

THARUNKA

Influence



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Issue. 02

Tharunka acknowledges the traditional custodians of this land, the Gadigal and Bedegal people of the Eora nation, on which our university now stands.



-ABOUT THE COVER-

Through this cover, I wanted to capture "Influence" as a ubiquitous force. I did this through the design of the oppressive city structure - with the blaring advertisements and towering buildings serving as representations of constant societal influence in our own lives, in terms of fashion, finance, and class.

-Aditya

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DEAR READER,

Hey there and welcome to *Influence*! In this issue of *Tharunka*, we consider where power lies in the world. Notwithstanding the disruption that COVID-19 has caused to our lives, *Tharunka* is forging on ahead to bring you a diverse range of student ideas, arguments and reflections for the quiet days ahead. In *Influence*, we divide our time between rigorous critiques of political power, meditations on our very human vulnerability to the structures that shape our habits and behaviours, and persuasive arguments laying out what we as students can do to push back.

When all we see on the news is a rising death toll and ever-more restrictive regulation of public activity, it's heartening to be reminded that there are actions we can take to bring people together. The 24-hour news cycle brings us ceaseless updates on the haphazardness of those in charge, of disagreements between Federal and State governments on school closures, and blame-shifting on the release of passengers from the Ruby Princess cruise ship into Sydney. At times like this I look around at our new generation of student writers and think, you know what? We've got this.

Immense thanks as ever to Jack, Jo, Axel and Saafiyah for all your hard work, and to each and every one of our writers and artists for the depth of your creativity and the sincerity of your reflections. I cannot overstate the value of the contributions that you are each making to the cultural life of our university and our broader social debate, at a time when they are most needed.



AXEL
Creatives Sub-Editor

Welcome to *Influence*, which here in Creatives Headquarters (a place well-equipped for isolation at the best of times), we're calling 'The One Where We Get Meta'. It's been a more chaotic production period than usual, but *Influence* is a testimony to the perseverance of story-telling - on an existential level, sure, but on a more literal level, to the perseverance of our contributors, which I might argue is more important. My deepest thanks to Luis, Madeleine, Rubana, Pranika, and Wen, who have given their words, time, and energy to Tharunka and who have been an absolute joy to work with. There is a beautiful juxtaposition in all of these works: the wealth of tenderness and sincerity coexists with a stark disregard for and destabilisation of the norm, in form, theme, and production of works. The state of the world - which is currently rather unsteady, fragile, and just a bit ridiculous - is always reflected in the arts, and *Influence's* creative writers have exhibited this beautifully.



JO
Online Sub-Editor

I've recently been bingeing *The Bold Type* and wishing that I was a character on the show, living a life of luxury in New York City while writing for a successful magazine. In a recent episode (spoiler alert!), it was announced that the fictional *Scarlet Magazine* would be stopping its monthly print issue for financial reasons, and be re-focusing their energy entirely onto the website.

And so last week, I sat in our (virtual) Tharunka meeting with a bitter sense of déjà vu. We were told that in this global pandemic, understandable cost-cutting measures need to be taken, and Tharunka Print will be no more.

Although this is a small loss in the scheme of a world health disaster, it is still disappointing that our little publication, that has been in print since 1953, has had to stop the printing press for this year. Although *Influence* will not receive a wide print run, I am still very proud of this issue and particularly the work of Jordan, Claire and Maha, who have each delivered excellent work with their own individual takes on "Influence". Although our print is stopping, our website, like that on *The Bold Type*, continues to grow. Stay tuned!



JACK
Features Sub-Editor

We are now going through unprecedented times: global panic, economic collapse, and social upheaval are all thick in the air. It has become frightfully easy to succumb to despair, hopelessness. This issue of Tharunka, *Influence*, showcases a diverse range of voices who have all resisted that temptation, instead offering strong, vigorous and critical perspectives on the important issues of our time. Thao Pham's exposing the pernicious influence of undisclosed donations on Australian politics. Juwariya Malik's analysis of the Bolivian coup highlights an all too familiar pattern of neo-liberal interference in Latin American politics. CJ Tulong's article takes aim at some dangerous weight loss trends propagated on social media. But on a more irreverent note, Nishant Pandav's hilarious satire may give us some idea of what exactly is going on at UNSW's upper management.

