isn't the point of reading a text to understand it?

I would say no. In fact, I would argue that reading a text in a language of which one has only a rudimentary grasp is an invaluable process. The lack of comprehension itself allows us to appreciate the musicality of the language and escape the arrogance of thinking that every text, or even any text, can be adequately understood. This restores a beautiful strangeness to the written word. Like Odradek, that

which we do not understand will outlive us, but this shouldn't be a painful thought.

II

Ezra Pound provides the following advice to any aspiring poet: "You cannot learn to write by reading English." This is because the meaning of the words diverts attention from the movement of the language itself. Reading a poem where the meaning is not immediately evident allows you to focus on its rhythmic and musical qualities, the phrase as a constructed sequence of syllables and sounds.

The English speaker can gain a lot, in this sense, from the following stanza from Lorca, even before seeking out the translation.

*La luna vino a la Fragua  
con su polisón de nardos.  
El niño la mira, mira.  
El niño la está mirando*

It is both instructive and enjoyable to simply read the lines aloud without understanding exactly what they mean, to listen to the way that Lorca plays with rhyme and rhythm and appreciate the words as sound divorced from content.

This instructive capacity is not limited to aspiring poets. Admiring the architecture of a phrase without being distracted by its meaning can also improve one's writing in prose, as the way that a sentence moves, both internally and within a paragraph, is itself a form of poetry. Taking a step back from the meaning of the words allows their

form to come into focus. Further, to borrow from Henry James, it is the form that "takes and holds and preserves substance, saves it from the welter of helpless verbiage that we swim in as in a sea of tasteless tepid pudding."

The experience of reading something that you only partially understand is, beyond the initial frustration that it causes, also a very enjoyable one. Once you stop looking for the translation of every individual word or phrase and simply allow the sounds to wash over you, it opens up a wholly different enjoyment. The text becomes music. This experience of language, not squashed into meaning but playing out freely in sound, is a beautiful one.

III

Beyond instruction and enjoyment, being confronted with a half-understood text also allows us to escape the tendency to interpret. This is a valuable thing because, as Susan Sontag has argued, there is a modern tendency to consistently reduce works of art to their content, in order to then offer interpretations of that content. In this, we lose the essence of the artwork itself.

Interpretation is, as Sontag notes, a form of translation – A becomes B, B becomes C – the text is brought into our world, into our language by becoming something other than itself. The act of interpretation transforms the text. This process is often a reductive one as the wholeness and at times unsettling strangeness of the work of art is reduced to its content, something

more manageable. To know what a text 'means' is to bring it into your understanding as something greatly diminished.

Odradek, for example, Kafka's confusing, meaningless spool of sentient thread, has been interpreted as reflecting Kafka's personal anxieties, a critique of capitalism, the Jewish tradition, an uncountable array of other things that take one away from the text itself. While these interpretations can be valuable and interesting, the story cannot help but lose something of its fullness in the process. As the priest says to K in *The Trial*, "You must not pay too much attention to opinions. The written word is unalterable, and opinions are often only an expression of despair."

I will be the first to admit that the way that I tend to read is by reducing the text to its content. I skim through the pages, identify the central ideas, write some quick notes and then congratulate myself on having 'understood' whatever it is that I have read. This cannot happen when reading in a half-understood language.

In setting aside an attempt to know what a text means, even briefly, and allowing it instead to wash over us, we can get away from this dominant approach to reading. This liberates the text from our understanding and interpretations and restores to it an almost mystical quality. It allows us to glimpse what Sontag insists the "earliest experience of art must have been ... that it was incantatory, magical ... an instrument of ritual."

# Breaking up with straight white men

Casey Zhu boycotts straight white male authors.

The joy of reading fiction comes from the glimpse you catch into another person's experiences. The promise of learning something new about how someone passes through the world that you share is one of the most exciting things as a reader. Yet recently, I have noticed that I was getting insights into the same person's experiences and ideas – white straight men.

This realisation was sparked by Elena Ferrante's *My Brilliant Friend*, which made me realise that something was missing from the books I had been reading, mainly modern classics written by white straight men. From there on, the books from my usual repertoire didn't make me feel the same as it did before – there was always

something missing.

I started noticing that all the characters were white. I noticed the holistic depictions of masculine identity and experiences, glaringly contrasted against the role of women merely as one-dimensional supporting characters – a mother, a wife, a sexual object. This became hard to ignore and prompted the unshakable feeling that, as a woman of colour, the author was writing for an audience that excluded people like me. I was not what the author had in mind.

It's not to say that the perspective gained by reading fiction by straight white men is inherently boring or valueless – it's just I've absorbed it already. It's no longer exciting. As Ferrante has pointed out, there

*I noticed the holistic depictions of masculine identity and experiences, glaringly contrasted against the role of women merely as one-dimensional supporting characters – a mother, a wife, a sexual object.*

has been a 'male colonisation' of the female imagination – women have no problem imagining things from the male perspective. Yet it is clear from recent events, seen in the responses to the sexual harassment 'scandals' that have pervaded Australian media in the past months, that this is not reflected in the reverse. Although there are really great works of fiction by white straight men, there are also books that are just as remarkable and skilfully written, created by women

and people of colour, that challenge me and include me, both within the book and as its audience. I don't need more insight into the world as experienced by white straight men, which already permeates almost every aspect of my life outside fiction.

Thus, at least for now, in a time where women and people of colour are being published at growing (albeit slowly), fiction written by white straight men sit at the bottom of my to-read list.

# In defence of child celebrities

*Alice Nason says that child celebrities get a bad rap.*

As anyone who has spent a few minutes with children over the past few years will tell you, the absolute ubiquity of TikTok for today's children cannot be denied. With TikTok surpassing 2 billion downloads in Q1 of 2020, the most downloads for any app in any quarter in history, the cultural capital of its flagship creators is unparalleled and continues to grow. While the centrality of these new child stars — Charli, Addison, Loren, et cetera — to the cultural zeitgeist is indisputable, the implications of the platforming of these children, both for our digital discourses and for these child-stars themselves, are rarely discussed.

The industry that has emerged around the new 'kidfluencer class' is far from the double-denimed Disney Channel red carpets of our childhood, but is likely just as insidious. The dark shadow of the entertainment industry that has traumatised child stars for decades is well publicised and widely criticised. TikTok stardom differs in striking ways, but the spectre of harm still looms just as great. The problem begins with the almost total absence of regulation. No one could have predicted how rapidly these child stars would reach their position of primacy in online culture. In some areas, the global community has tried to respond proportionately; the French parliament passed landmark protections for child influencers, related to their ownership over their assets and their "right to be

forgotten", meaning the immediate erasure of their content from every platform upon their direct request. However, the United States remains more or less silent on the working hours and activities of the creators in this immensely profitable industry. Moreover, while public engagement with child celebrities has always been intrusive, separation between the private and professional lives of social media stars is totally absent. The public's access to their lives is relentless and, more so than any other form of celebrity, unmediated. For these young social media stars, accessing their millions of followers on an account that still uses their Club Penguin password, their autonomy is noticeably greater, but in embracing their platforms they have abrogated their right to silence.

The first problem emerging from this culture of consistent visibility is a societal one: the online political discourse. As our political conversations have infiltrated the digital domain, the participation of influencers is increasingly deep-rooted, validated by blue verification marks that seem to act as some universal qualification. Teenage influencers have been the most visible participants in many crucial political conversations over the past year; conflicting opinions around compliance with social distancing were fought out around the 'Hype House' and Bryce Hall's 100-person 21st. Online engagement with the

Black Lives Matter protests in June last year was in some part preoccupied with which teen stars changed their profile pictures or posted for #BlackoutTuesday. In a society used to emulating its celebrities, it is unavoidable that our support for stars is related to our agreement with their political opinions. But handing the airwaves to child stars, who experience a professional invincibility due to their cult following, an economic reward for scandal, and a validation for their wildest opinions validated by their follower count, has degraded our online political conversations to shallow contributions and underinformed infographics. While this phenomenon is not wholly harmful, it is certainly positive to have messages of tolerance and equality preached to young, and perhaps unengaged, audiences by people whose opinions they respect. However, expecting teenagers to understand and not butcher their words around complex global issues is obviously problematic and actively redirects leadership away from experts. While it's easy to blame influencers for the 'sideshow' that has emerged in digital spaces, it is equally important to recognise the effects that being platformed has on these young people in real time. It is too soon to say if the 'toddler-to-trainwreck pipeline' has reached a new incarnation. However, the detriments of online fame are becoming increasingly manifest. The essence of TikTok fame is offering instant gratification to the audience.

Your quirks, sense of humour, dress sense and interests are only valid to the extent that they grow your following. While I've acknowledged that, to an extent, a cult following will be quick to absolve macro-influencers of their crimes, a large peanut gallery of digital citizens is prepared to ridicule and condemn the most benign of activities, from vaping to swearing. Charli D'Amelio, the largest creator on the platform, lost 1,000,000 followers in the span of a few hours for acting "bratty" to a home chef in a video. Treating their platforms as a diary, and their followers as friends, obviously has psychological implications for these child stars. While their audiences may have a fleeting attention span, the internet has a long memory and the real cost for these influencers living out their worse impulses in the public domain is yet to be seen. We should exercise restraint in a digital era that ages up young people and forces them to participate in conversations they have no qualification, beyond their follower count, to enter.

In defence of a well-functioning digital community, and of children who stumbled into a digital following they were unprepared to control, we should be apprehensive about our engagement with influencers. More than anything else, I petition that we should show these children the same, perhaps weary, kindness that we wish that someone would show our 15-year-old selves.

# 'Social' science fiction, and the continued relevance of the genre

*Matthew Kelleher comments on the commentary of sci-fi.*

A great selling point of science fiction, whether a novel, film, or television series, is that it presents worlds distorted in structure and ideology. The very best of the genre, the utopias and dystopias that resonate most strongly with readers and viewers, are not, however, stories that merely invent marvels of tomorrow, but the science fiction that also comments on today's social issues. Science fiction has a habit of surrounding hot-button topics with aliens, spaceships, and time-travel, where insights and conclusions can be drawn from these subjects that are perhaps not possible in a more traditional debate setting. Is the commentary intentional? Or are they merely inferences overly ambitious writers such as myself are creating by delving too deep into the machinations of the novelist's mind? Classics, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* for instance, adopted the language of change without commenting specifically on any single events. Shelley makes the point that technology has the power to facilitate advancements of mankind, but also has the potential to change humans on an ideological level. Indeed, when

Frankenstein rejects his creation at the point where he realises radical change creates monsters, he comes to not embrace change on a structural level, being the existence of his 'monster' in society. George Orwell's *1984* and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* clearly warn of the dangers of totalitarian regimes, and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* considers the fallacies of utopias. Films too have not-so subtly addressed issues of growing populations and environmental disasters: *Planet of the Apes*, *Soylent Green*, and *Logan's Run* to name a few. There are less obvious examples as well — *Star Trek* is about the pursuit of a better world and way of being, the characters not looking to fight the new species they encounter but befriend them — in the pursuit of social justice. *Star Wars* represents, and in places mocks, the rise and fall of a fascist Empire, the stormtroopers deriving their name from German soldiers, and are frequently chastised by fans for their inability to fire a laser rifle accurately. So how intentional social commentary is in science fiction? *Starship Troopers* is perhaps one of the most overt novels I have ever read when it comes to

commentary. Scratch the surface and find social commentary woven throughout: suffrage, civic virtues, and war. The society it describes, in which only military veterans have the right to vote, is fundamentally fascist, and is satirised in the 1997 film of the same name. The novel has also been criticised for its depiction of the aliens, their treatment arguably an example, and criticism of, racial epithets. In stark contrast, Heinlein's short story *All You Zombies* is devoid of such commentary. In its nine pages, the story encounters issues of gender equality and perspective, sexual identity, and consent, yet focuses narrative-wise on the mechanics of time-travel. Perhaps the relatively short length of the story did not allow for such discussion. Yet, even unintentionally, there are hints. The film highlights the difficulties of being a man without having supposed 'manly' qualities; "a ruined woman" in Heinlein's words. The issues feel very current and relevant, without having any contemporary parallels. A more recent example, *The Expanse*, a television series based on novels of the same name, similarly makes comment on current political and

social events without clear links to specific events. Daniel Abraham, who is one of the author's novel and an executive producer for the show, has stated that: "There's no conversation about trying to make any of it topical. That some of it is speaks more to the zeitgeist than to any intentionality on our part." Science fiction remains a critical genre of literature, for its innate ability to provide an engaging and sophisticated backdrop for stories to easily talk about current issues. Arguably, it is so inextricably tied to the commentary process that it is almost impossible to write without at least making some remark about modern social issues. Whether intentional or not, it seems even without effort, science fiction and social commentary are part and parcel in their discussion of today's world.



Art by Altay Han

# Making literature fashionable — again?

*Thomas Fotiou relates literature's surprising influence on fashion.*

It wasn't until this year that I discovered Haruki Murakami's luminous literary oeuvre. In March, I read Norwegian Wood and fell in love with its rendering of late 1960's and '70's Japan — its jazzy soundscapes, textural characters and dynamic urban and natural environments, swimming between Tokyo, Kyoto and the mountains.

When I completed the novel, UNIQLO happened to release a new clothing collection — 'Murakami Radio'. I was surprised for two reasons. The first was enmeshed with an appreciation of serendipity — that UNIQLO had released a literary-themed clothing line about Murakami, parallel to my introduction to him. The second was more profound, built upon the surprise that a clothing brand, one that I'd encountered and knew, had created a collection with a literary theme at all.

The collection infuses Murakami's notorious jazzy bravado and intellectual quirkiness into a series of shirts paying homage to each of his central novels. UNIQLO's interpretation of Norwegian Wood — a simple, forest green shirt with scarlet writing emblazoning the novel's title across its chest — stood out to me for its stark simplicity. Compared to the other shirts in the collection, like the anthropomorphic, jazzy feline headlining a Murakami Radio shirt, and Kafka on the Shore's intricate Japanese calligraphy winged along a stencil of a nightingale, UNIQLO's interpretation of Norwegian Wood reminded me of the seamlessness of the relationship between fashion and

literature.

This seamlessness has been echoed elsewhere in 2021. In February, Maison Valentino established their 'Writer's Campaign.' With contributors including Ocean Vuong, Elif Shafak, and Donna Tart, Valentino's 2021 Fall/Winter Collection has allowed these authors to create literary vignettes capturing particular pieces from the Collection. Each vignette intimately engages with one's emotional response to and relationship with fashion. Vuong's piece chases Leonardo Da Vinci and Gian Giacomo Caprotti, his apprentice, across 'streets lit with dawn's bluest seconds', built along carefully enjambed lines leading to the sea, 'her black dress a stitch in the shore'. Tart captures a woman waiting for a date, 'all Valentino-ed up', and Shafak uses the blank space of the page to cross-stitch protest, literature and fashion into a kind of 'Valentino Red' textual bodice.

My initial surprise at UNIQLO's 'Murakami Radio' Collection, which doubled upon encountering Valentino's 'Writer's Campaign', reflects something interesting. Prior to my encounter with these two campaigns, I had not seriously reflected, as a lover of literature, on its influence upon fashion. In an age where social media dominates the generation of new clothing and fashion trends, UNIQLO and Valentino are reviving literature as a focal point of inspiration in the fashion sphere. Although we thought that the pervasiveness of the Instagram hashtag and the boistrousness of

TikTok had eclipsed the influence of literature on fashion, maybe it is time to reconsider what is truly in vogue.