As the world dissolves into complete madness it has become the new normal to be totally out of whack at all times. Breakfast at noon, dinner at your desk, video calls in your pyjama pants and not knowing what day of the week it is. A hot tip - Be sure to wear pants when in video calls, you never know when you will have to get up to get the door...I am definitely not speaking from experience.

As the transition to digital became a reality, it somehow slipped my mind that Tharunka would endure the same fate, confined to the boundaries of the internet. Whilst that is pretty upsetting news, what's not is the amount of dedication and work put into this issue of Tharunka. Massive shout out to Aditya (who has literally defined the design of this magazine), Jelena, Rongxuan, Batool and Luis for making *Influence* a little more colourful.



SAAFIYAH
Graphic Designer

LIVING A SOCIAL MEDIA LIE

by Maha Rauf

Like most things in pop culture, the portrayal of our lives on social media, for the most part, is limited to the highlight reel.

All the complexity, the struggles and the inevitable 'low' points of our lives are almost always swept under the rug to make way for flashy aesthetically pleasing pictures. Usually, our social media accounts feature only positives; pictures of trips abroad posing in front of popular landmarks, carefully choreographed brunch photos, perfectly timed boomerangs with our best friends and heavily photoshopped selfies.

This social media charade pervades most of our lives and I'll be the first to admit that I'm an active participant in it.

I am guilty of living a social media lie.

And while I don't actually lie or intend to create a marketable facade, I do find that a lot of my behaviour is driven by the visibility of social media metrics.

I am embroiled in a trap of social signalling and most people I know are too.

Instagram has become a game of monopoly. Its an ultimately arbitrary exchange of likes and comments that satiates our human desire for validation.

And it's very problematic.

I am painfully aware of the repercussions of being invested in projecting a faux veneer of fun and happiness on social media, but I still struggle to stop. I have spent an absurd amount of time writing and editing and rewriting and re-editing what I hope are cool, quirky captions. I have spent ages adjusting the brightness, lux, filters and degree of saturation on my pictures before posting them. I also usually feel anxious once I've posted consider deleting the pictures after scrutinising every detail. If I decide against deleting, then for the next five minutes, it's a familiar, cyclical internal monologue of self-criticism and questioning.

It's exhausting and stupid. Yet it feels so important.

We spend so much time crafting and honing our social media existences and competing in futile signalling games like children in an overzealous race to adulthood.

We quantify our self-worth by likes and comments and are consistently plagued by FOMO and feelings of inadequacy because social media is essentially a breeding ground for these emotions.

I've always been fond of aesthetics and have a penchant for pretty looking things and beautiful pictures. So naturally, Instagram appeals to me in all its artful glory. I find it fun and interesting, a good form of connection, a good outlet for creativity, an inventory of significant events and an archive of memorable moments. But I also find it a regular and depressing reminder of every conceivable insecurity I have.

I am bombarded daily with photographic evidence of people who are far more accomplished, talented, successful, smarter, happier, better looking, better dressed and having more fun than I am.

It's deeply damaging to be exposed to the best of everyone else's lives all the time.

Instagram has, according to BBC news, secured a place as the "worst form of social media for mental health". My personal experience corroborates. this as my emotional wellbeing has been compromised by my obsessive use of Instagram.

And I know for a fact that my behaviour on Instagram is obsessive.

If I see something "instagrammable", i.e a pretty landscape, a well-presented meal, NOT immediately taking a picture feels like a dereliction of duty.

I don't want it to be this way, of course. I don't want to overshare or deceive in any way and that's partially the reason for my writing this; to address the very obvious fact that my life looks nothing like what it seems on Instagram.