Seminal authors like Oscar Wilde and Virginia Woolf emphasised the centrality of fashion to understanding their own work. In his *The Philosophy of Dress*, Wilde argued that fashion, and the representation of it within literature and other art forms, allows for a deeper engagement with art itself. His famous adage from this essay; "Fashion is ephemeral. Art is eternal", solidifies the continuous and intertwined relationship that both had, and continue to have, on each other.

Think of the opening line that Woolf had originally given to her novel *Mrs Dalloway*: "Mrs Dalloway said she would buy the gloves herself." Even though the novel in its published form did not use this line as its opening, it gestures towards the significance of fashion, of appearances, as markers of historical progression and how people understand themselves.

Woolf in Orlando also observes that 'there is much to support the view that it is clothes that wear us and not we them. We may make them take the mould of arm or breast, but they mould our hearts, our brains, our tongues to their liking.' Literature's self-reflectivity and reflexivity is best understood through its relationship with fashion. Although the magnetic pull of alternative influences appear to stand as more 'contemporary' and 'relevant', literature can rest on the arguably perpetual, yet dynamic, relationship it has with fashion, and

by extension, with how we understand ourselves and the world.

Midori, one love interest of Norwegian Wood's protagonist Watanabe, is deliberately named so. 'Midori' means green in Japanese: a colour central to the novel's diaphanous, spectral colour palette. When they initially meet, Midori can't help but notice the 'Humphrey Bogart' sophistication of his green polo. She notes that "green looks terrible on me... I'm cursed". Later in the novel, after a sustained period of silence blooming out of certain events distorting Watanabe's relationship Midori, he spots her in a lecture theatre, 'wearing a deep green pullover and the dark sunglasses she had often worn all summer.'

It is in fashion, that signifier, that conduit facilitating the evolution of our relationships and self-understanding, that literature finds a seemingly unlikely companion. Murakami, like so many authors, constructs moments where his characters struggle with this dynamic. But, by the novel's end, Murakami repositions his characters and audience in the mirror of fashion's relationship with literature, enabling them to achieve self-apotheosis and comfort in who they are, and how they interact with others.

If, in the words of Coco Chanel, where 'fashion changes, style endures', we can be sure of at least one thing — that literature will continue to breathe life and weave inspiration into fashion.

# How I learned to stop worrying and love the lens

*Harry Gay captures the importance of images.*

So, I'm an uncle now. That's fun. Aside from the sudden whooping cough injections I needed to take, nothing has surprised me thus far. The crying, the pooping — these were all to be expected. What I hadn't counted on, however, was the influx of photographs on my timeline. From TikTok videos, Instagram stories and Facebook posts, to snapchat replies, video calls and group chat images, it seems there is no escaping this child. I am confronted by their visage every waking moment. The proliferation of these images bring up a number of concerns. For one, the eerie nature in which this child, who, from the moment of birth, has now been logged into a global system of data and code. Who knows who's watching from afar and has access to my sister's child? From the very beginning of life, it is as though they are already being tracked in an international panopticon of surveillance technology.

Aside from that, the way in which this newborn is being confronted by the steely gaze of a camera lens is unsettling to say the least. I wonder what this would do to a developing mind, to imagine your parent as the

barrel of a camera rather than a human being: an artificial oculus, instead of a natural one. And to the photographer, the distancing effect this creates.

Krzysztof Kieślowski taps into similar concerns in his film *Camera Buff*, which follows the impulsive purchase of a film camera by a father to capture the early moments of his child's life. As he begins to film everything he sees, an emotional barrier between him and his family starts to emerge. One scene sees him document his child sitting down but falling over, to which he continues to record without going over to help. His wife derides him through her rhetorical questioning: "If she fell off the balcony, would you film that too?" In an interview for the Criterion Channel, directors Josh and Benny Safdie suggest it acts as a warning to all filmmakers, asserting that film is "innately perverse" and "godplaying." The horror of all this is captured in the Polish poster for the film, with the face of the protagonist morphing into that of a camera lens, an ersatz eye replacing an organic one. This begs the question, *why record these moments at all?* What compels my sister to take

photos of her newborn child? I sat down with her and my brother-in-law to gather deeper insight into their thoughts. For my sister, Hannah, she infers that "taking photos is a means through which to make physical my love for him and the affection I have for him through my own eyes, to then pass onto others." For her husband, Joe, he spoke of how his desire to take photos of people he loves, such as his child, is driven by a need "to capture that moment in time, particularly because time is so fleeting — it allows you to look back on a moment and remember it for what it was."

These responses point toward a larger notion that extends to all of us: the inherent reason we take photos of things and people we love. Since photography's inception, people have carried photographs with them, whether it be in their lockets, wallets, or pocket watches, taking them wherever they go and refusing to part with them. A certain religiosity is given to photos, especially photo albums, which, when interviewing people who have just escaped their burning homes, often say it's one of the first things they grab. Despite

the prevalence of mobile phones, this still holds true, as the wallpaper of someone we love accompanied by a digital clock acts as a modern day pocket watch, and the camera rolls as a contemporary photo album.

It is the ephemerality of the image, something about it that we feel compelled to seize, capture and hold on to forever. In *The Art of Travel*, Alain De Botton discusses how when encountering the natural wonders of the world, we feel an urge to take hold of this moment and freeze its temporality through the process of photography.

For me, I take photos of my girlfriend, of the sunset, of friends and family in my life because I don't want to lose them. I want to hold on to these people and things for as long as I can, because they may not be around forever. I am reminded of a scene in Kieślowski's *Camera Buff*, a beautiful moment in which a man's mother dies, and he replays the only footage of her ever captured on film. With tears in his eyes and in a darkened room, the two second silent footage plays before spooling out of its reel, and he says quietly, "she's there forever now."

# Learning from the board

*Chiara Bragato is never bored of board games.*

Given the last year has been one of isolation, board games are more essential than ever before. They allow you to have fun, test your skills, compete, and spend a few hours rolling dice and moving meeples. The ability to socialise and connect in a relaxed setting is often overlooked, and board games can provide the perfect opportunity to do just that.

In recent years, video games have also been on the rise. With the growth of multi-player games, competitions and streaming, the industry is worth \$175billion. Though they can provide a more immersive and realistic experience, they simply cannot erase the joy of playing someone in person. The increased immersion of technology in our everyday life has its

do you practice your strategy and addition skills, but you also pick up on subtle social cues in ways you might not have otherwise. Recognising your friends' smirk when they have a good hand and knowing when a laugh is fake, are all things that can help you throughout life.

The educational benefits of board games are also important — particularly for children. I don't know about you, but I learnt the basics of budgeting while decimating my brother in Monopoly. Games teach essential skills, despite not outwardly advertising that intent. Scrabble expands your vocabulary (particularly if you're interested in words you may never use again), Cluedo tests your ability to judge a social setting and your ability to lie, Betrayal at the House on the Hill gets you to think ahead and take calculated risks.

For those of you who still aren't convinced, you simply haven't played a good game in a while. Classic board and games like Chess and Monopoly can't be missed, but there are so many more out there. Most games can be separated into teamwork or competition. Are you trying to stop a worldwide plague in Pandemic, or figuring out secrets in Codenames?

Beyond the childhood classics, many people don't realise the diversity that's available.

Strategy games, such as the classic Ticket to Ride, are prominent in the industry. Whether working competitively or together, many games are based on the premise of limited resources or times, and the player's ability to use these to maximise their points or reach an end goal. Planning ahead and thwarting your opponents can lead to some very heated arguments and some very entertaining victories (or losses). Fantasy based games, such as Gloomhaven or Catan, have the added benefit of extending your imagination beyond the confines of the real world. Why be on Instagram when you could be a Mindthief?

The joy of opening a box and spending a few hours with friends or family cannot be understated. Board games are the perfect way of spending a few hours doing something fun, bonus points if you're procrastinating uni assessments. So next time you want to needlessly scroll on your phone, remember the pure joy of winning at Monopoly, and play a board game instead.

*So next time you want to needlessly scroll on your phone, remember the pure joy of winning at Monopoly, and play a board game instead.*

While many people consider board games to be too nerdy or too boring, this is a massive generalisation that fails to consider the variety of games that exist. Yes you have your classics, like Monopoly, Life or Trouble, but there are so many more! Escape rooms, construction, storytelling, and war games. The list never ends. Recent years have seen an explosion in the development and sales of different types of games, particularly with lockdowns resulting in increased sales. The global board game industry is worth approximately \$14 billion, and is expected to grow in the future.

benefits, however it is also essential to enjoy time away from our screens. Board games provide an opportunity to exercise your brain, away from the computer.

Many games have the added benefit of challenging individuals mentally — to think outside the box, recognise patterns, or simply out-manoeuvre your opponent. The opportunity to practice critical thinking skills in an informal environment allows individuals to develop these abilities in a way that can't be taught (though most of us won't need to plan global domination outside of Risk). Not only

# Striking the balance: podcasts and music

*Xavier Roche tunes in.*

Podcasts are everywhere. Emerging out of obscurity only a decade ago, they've become one of the primary forms of audio entertainment, making us laugh, educating us, providing distraction or motivation. They have become an indispensable slice of my time. I went from exploring content related to any and all of my interests — to finding joy coming to know the hosts of my favourite shows — to relying on them to keep up to date with the news. But recently while walking down the street, I found myself selecting a show I was only vaguely interested in, and realised my music playlists had become tired, and even boring. Listening to podcasts has become a habit, rather than a pleasure, and the love I'd developed for finding new music had wavered, in favour of lazy selections of the shows that provide me comfort, but engender little enthusiasm.

By no means is it my intention to rag on podcasts, a medium that has grown immensely since its inception, becoming more stylised, focused, addictive, and available, to name only a few of the forms numerous qualities. The vast array of subjects and approaches now at our selection can hook anyone looking for entertainment that engages the mind in a unique way, serving their listeners in every way from

impersonal storytellers to confidants that instil a sense of companionship in their audience.

But the thought of all those unheard songs and unknown artists waiting patiently to reveal themselves to me begs the question: am I missing out?

To think of all the classics I haven't given the time to, those albums serenaded in blogs and news articles as 'life changing,' or that 'forever changed music history.' Yes, Pet Sounds will still be there in fifty years, but why not listen to it now? Instead I find myself half listening to an assessment of Biden's latest policy struggle, a conversation worth hearing, but one that's quickly forgotten amidst the chaos of constant news and daily life. Of course it shouldn't matter what random publications deem essential listening, just whether you're entertained and enjoying the content you select. However, there's something to be said for the emotional power music possesses that no podcast can match. We've all found those songs that make you walk a little faster, with more purpose and a new perspective, or those that peer inside your head, knock you down, then tell you something about yourself or the world you're glad to know, if only fleetingly.

So I'm advocating for a balance between these two mediums, one that I am sure millions of people have already formulated, but that has recently escaped my grasp. I have no desire to become numb to the pleasure of a great podcast. In fact, of the thousands downloaded every day, I'm sure I will come across many that return my enthusiasm, maybe by offering hilarious banter between two comedians and lifelong friends, or presenting a disturbing portrait of an unhinged serial killer,

*Listening to podcasts has become a habit, rather than a pleasure, and the love I'd developed for finding new music had wavered, in favour of lazy selections of the shows that provide me comfort, but engender little enthusiasm.*

as seems to be the preference of so many. We absolutely should keep supporting podcasting, a young mode of expression that promises to only improve as the more technologically savvy generations coming through take hold of it, but don't let music's appeal suffer in the process, or become any less involved in shaping our view of the world and global pop culture.

My idea of a healthy relationship

between the two doesn't involve a designated time split or set number of hours, rather a personal feeling that I'm appreciating the creativity and artistry exuded from both. Music streaming services like Spotify and Apple Music have made it easier to discover under-promoted new bands, as well as lesser-celebrated older ones easier than it has been at any time in history. This privilege makes exploring hundreds of years of musical accomplishment all the more rewarding.

So next time you plug your earphones in, and find that your playlists feel stale, or that your podcast slate is too narrow, listen to something new. Hell, not listening to anything is a pretty valid alternative itself, probably even healthier. For now, I'm just in need of the next song that throws me down the rabbit hole of an artist's discography and the accompanying online forums debating their musical merit. Join me!

# Elitism at the Archibald Prize

*Harry Gay paints a picture of the Australian art scene.*

With entries recently closing for this year's Archibald Prize, artists both young and old, emerging and established, have all rushed to get their portraits in from around the nation. While the exhibition regularly draws big numbers and significant media attention, you'd be hard pressed to find people who often agree with the judge's picks for the winner.

So what's the problem? One could argue the prevailing issue is anti-intellectualism, as a majority of works fail to capture the essence of the subject, but rather a photo-realistic representation. The images become more a show of skill in making the portrait seem photographic, rather than using the medium of painting to its full advantage: a medium wherein reflecting objective reality is not the primary aim. However, this cannot be said of all the winners, and this is usually a problem with the People's Choice Prize rather than the actual judge's themselves.

Where the real issues lie, I would argue, is a self-fulfilling cycle of elitism, which rewards the wealthy and the well-known, and disadvantages those without an elaborate web of connections or the financial backing to make up for it. We regularly see the same recurring celebrity artists featured as finalists in the prize — figures such as Anh Do, Vincent Fantauzzo, Tim Storrier and Shaun Gladwell. One need only scroll down the Wikipedia page of previous year's Archibald Prize winners to be confronted by a wall of names in blue, linking you to massive, career spanning blocks of articles stressing their notoriety. These artists are well established figures, and while they

may produce good work, their more mediocre entries may potentially take the space of someone less prominent.

At the same time, the rules are designed to aid this elitism, and when convenient, are often thrown out altogether in order to accommodate this perpetuating cycle. Under the guidelines, it asks for the portraits to be of "some man or woman distinguished in Art, Letters, Sciences or Politics". How is an up-and-comer able to rub shoulders with such distinguished figures if they are not already a celebrity themselves?

Another rule requires that it "must be a portrait painted from life"; a rule which is regularly broken by the artists, and virulently ignored by those judging. While most portraits present their figures in vacant voids to create the illusion of some sort of studio sit-in with their subject, some painters don't even try to hide the fact that their works were aided by the use of photography. Tessa MacKay's 2019 work Through the Looking Glass features famous actor David Wenham posed uncomfortably in an outdoor location. Taking into consideration lighting, the movement of reflections, and Wenham's pensive gesture, attempting to paint this piece live sounds like a nightmare. While I might concede that a follow up rule asserts artists may only have "one live sitting with the artist," that doesn't prevent someone from having a quick meeting with the subject, taking a couple photos and then going their separate ways. Considering the celebrity status of Wenham, it's no surprise why the judge's chose to ignore these rules.

Aside from this, most artists outside of New South Wales have



great difficulty getting their entries in. Speaking with artists who have previously submitted works to the Archibald Prize, they expressed their annoyance at having to pay large sums of money to transport their portrait to the Art Gallery of New South Wales. As an aspiring artist, it's difficult to choose between paying the bills or fulfilling your dream.

Finally, the consensus among audiences is usually that the judge's pick the weakest link out of the finalists for the top prize. While I often don't mind the artworks they award, one must wonder why they themselves are not artists. "Trustees of the gallery," — the investors, moneymakers, and owners. These people have a vested interest in drawing in crowds and bumping up ticket sales.

As an emerging artist, especially one potentially graduating from SCA or just starting USyd, this all may sound confronting and hopeless. But there are alternatives to the

Archibald machine! Whenever the Archibald Prize exhibits, over on Observatory Hill in the CBD, the S.H. Ervin Gallery showcases a competing program — Salon des Refusés — which features many of the Archibald rejects. Oftentimes, this exhibit features works far more intellectually engaging and skillful than the finalists of Australia's so-called 'top prize'.