I inhabit an almost completely different identity on Instagram.

Social media is a tool that enables access and aids the functioning of so many different spheres such as commerce, politics, development etc. However, I find that the impact it has on personal lives and the many inexplicable ways it drives our behaviour is a true testament to the breadth of its influence.

During the early hours of Monday 16th March, Professor Ian Jacobs, Vice Chancellor of UNSW was seen rushing into the international terminal of Sydney Airport. One of the SRC members camping in the bushes outside the Chancellery spotted Ian leaving the campus in a security van. The SRC member reported that at about 3:15am, some helpers including Professor Merlin Crossley, UNSW Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), were seen helping Ian push over 7 Coles trollies full of cash into the security van. This was followed by an elbow nudge between the VC and the Deputy VC (acad.).

The incident took place a few hours after the census date for UNSW had passed and the university had informed students of an active COVID-19 case on campus. A Management Board member, lured by a trail of cash planted by the SRC, confessed that Ian had initially planned on returning to his alma mater, University College London. He decided, instead, to go to a sparsely populated region in Scotland and wait out the pandemic. "Ian knew that it would only be a matter of time before new COVID-19 cases would emerge on campus. But he waited until the last moment to inform the university so that students wouldn't panic-withdraw from the courses." The board member was visibly angry after he realised that Ian hadn't left much cash for him.

Earlier in the year after the first member of UNSW community tested positive for COVID-19, Ian was seen roaming the campus, donning a kilt and playing a bagpipe. When a student tried to film him, he was heard screaming, "Oan yer trolley, you fkin' weapon!"**

The board meetings have been a mess, claimed the captured board member. "Ian has been incomprehensible. He has been practicing Scottish English for a while now and we've had to bring in a translator. He kept mentioning something about making money, so we let him be."

Ian's decision may have been influenced by the angry students and teaching staff at UNSW who started bullying him by waving a three-fingered salute and only giving him three-worded responses to all of his attempts to start a conversation. An ex-employee from the Chancellery claimed that Ian made them chant a 'Trimester Anthem' every morning for 10 weeks (a whole trimester) and made them watch videos of him talking about the benefits of trimesters which would soon be clear to the students. "He talked about making money from international students and how we could benefit by underpaying the teaching staff. I tried so hard and got so far in understanding him, but in the end money doesn't even matter." Management raised red flags after they saw the employee reading Marxist texts during his breaks. He has since been unemployed.

The post of VC at UNSW remains vacant at this point. There have been speculations about who would occupy it. MechSoc has been adamant about pressuring Johnny Sins into the post. It is also unclear what post Ian would assume at UCL as the institution is already working on a trimester calendar. Nevertheless, the students there are worried about the implications of his arrival and have taken to the streets to express their anger. The students' representative body has even written a formal request to Her Majesty The Queen, asking her to intervene.

The SRC member who spotted Ian followed him to the airport. When confronted, Ian was reported to have said: "We are confident that as UNSW3+ becomes established the benefits will become clear to our entire community." The SRC member was then taken into the Chancellery where they were shown videos about the benefits of UNSW3+. They were released after about 2 weeks of re-education. A senior SRC member was quoted saying, "We are lucky to have our comrade back, although now he won't shut up talking about the benefits of UNSW3+."

IAN JACOBS FLEES TO SCOTLAND

by Nishant Pandav (@NPaNium)

POLITICAL DARK MONEY:

*how a lack of transparency in
political contributions influences
policymaking*

By Thao Pham

I remember my first visit to the NSW Parliament. As the only representative from my local public school out west, visiting the city was an adventure. The 16-year-old me had the opportunity to listen to a discussion on women in Australian politics with an inspiring panel, one of whom was Jo Haylen MP, which made the day ever more exciting. Of course, there was also the chance to skip school.