On the other hand, if that is still too mainstream for you, there are a plethora of smaller galleries around Sydney that are always looking for emerging artists and doing callouts for new talent. You've just gotta keep your eyes peeled. One lot of galleries I enjoy going to is along Hampden Street in Paddington, with the latest and greatest new, exciting, up-and-coming artists. And with the trees extending themselves over the street, and the leaves gently falling down, it fills you with a romantic reverie that the imposing, monolithic AGNSW never can.

# My love/hate relationship with reading challenges

*Veronica Lenard discusses the merits of quantifying literary consumption.*

There is a little square widget on my phone that reads 'Week 19'. Its intended purpose was to reduce the amount of times that I went onto Google and typed in the phrase 'what week of the year is it.' What was supposed to be my way of tracking a goal, is now a reminder of a benchmark that I'm not so sure I want to meet.

I'd added the square in question because I've spent the last few years trying to read fifty-two books a year. Like many, the workload at the end of high school had left me a little free time and I was now desperate to read more. The first year I tried this challenge, albeit somewhat limited in its potential for success given it was my first year at university, I only made it to halfway through. It was a year of trying to read on buses, between classes, and before bed. Some of

these worked better than others. While I can't fall asleep in a moving vehicle, I can read for hours and hours in one without feeling ill. Even then, many of the books I'd counted seemed like incidental reads rather than intentional choices to fulfil the challenge.

The appeal of reading challenges makes sense to me. I've always loved books and I get competitive a little too easily. In primary school, I thrived on classroom reading trackers and competitions like the Premier's Reading Challenge. I was endlessly appreciative of librarians who would let me borrow more than I was supposed to: he recommended two fiction and two non-fiction wouldn't even last me the time between lessons. In high school, I once used an online speed reading program to read a four hundred page book in two

hours because I had forgotten to read it the night before. It's these kinds of reading practices that drew me, and to a certain extent continue to draw me, to reading challenges.

2020 was my take two. I ended up reading 52 books, yet I didn't read the last third until December. I've never been able to read before bed, once I've started a book I can't stop reading. This became less of a problem when I didn't have to be anywhere the next day. But even overcoming this self-imposed challenge saw me frantically trying to finish a reread of Tina Fey's *Bossypants* on December 31. At that point, I didn't care if a reread would be cheating, I just needed a shorter read that would let me reach my goal.

This year, I tried to pick a new number that would strike the right balance between doable and challenging. I briefly threw around

the idea of reading 65 books after realising that 100 as too big of a load to add to the increasing stack of weekly readings I would have to do. I could never decide on a higher number. I think this is the problem with reading challenges. There are always more books to be read, more genres to try, more authors to experience. And so, the finish line keeps moving, turning an enjoyable activity into another task to fit in our already busy weeks.

This year I've read four books. I'm not sure how many I will read by the end of the year. Right now, it doesn't really matter, I'll keep reading. Or at least, adding books to my shelves and the endless 'to be read' list in my mind that I don't dare to try to write down. I'm not quite sure that I'm ready to delete the widget just yet. But, maybe next year?

## Purposeless possessions and boxing up the past

*Shania O'Brien makes excuses for being a hoarder.*

I have a little shoebox that I keep under my bed. Once, it was baby pink, but now it is frayed at the edges and the cover has turned parchment yellow. I bought it when I was eleven, and in it, I put the very first love letter I received – a torn piece of notebook paper that said, “I like you even though you accidentally kicked me during P. E. Do you want to sit together in English?”

Over the years, I filled it with things I thought I wanted to keep forever: friendship bracelets from friends I knew I would lose with time, lily petals that have now turned a putrid brown, a ceramic ballerina from a music box that my brother broke as a toddler. These trinkets hold memories of people and places that don't exist anymore. In the cutting of an artificial rose lies a summer afternoon spent spinning around a water fountain. Scraps of paper hold failed origami cranes and lost hopes of a constructed hinterland.

I don't know when collecting items from my life stopped being a harmless hobby and morphed into an obsessive need to preserve the past. I worry about forgetting important

moments and the people I've loved, however briefly. Still, I worry more about turning into someone who could discard such a memory to the clutches of oblivion. When I have things I can hold in my hand, magnetic bookmarks and heart-shaped pendants and fig-scented candles, I know that the people I have cherished are within reach. I recognise that it is foolish to assign love a tangible value when it is remarkably easy for things to wear, but this knowledge does nothing for the stacks of boxes I envisage in my future, all piled up in a closet I will shy away from opening.

When I was thirteen, my best friend gave me a plastic gem that she had 3D-printed and dyed purple. I kept it in my pencil case, a good luck charm of sorts, until we had a falling out. After that, it went in the box, and I bought a new container just to avoid looking at it. The gem disappeared multiple times over several months, but it somehow always found its way back to me. I started carrying it around in my hand when I began University; I would sit on the Quadrangle Lawns and

watch the sunlight refract through it. I found myself wanting to lose it, needing to let go of everything it represented.

Now, as I sit on my bed with the contents of multiple memory boxes upended on my duvet, I find myself being unable to identify some of the items. I am not sure why I have a pink safety pin or periwinkle beads. The very purpose of starting this activity is lost to me, the act of collecting becoming more habitual than meaningful.

All my little trinkets reveal more about my personality than anyone else they might have belonged to. In my hoard of treasures, I see a thousand versions of myself. And with every new addition, I find myself thinking the same thing: *someone, please, remember this. Remember I was here. And that I was loved.*

Holding onto things from the past feels much like reaching across time for something unattainable. Giving old clothes away is always hard because I don't want to lose that dress I wore at the party of someone who isn't alive anymore, or the shoes that supported my weary feet as I

made the uphill climb endless times on my last ever school camp.

A lot of this may simply be me confessing to being a hoarder, but love is stored in all the things that I cannot bring myself to throw away. Some of the memories, if not most, are lost to me but it is easier to hold something and know that it mattered enough to preserve than stand with empty hands and nothing to show for my life.

Because, really, what can one say for other people after they're gone? Will having boxes full of miscellaneous items really satisfy me in the long run, whatever that might look like?

I have often been told that utility should be the primary function of an object, though I have never met someone who subscribes to that belief religiously. Sometimes, people just have things, lots and lots of things, and they needn't do anything more than serve as a reminder of an old friend, or a day well spent.

I will happily clutch onto my purposeless possessions, satisfied with the knowledge that another version of me once did the same.

## Review: A Room of One's Own

*Felicity Macourt reviews Belvoir theatre's adaptation of Virginia Woolf's book.*

Actress Anita Hegh has been adverting on Carissa Licciardello and Tom Wright's adaptation of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* since March 2020. It shows.

Rehearsals started at Belvoir Theatre in April 2020 for a March debut, before the world was plunged into lockdown in what was a particularly tough year for theatre companies. Actors, who are most often contractors, were left without income, and unable to apply for the JobKeeper subsidy. Where the government did provide performing arts subsidies, there was no contingent requirement that those funds be used to keep working actors employed.

One of the first shows to return after lockdown, it enjoyed an initial run from 10 September – 18 October, 2020. Hegh's only prop on a minimalist stage during her unstoppable whirlwind monologue was a spindly black chair and a tiny black leather

notebook. The only other actress, Ella Prince, appeared intermittently throughout the play, isolated in a discrete black box in a pre-lockdown staging decision that could not be more apt for our socially distanced world. Only illuminated upon the cue of an ominous ringing sound, Prince's wordless, graceful movements were at times startling when she lit a flame for a cigarette, and captivating, as she drew a budding rose from her throat.

Back by popular demand for a run in May 2021, Virginia Woolf's prose again proves timeless amidst the government's unfolding gender crisis. Having dwelt on *A Room of One's Own* for over a year, Hegh's careful attention to particular phrases in Woolf's spiralling stream of consciousness brings the words alive with furious intensity.

Rolling descriptions of food at Oxbridge are whimsical and light-hearted as the play begins. However, as

she rose from her chair, Hegh's raised voice clearly emphasises every word of Professor von X's now infamous title, *The Mental, Moral, and Physical Inferiority of the Female Sex*. Elegantly draped in silks of charcoal and true black, Hegh infuses Woolf's prose with pain that booms across the austere set: “My heart had leapt. My cheeks had burnt. I had flushed with anger.”