I was starry-eyed hearing their political journeys, their struggles and their immeasurable support for women in power. I wanted to be where they were. I wanted to join their cause. I wanted to believe I could someday get to help those whom I represented. That dream ended faster than Emma Husar's political career.

The 2019 election was the first I had the opportunity to vote in and it turned out to be bittersweet. It was reported that more than \$100m in political donations was 'dark money', in other words, undisclosed, totalling 31.4% of all donations.¹ I'm confident to say that unless I attached money to my vote, whichever political party I chose would have only a fraction of care for the needs of myself and the community at large.

¹ Knaus, Christopher. 2020. "More Than \$100M Donated To Political Parties From Hidden Sources In Election Year". *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/feb/11/more-than-100m-donated-to-political-parties-from-hidden-sources-in-election-year>.

² "Transparency International - Australia". 2020. *Transparency International*. <https://www.transparency.org/country/AUS>.

³ Muller, Damon. "Election Funding And Disclosure In Australian States And Territories: A Quick Guide – Parliament Of Australia". 2020. *Parliament of Australia*. https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1819/Quick_Guides/ElectionFundingStates.

According to Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index,² Australia's score as of now is 77/100. Although we rank top 12th out of 180 countries it is our record low, having declined since 2012. This index is measured through data on bribery, division of funds, legal protection of whistle-blowers, ability to contain government etc. but does not include citizens' perception and experience of corruption, tax fraud, money-laundering, enablers of corruption or private sector corruption. This metric is not perfect but it effectively represents issues with public institutions, including political contributions.

Campaigns are expensive, I get it. But with a third of political donations being 'dark money', it can be seen as 'sketchy' at best and borderline unethical at worst. For federal political donations, any amount beyond \$13,800 must disclose its source (i.e. which organisation or lobby), but the number is not aggregated. This means a donor can continuously contribute amounts lower than \$13,800 and remain undisclosed to the public.³

There is a possibility of huge donations made through smaller amounts, but the lack of transparency makes it impossible to tell. It might be of interest to note that the Coalition received over \$65 million in dark money and the ALP received over \$25 million. Altogether, this has accumulated over the last two decades into a billion dollars in dark money whose background is unknown to the wider public.

The implications that dark money has had on policy through the years are hard to measure due to many anonymous receipts in federal donation and limited record-keeping laws. But it is easy to think of the possibilities if donation contributions are disclosed. For instance, let's look at two large industries which continuously lobby and donate to gain a large influence in government: fossil-fuels and pharmaceuticals.

It's plain as day that the fossil-fuel industry has large stakes in politics, but to what extent? Excluding Clive Palmer's self-donation through Mineralogy Pty Ltd, fossil-fuel companies donated a total of \$1,897,379 in 2018-19, jumping up 48% from the year before. However, there are estimates that the true figure could be five to ten times higher with the inclusion of dark money.⁴

Both major political parties receive donations from fossil-fuel companies. The Coalition took more than \$1,000,000 and the ALP over \$700,000.⁵ Government inaction in regards to carbon emissions has had devastating costs, as highlighted by the unprecedented destruction caused last bushfire season. The fires burned twice as much land as Black Friday, all to keep one of the biggest government donors happy.

The frustrating timeline of pushing and pulling regarding carbon tax policy goes back decades⁶, and is seeing no development. It is embarrassing how in-your-face and influential money is in our climate politics, with government overrun by lobbying and donations. 2008-09 saw the ALP attempt to introduce an emissions trading scheme, but they were faced with aggressive lobbying by the Mineral Council of Australia and the exaggerated danger of mass unemployment.

The events leading to the carbon tax implementation and the internal chaos of government leadership were later studied and conclusively summarised as "the power of collective action to distort national policy to serve sectoral self-interests."⁷ Today, Australia emits the seventh most CO₂ per capita in the world, according to the World Economic Forum.⁸ With the current political climate, this seems hardly likely to change.

A less publicised industry with an immense influence is Big Pharma, who lobby intensely and contribute political donations under tight secrecy. Australia's healthcare system under the National Medicines Policy is based on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), which allows Australian residents to access subsidised prescription drugs. In 2017, a Grattan Institute Report found that Australians are paying 3.7 times higher than global benchmark, unnecessarily increasing the cost of the PBS by half a billion dollars.⁹

Medicine prices are still too expensive for the chronically ill under the PBS.

The Grattan Institute report also found the pharmaceutical industry is given great access over individual policies, including a case where industry lobby groups were in the very same rooms as the federal government when developing therapeutic pricing policy. Additionally, experts in pharmaceutical policy have indicated an overall lowering of standards when bringing new drugs onto the market, using emotive lobbying through "grassroots" consumer groups to "fast-track" particular drugs.

⁴ Fleming, Sean. "Chart Of The Day: These Countries Create Most Of The World's CO₂ Emissions". 2020. *World Economic Forum*. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/06/chart-of-the-day-these-countries-create-most-of-the-world-s-co2-emissions/>.

⁹ McIlroy, Tom. 2020. "Australians Paying Four Times Above International Prices For Drugs: Grattan Institute Report". *The Sydney Morning Herald*. <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/australians-paying-four-times-above-international-prices-for-drugs-grattan-institute-report-20170305-guqx3c.html>.

¹⁰ Knaus, Christopher, and Nick Evershed. 2020. "Pharmaceutical Industry Donates Millions To Both Australian Political Parties". *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/sep/25/pharmaceutical-industry-donates-millions-to-both-australian-political-parties>.

¹¹ Ross, Monique. "Some Say It Could Bring Down A Government, But You Have Probably Never Heard Of This Lobby Group". 2020. *ABC News*. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-06-20/pharmacy-guild-lobby-wields-great-political-power/11217028>.

⁴"Australia's Major Political Parties, Brought To You By Fossil Fuels! | Market Forces". 2020. *Marketforces.Org.Au*. <https://www.marketforces.org.au/politicaldonations2020/>.

⁵"Donations Data Reveals Scale Of Coal And Gas Industry Efforts To Influence Australian Politics". 2020. *Australian Conservation Foundation*. https://www.acf.org.au/donations_data_reveals_scale_of_coal_and_gas_industry_efforts_to_influence_australian_politics.

⁶ "Timeline: Carbon Tax In Australia". 2020. *ABC News*. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-07-10/carbon-tax-timeline/5569118_.

⁷ John C.V. Pezzey, Salim Mazouz and Frank Jotzo, The logic of collective action and Australia's climate policy, *Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*, 54, 2 (2010)

One of the industry's largest lobbyists, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, can be regarded as "the most influential force in the health system".¹⁰ They have advocated and helped to implement numerous policies that serve the best interest of only Big Pharma. For example, 'location laws' dictate that new pharmacies cannot be within 1.5km of other pharmacies, and must be either within 500m of both a medical practitioner and a small supermarket, or within 500m of a large supermarket.

These laws have restricted sales, making the industry less competitive, and have arguably cost consumers more.¹¹ However, because the pharmaceutical industry largely works under strict confidentiality and behind tightly closed doors, there is little knowledge of how deep their roots are in politics and therefore little scrutiny on the industry.

For the next federal election, your vote will probably contribute to getting the party of your choice in power, but consider chucking in a couple million to actually have any chance of getting policymaking done the people's way.

HOW PASTORAL LEASES DESTROYED THE AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPE

By Claire Angelica

In the 1800s, the British Crown was faced with the problem of governing a surge in squatting in Australia. Squatters were settlers who squatted in what was called the Crown's "waste lands" (which meant outside the colony boundaries). They would graze cattle and sheep and with the growing wool industry, squatting became a lucrative enterprise, to the extent that they were even labelled their own social class: the "Squattocracy". Famous families of the Squattocracy include the Kidman family (yes, related to Nicole Kidman), who at the height of their power squatted across 107,000 square miles in Central Australia.