As Prince stands in her own room, Hegh explains that when women tell the truth, men shrink before their own reflection: “How is he to go on giving judgement, civilizing natives, making laws, writing books, dressing up and speechifying at banquets, unless he can see himself at breakfast and at dinner at least twice the size he really is?” Prince's isolated room turns to pitch black as she promptly exits, defeated.

Due to the bravery of those women who spoke out on their experiences, the government's unfolding gender

crisis has, yet again, demonstrated that women are not safe within their workplaces from violent, predatory behaviour by men. Even during the pandemic, women were subjected to higher rates of violence within their own homes and were more likely to suffer financial insecurity due to precarious casual work arrangements. Sitting in an audience of masked strangers, I wondered who among us was desperately in need of a room of their own.

As Hegh pleads with the audience to remember that the plight of Shakespeare's sister lives on in all women, I could not help but notice that Woolf's rhetorical question remains unresolved following parliament's failures: “Who shall measure the heat and violence of the poet's heart when caught and tangled in a woman's body?”

*A Room of One's Own* is well worth seeing at Belvoir Theatre.

## Review: Second City: Essays from Western Sydney

*Grace Roodenrys on writing and Western Sydney.*

Novelist Felicity Castagna opens her essay in *Second City* by summarising the difficulty of writing about Western Sydney. “The problem is that Western Sydney is a place,” she writes, “but it's also an idea. And you can either write to that idea ... or you can write against it.”

This is an apt way to begin the anthology, which comprises fifteen essays by Western Sydney writers. It underlines the double-meanings at play when we talk about the West, which is both a real place and an imagined one, a site of lived experience for people who come from it and an image in the minds of those who don't.

Writers from the West who have entered Sydney's literary mainstream in the past decade have resisted this image, writing against the damaging representations to which our community has long been subject. This has been “important work,” Castagna reminds us, “political work,” but it's also work that is

nearing completion. The next task for Western Sydney writers, Castagna suggests, is to write the West with complexity, to turn from what it isn't and engage with the more difficult question of what it could be.

Such is the work that *Second City* promises to perform, a standard that many of its contributors rise to over the course of this collection. There is ‘Raise Your Needles’ by Aleesha Paz, a brilliantly inventive essay that traces the history of public knitting to make oblique reflections on the state of gender politics. There is Sheila Ngoc Pham's ‘An Elite Education,’ a study of race, education, and class that gives a fascinating comparison of Pham's family, who are liberal-voting, middle-class and Australian-Vietnamese, with her white husband's: “though ours is a relationship of equals, there's one notable difference: I'm not the first in my family to receive a university education.” Then there is Eda Gunaydin's ‘Second City,’ an

ambivalent critique of gentrification that laments the growing middle-class influence in Western Sydney while recognising that no ‘original’ West can be restored without radical colonial remediation.

The essays are at their best when they shimmer with this kind of complexity, the recognition that the counter-narratives we tell about our community can sometimes fray. Gunaydin and Ngoc Pham are right, of course – we cannot embrace any political imperative to ‘reclaim’ the West without recognising that it wasn't ours in the first place, and intersections between race and class are indeed slipperier than they once were. Admittedly, some of the essays fall short of this rigour: George Haddad's ‘Uprooted,’ which relates the story of a drug-addled stranger making a barbed allusion to Haddad's Middle Eastern appearance, beautifully renders the loneliness of being othered in one's own country, yet misses an opportunity to explore

the tensions between racial and class-based power underpinning this moment. Haddad is looking down at this man from his Inner West terrace, he is the one with a livelihood and education while the other pushes a stolen trolley from the Marrickville Metro. Exploring such ironies would return class to the conversation in fascinating ways, and would also illuminate the reality that class mobility cannot protect against the pain of casual racism.

*Second City's* call for a shift in Western Sydney writing is a welcome one. As Castagna recognises, we need writing that pushes away from the relatively simple work of resisting stereotypes and “opens the deep work,” as she writes, “that hesitation requires us to engage in.” The exciting thing about this collection is that it hands this work over to the community: the essay stops “when it feels itself complete,” writes Theodor Adorno, “not when there is nothing left to say.”

## Review: Think Floyd

*A confident and charming debut from a USyd alumnus, writes Jeffrey Khoo.*

Floyd Alexander-Hunt is an overthinker – that much she admits at the start of her debut solo show, *Think Floyd*. It comes as no surprise, then, that Alexander-Hunt has put a lot of thought into her sold-out run at the Factory Theatre, as part of the Sydney Comedy Festival.

Alexander-Hunt is a University of Sydney graduate, having studied law (a famously hilarious degree) before deciding she'd rather be a stand-up comic rather than a solicitor. She's no stranger to comedy, having directed the 2019 Law Revue and performed at this year's Melbourne International Comedy Festival.

Alexander-Hunt's material spans the entirely mundane and the deeply personal, all delivered through her awkward, overthinking character. She sells her persona through the acute use of short silences; after she delivers a punchline, she'll tilt her head, narrow her eyes and collect herself briefly, before powering onto the next joke. It's a quirk that endears herself to the audience, even when recounting a cringeworthy story about modelling handbags at a charity fundraiser. A unique aspect of her act is her performance of classical violin to soundtrack imagined scenarios (such as Jack and Rose on the Titanic, if they were in a domestic argument).

Behind her bumbling exterior, Alexander-Hunt displays a whip-smart ability for comebacks, audience interaction and quick quips. She's a master of the one-two punch, hitting the audience with follow-up jokes (“I've been seeing someone ... my counsellor”), which enables her to draw unexpected analogies, like comparing a sex shop to Lush (“the staff are very intense”).

She excels when talking about family (her divorced parents, her siblings Romeo and Jupiter and her dog Lisa are recurring butts of the joke), relationships, dating and sex, in a way that would make your mother blush. Alexander-Hunt knows how to

go for the joke and pull back at the right moment. The intimate space also worked in Alexander-Hunt's favour, making the audience feel like they were in a casual, relatable conversation with a friend. A minor flaw, however, was that as her character didn't let up in spewing a stream of anxious thoughts, the audience needed more time in between to appreciate each joke.

Overall, Alexander-Hunt presented an enjoyable 60-minute romp through the inner workings of her interesting mind. With *Think Floyd* selling out, audiences will just have to wait to see what she does next.



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## President

### Swapnik Sanagavarapu

This week has been much quieter than the last, but I've been dealing with the fallout of last week's massive revelations of surveillance of student and staff activists by NSW Police and the University.

To start with, I want to give my most sincere thanks to Rose Jackson, MLC, for her speech in NSW Parliament this week. Her speech responded directly to the SRC's media release regarding

the revelations, and focussed in specifically on the use of undercover police and extensive intelligence networks. Rose was a former SRC President and NUS President, and her continuing support of the SRC and its activism is highly appreciated. Similar thanks must go to Jamie Parker, David Shoebridge and Jenny Leong, all of whom expressed their interest in supporting the SRC in this continuing fight. I've also been speaking to media

figures - I look forward to their stories coming out in the press in the near future.

Aside from this, I've been continuing work on SSAF for the SRC. The University has unfrozen contestable spending for the first time in two years, and the SRC is applying for a number of great projects including a space for students at the Conservatorium to study, a full time

assistant at the FoodHub and funding for Radical Sex and Consent Week.

Finally, I attended the annual Nakba Day rally at Town Hall. This is especially relevant in the context of increasing Israeli aggression against Palestinians and the ongoing attempts to displace Palestinians from Sheikh Jarrah.

Until next time,  
Swapnik

## General Secretaries

### Priya Gupta and Anne Zhao

Hello!