Colonial officers were perplexed as to how they could control, "persons hanging on the Frontiers" of the colonies "to which there is no known or assignable limits" (Reynolds & Dalziel 1996). The fraudulent British landlord, Madame Crown, was not happy. And in 1846, Imperial legislation granted the Australian colonies permission to give out leases, so these Squatters would squat no more! Begone, we now appoint thee a Pastoralist! Under a Pastoral Lease, Madame Crown could now assert Imperial influence and continue to make revenue from her throne across the seas.

Renting the land had other benefits for Madame Crown, namely mediating Frontier violence. In the New South Wales colony, maintaining government control over the settlers was serious business. There was concern that if the squatters/pastoralists believed they had permanent "freehold" rights to the land, frontier violence would erupt immeasurably. The brutality of frontier homicide was a significant concern for the public safety. Bloodshed, rape and murder marked most interactions between Indigenous people and settlers. Imperial mediation presented itself in the form of an Order in Council that amended provisions of the Pastoral Lease legislation to include rights of Aboriginal people to access their land.

In effect for 6 years, "The Order in the Council authorised the Governor to insert in all future leases such conditions as would prevent the injury to the public that would result in the absolute exclusion of Aboriginal people from lands held under pastoral lease". (Reynolds & Dalziel, 1996)

According to historian Henry Reynolds, the NSW Governor Gipps made measures to protect all persons, “to prevent violence upon and by Aborigines in the pastoral districts” (Reynolds & Dalziel, 1996). In 1855 the Imperial Land Acts were repealed and replaced by the New South Wales Constitution Act, which also brought the removal of any reference to Aboriginal people in Pastoral Leases. In my research I could not find further reference to Aboriginal people in government legislation until the 1993 Native Title Act that followed the 1992 Mabo decision.

The amendment is interesting because on one hand it's an intervention against Frontier homicide. But on the other, it extended Imperial influence over the sort of interactions that Madame Crown wanted between Aboriginal people and settlers.

Historian Patrick Wolfe argues that the reshaping and subsumption of territory by the settlers are crucial characteristics of settler-colonialism. Turning Squatters into Pastoral Lease owners is a tactic that helps extend the boundaries of British settlement. According to Wolfe, “rather than something separate from or running counter to the colonial state [...] the frontier rabble constitutes its principle means of expansion [...] once the dust is settled, the irregular acts that took place have been regularised” (Wolfe, 2006).

Pastoral Leases mark the legalisation of squatting. It's an insightful example of what settler-colonialism looks like, how it eats and breathes: lawlessness authorised lawfulness. Madame Crown extending her colonial ownership, and simultaneously mediating Aboriginal-settler conflict to ultimately secure her power over the land. This is the scary prowess of settler-colonialism.

Traditionally the pastoral industry looked like Hugh Jackman driving cattle from point A to B, pretty much reliant on Indigenous knowledge of the land, as romanticised in Baz Luhrmann's, *Australia*. Today, Pastoral Leases make up 44% of the Australian continent and have been further extended beyond Pastoralism, to the Mining and Tourism industries.

In the first chapter of First Nation writer Bruce Pascoe's 2014 book *Dark Emu*, we learn about the destruction of Yam Daisy ('Myrnong') farming, due to European livestock. Once a prolific vegetable in the Indigenous agricultural economy, Pascoe writes about how the particular teeth of cattle allowed them to eat the growth right to the ground and their hooves. One of the most poignant passages from *Dark Emu* quotes an observation by Archaeologist David Frankel of, “numerous mounds with short spaces between each, and right angles to the ridge's slope. It is conclusive evidence of the work of human hands extending over a series of years” (Pascoe, 2014). This is an observation of terracing practiced in Yam Daisy farming by Indigenous people.

The consequences of such techniques are nothing less than sublime. The following passages describe earth flourishing with orchids, lilies and mosses among grain crop. So fertile that horses' hooves would sink. In *Dark Emu*, Pascoe has gathered diary and notebook entries from the settler colonial period to create an archive that reveals a story of a landscape activated by a rich agricultural economy that connects directly to its wellbeing.