For the past few weeks we have been doing a range of things! We completed and submitted the SRC's SSAF Acquittal to the University, and are so glad to be done with that and moving onto bigger and better things! As we mentioned in our last report, the 12-week Semester Vote happened in the Academic Board at the start of May. We contacted staff and student members of the Board and made the case against the change from the point of view of undergraduate students. Now this is old news but we won! The vote didn't pass, with 7x as many

staff and students voting against the proposal!! This is wonderful news for undergrads, and it seems that for at least the next few years we are once again safe.

We are now working on applications for Contestable SSAF Funding. This is exciting because it is the first time since the beginning of COVID-19 that this pool of funding has been made available to us, and we hope to fund some important and necessary projects, including translating SRC resources into languages other than English so they can be used by the widest range of

students.

If you want a break from studying or want to get more involved in uni life, we highly recommend joining the Education Action Group (EAG). Members of the SRC recently uncovered that Uni Management knowingly allowed undercover police on to campus last year to suppress the protests against course cuts by the EAG, and were aware of the police's use of AI to monitor staff involved in this sustained fight. The EAG is organising a student fightback against the university's blatant disregard for the free speech and safety of its

students and staff, and more student power is always welcome!

We are also beginning to organise Radical Education Week for early next semester. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to learn things we aren't taught in our degrees, and sessions will be led both by external speakers and fellow students! If there is a topic you would like to hear about, feel free to let us know by emailing us ([general.secretary@src.usyd.edu.au](mailto:general.secretary@src.usyd.edu.au)) or messaging the Radical Education Week Facebook page.

Until next time,  
Priya and Anne

## Vice Presidents

### Roisin Murphy and Maria Ge

In recent weeks it has come to light that a number of departments and schools at our University, including Theatre and Performance Studies, Studies of Religion, the School of Literature, Art and Media, the School of Philosophical and

Historical Inquiry, are at incredible risk of being axed or restructured. There is, of course, a theme here. None of these are areas of study that our Government or VC would consider "Job Ready".

The SRC are going to fight tooth

and nail to save these departments, and prevent our Uni from further descent into a corporate degree factory.

We highly encourage you to get involved by attending the rally against these cuts on June 2 at 1pm, on Eastern

Avenue. If you can't make the protest but still want to support the cause, a great way to do so is by enrolling in a course in any of the aforementioned schools for next semester. We won the battle against 12 week sems, and we can win this one too.

## Disabilities and Carers Officers

### Margot Beavon-Collin and Sarah Korte

To new and old disabled students, we're Sarah and Margot. We're your office bearers for this year. We run the Disability Collective, which is an autonomous group on campus for disabled students to meet, organise, support one another, and push for a better, more accessible campus. We

also help liaise with the Caregivers Network, a group for students with informal caregiving responsibilities. If you'd like to get involved, email us at [disabilities.officers@src.usyd.edu.au](mailto:disabilities.officers@src.usyd.edu.au).

We're currently looking forward

to the event we're co-hosting with SignSoc, USyd's Auslan society. You can join, meet other Auslan users, or learn the language in a fun, safe environment. At the event, three short films in Auslan and BSL will be shown. It'll take place on April 21, at 5pm, in person and via Zoom.

It'll be a gold coin donation for DisCo members, and SignSoc members can come for free. For more info, check the Disability Collective Facebook page, or shoot us an email.

Have a good semester, and take care.

## Refugee Rights Officers

*Drew Beacom and Isabella D'Silva did not submit a report.*

## Sexual Harassment Officers

*Li (Kelsey) Jin, Courtney Daley and Hao (Raymond) Yan did not submit a report.*

## Superannuation Refunds for International Students



When you work in Australia, you will often earn superannuation (also known as 'super'), which is paid into a 'super fund' account by your employer. Superannuation is intended to help people in Australia pay for their retirement; the money in the super fund account is invested and usually you cannot withdraw it.

However, if you have worked and earned super while visiting Australia on a temporary visa, you can apply to have this super paid to you as a departing Australia superannuation payment (DASP) after you leave.

### Do I get superannuation?

Under the superannuation guarantee, employers have to pay superannuation contributions of 9.5% of an employee's ordinary time earnings if:

an employee is paid \$450 or more before tax in a month and is:  
over 18 years, or  
under 18 years and works over 30 hours a week.

For example, if I earn \$1000 (of ordinary time wages) at my job this month, an additional 9.5% of that, or \$95, will be paid into my super account by my employer. Payments do not always happen monthly; by law, superannuation has to be paid at least every 3 months into the employee's nominated account.

The superannuation guarantee applies to full-time and part-time employees and some casual employees, and **includes temporary residents**. What this means is that lots of international students who work here will accumulate super over their time in Australia. Sometimes, this can be thousands of dollars over the course of several years of work - definitely a significant amount of money!

### How can I get the money from my super when I leave Australia?

- Generally, you can claim a departing Australia superannuation payment (DASP) if the following apply:
- you accumulated superannuation while working in Australia on a temporary resident visa issued under the *Migration Act 1958* (excluding Subclasses 405 and 410)
- your visa has ceased to be in effect (for example, it has expired or been cancelled)
- you have left Australia and you do not hold any other active Australian visa
- you are not an Australian or New Zealand citizen, or a permanent resident of Australia.

If this sounds like your circumstances, you can probably claim a DASP. This money can be incredibly helpful to you when returning to your home country, as it can often be thousands of dollars.

If you think you are eligible to claim a DASP, it is definitely worth your time trying to get that money back, and you shouldn't wait too long either: If it has been six months or more since you left Australia, your visa has ceased to be in effect. If you have not claimed DASP, your super fund will transfer your super money to the ATO as unclaimed super money. After that point, the money is gone, so make sure you start planning to claim a DASP before you leave Australia!

For help with any information about your super payments, and claiming your super when you leave Australia, call 9660 5222 to make an appointment, or email your question to [help@src.usyd.edu.au](mailto:help@src.usyd.edu.au).

## Ask Abe

SRC caseworker help Q&A

### Student Financial Challenges



Hi Abe,

I need some financial help. I already get Youth Allowance (live at home rate), but it's not really enough to cover all my textbooks and living costs. I'm worried about the pressure that I'm putting on my parents and younger brother and sister. Can you tell me if there's some other way I can get a University loan or get the higher rate from Centrelink?

*Financially Challenged*

Hi Financially Challenged,

I'm sorry to hear about your struggle. It is certainly not uncommon. There are a few things you can do.

Look for secondhand textbooks or e-textbooks online or ask friends. If your lecturer tells you to buy the latest edition ask if the older edition will do.

The University has a Scholarships office with information on a wide range of scholarships, bursaries and awards. There are a few community scholarships available that SRC Caseworkers can tell you about. The University can also offer you interest free loans.

For more hints on food, health and entertainment, look at the SRC's Living on Little Money leaflet.

Abe

Don't miss the SRC's  
**Essential Student Guide to Living on Little Money!**

Available on the SRC website:  
[src.usyd.net.au/src-help/money/guide-to-living-on-little-money/](http://src.usyd.net.au/src-help/money/guide-to-living-on-little-money/)

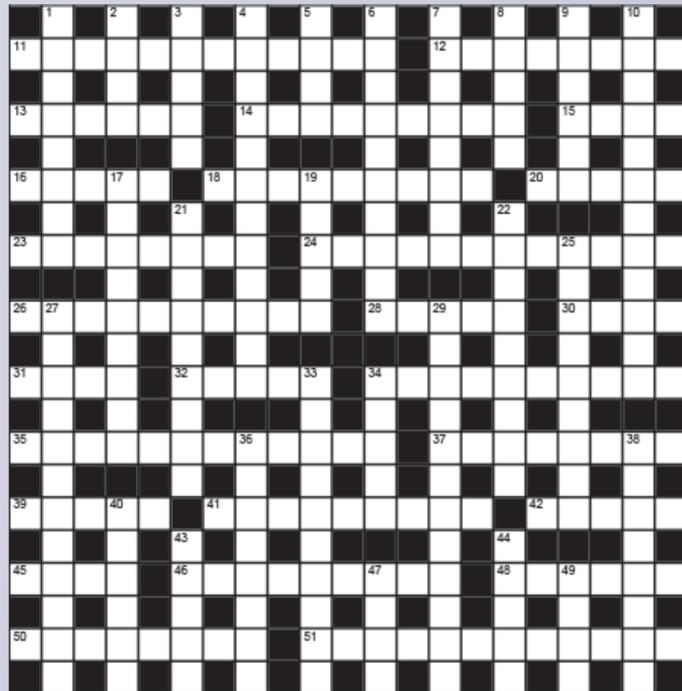
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[@src\\_sydneyuni](https://www.tiktok.com/@src_sydneyuni)

Crossword by Tournesol

# Omega Crossword



## Across

- 11 Dishonest, without morals (12)
- 12 Illegal (8)
- 13 Picture A (6)
- 14 Month of the year (9)
- 15 Picture B (4)
- 16 ? Bill goes on board with knives (5)
- 18 Band: One ... (9)
- 20 Burglary (5)
- 23 Relating to the Church of England (8)
- 24 A sci-fi film series or the toy robots on which it is based (12)
- 26 A place to find meaning (10)
- 28 Picture C (5)
- 30 12 o'clock in the day (formerly 3pm) (4)
- 31 ? Celebrity reportedly out of work (4)
- 32 Ooft, cringe (5)
- 34 ? Australian Reverend White pulls apart kiddies' soft toys (5,5)
- 35 ? Proceed with energy to yield a tangy, pulpy delight (7,5)
- 37 Satisfactory, enough to meet needs (8)
- 39 Baguette shop on campus (5)
- 41 Retrospect (9)
- 42 Sam, Tom, Roger, Toby's, et cetera (4)
- 45 Picture D (4)
- 46 Swimming pool soccer (5,4)
- 48 Sofa, couch (6)
- 50 Spicy Indian curry (8)
- 51 In the ordinary fashion, following the status quo (12)

## Down

- 1 Disconnect (typically referring to aeroplane seatbelts) (8)
- 2 A book of the New Testament (4)
- 3 ABBA song: ... Trouper (5)
- 4 ? (8,4)
- 5 ? Pay top dollar to exchange liquid lunch (4)
- 6 Bare necessities (10)
- 7 Wellingtons (8)
- 8 Plant life, Sleeping Beauty's pink-loving fairy (5)
- 9 Button, such as for a light (6)
- 10 What a knight wears (4,2,6)
- 17 Bullies, makes feel small (9)
- 19 ? Coming in brazen trysts (5)
- 21 Picture E (6-3)
- 22 Categories of the human frame (4,5)
- 25 ? Male Skywalker sounds like a dummy (9)
- 27 Capital of Indiana (12)
- 29 Cocktail made of whisky, bitters, water, sugar (3,9)
- 33 A movie's playlist (10)
- 34 An ethnic group of Rwanda and Burundi (5)
- 36 Rubbing, discord (8)
- 38 ? Let gamer interfere with cable (8)
- 40 Hip, à la mode (6)
- 43 ? First-rate expansion (5)
- 44 Picture F (5)
- 47 Porcine utterance (4)
- 49 Thick Japanese noodles (4)

Picture A



Picture D



Picture B



Picture E



Picture C



Picture F



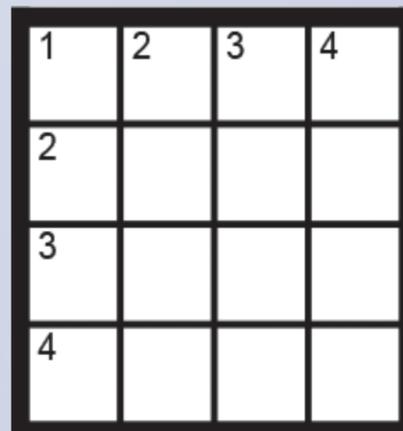
Cryptic clues are marked with a ?

## L for Latin Legends and Literature

All answers begin with the letter L. Quiz by Cloud Runner

1. Along with Octavian and Mark Antony, which Roman general was part of the so-called Second Triumvirate?
2. What modern European capital was part of the Roman province of Lusitania?
3. Which of the following famous female figures in Roman history lived last -- Lucretia, Lavinia, or Livia?
4. What Latin term can be used to describe the status of Latin in European scholarship and Christianity for most of the last two millennia?
5. Who authored the De Bello Civili, a Neronian epic about the civil war between Julius Caesar and Pompey the Great?
6. With a name meaning 'light-bringing', which Roman deity was the personification of the morning star?

THIS WAY OR THAT



- 1. Chunder
- 2. Flatbread
- 3. And others
- 4. One side of a room

Searching for answers? Go to [honisoit.com](http://honisoit.com)

# THE BOOT

## NTEU plot fails: police remain in pursuit of giant, novelty bubble tea statue

Marlow Hurst spills the tea.

After receiving a Dataminr alert late last night, NSW Police were informed that NTEU activists planned to use the large mobile boba statue outside of Manning House as a battering ram.

Upon police approach, activists were tipped off about their imminent arrival, at which point, NTEU Headkicker David Brophy mounted the novelty beverage and sped off down Physics Road.

While information is scarce, sources have told *The Boot* that the NTEU intended to breach the F23 building using the oversized bubble tea on wheels.

Police remain in pursuit, with Brophy last seen being towed down Eastern Avenue. Experts warn that the statue's straw is particularly dangerous.



## Ex Ice Skating Society president feels honoured to have been stacked by random faction

Marlow Hurst is skating on thin ice.

At yesterday afternoon's Ice Skating Society (IceSoc) AGM, President Abigail Winters was ousted after a pack of 25 factional hacks showed up to the meeting with a mean glint in their eyes.

campaign launch speech.

"I love ice. We do skate on the ice right?"

Winters considered it an honour though.

Following the AGM, IceSoc has suffered a schism, with a group of separatists called the "True Skaters" declaring the society compromised and pledging to register a rival Real Ice Skating Society.

"This is a dream come true." She told *The Boot*. "It's just like when Timothy Goebel landed three quad jumps in his 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics program: it was beautiful - beautiful yet deadly."

A University spokesperson warned students not to attend any ice skating adjacent campus events until the unrest had been quelled.

Walter Sturges, the newly elected President, fiercely rejected the accusation of stacking in his USU

"All it takes is one poisoned snow cone machine, and BAM, things could get a whole lot worse."

## Sexologists finally discover what Rawls meant by the 'Original Position' / p 666

## In this issue...

**OUTRAGEOUS!** - Student criticises system while engaging with it: later found dead on Eastern Avenue / p. 25

**ELECTION** - USU candidate Steve Orange ruined by inability to find rhyming slogan / p 61

**OOPS!** - Honi editor goes deaf after platforming too many voices / p 38

**SNAP, SNAP!** - The Quad declares bankruptcy after photos from confused tourists drop 460% / p 48

**GOOF!** - USU discovers they forgot to plug Manning in: "We were wondering why it never activated" / p 88w

**MAJOR MADNESS!** - IR student feels uncomfortable after not talking about China for more than 10 minutes / p 0

**LOONY LIBS** - Campus Liberal deludes themselves into thinking they're an independent after saying it just enough times / p \$%&



**src** activism  
advocacy  
representation



# MAY 21

## USYD STUDENT CONTINGENT

# CLIMATE STRIKE

### FUND OUR FUTURE NOT GAS

## 10:15 AM FISHER LIBRARY



CLIMATE  
JOBS NOW

ALWAYS WAS

DECOLONISATION IS  
CLIMATE JUSTICE  
STOP DESTROYING SACRED  
STOP BLACK DEATHS IN CUSTODY  
ASEN NSW



- 100% PUBLICLY OWNED RENEWABLE ENERGY BY 2030
- A JUST TRANSITION TO CLIMATE JOBS
- NO NEW COAL AND GAS PROJECTS & INDIGENOUS-LED LAND MANAGEMENT