We also learn about the devastating impacts of a humble hoof on the unique soil compositions of this landscape. Invasion is not an event, but an ongoing production and in this case performed in the theatre of a Pastoral Lease, the leading actors (cows and sheep), the executive producer (the Pastoralist) and the director (Madame Crown). Very quickly it becomes clear that 44% of Australia has probably been stamped out by pastoral feet. That ought to have changed the climate.

“Once the soil hardened, rains ran off the compacted surfaces, and rivers flooded higher than the Aboriginal people had ever seen. This created a new management problem for the soils of this district” (Pascoe, 2014)

Settler-colonialism is a land-centred project. It works to eliminate Indigenous societies, in the presence or absence of formal states or nations (Wolfe, 2006). But it is not just in the state lines or boundaries that it exists. No, what distinguishes settler-colonialism from colonialism is the ability to go beyond exploiting and feeding off the host. It is beyond parasitic. It is the ability to reconstruct and rebuild the host for its own purposes.

What is the extent of the damage? How much has been transformed by Pastoral Leases, the industry it licenced and those god damn hooves it invited? Settler-colonialism has been stomped into the 44% of earth beneath our feet! An entire agricultural economy older than the annals of time, annihilated by cow teeth and feet!

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HOW THE RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION BILL CONTRADICTS THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

by Rory Coverdale

A person in the Bible asked Christ what the most important commandment was, and He identified two, not saying that one was more important than the other. The second was "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31, N.L.T.).¹ Everyone is our neighbour, and discrimination against anyone, for any reason, is a sin.

The other commandment was: "The LORD our God is the one and only LORD. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength." (Mark 12:29-30, N.L.T.) We are told to believe in God and be devoted to faith, and to love our neighbours, at the same time, by the same person. It is my view that both are violated by the Government's proposed *Religious Discrimination Bill 2019*.

The stated aims of the Bill include making everyone equal before the law, without regard to religious 'activity or belief'.² Amongst other provisions, the Bill would make it so that "statements of faith", a term defined as anything that a reasonable person would consider to be a part of the speaker's faith, don't constitute discrimination. It is not enforcing itself through a Religious Discrimination Commissioner, but a Freedom of Religion Commissioner.³ The Civil Aviation Authority, through their own regulations and if it is necessary for 'the safety of air navigation', will also have the ability to violate the Bill if they deem it necessary.⁴ How many of us would feel comfortable violating our faiths to satisfy airport security?

Because of the emphasis on freedom to act, the Bill faces a large problem: God does not want us to discriminate and He does not want governments to tolerate our wrongdoing.

In Exodus 32:1-29, we are told how Aaron looked to appease a society, scared that God had abandoned them, by creating a false God for them

to worship as the real LORD. Obviously, it was not and, like this Bill, it was a direct violation of God's commandments. In fact, Aaron knew he was lying, but had to give the people hope. Like this, a Bill which removes protections against discrimination is no way to get closer to God.

(I am only able to speak about my own faith and what it teaches, and not majorly aware of the teachings of other faiths.)

There is no history in the Bible of God discriminating- why would He? He wants a relationship with all of His creation. But we cannot have a relationship with God if we place faith in other things- either golden calves, religious discrimination laws, or even the split-second judgement that we make of other people. It is also true that the Bill will strip the government of the ability to deter, or punish, discrimination against Australia's residents. If we believe and act on the knowledge that God is satisfied with a government that is openly silent as His children are being persecuted, what then?

But, our error is not inevitable. The unnamed person in the Bible accepted and understood that loving God and loving our neighbours was God's will (Mark 12:32-33). When He did this, Christ told Him "You are not far from the Kingdom of God." (Mark 12:34, N.L.T.). While we are unable to see Jesus in the flesh, we can still obey what He has told us. Our lives are only temporary, but they still matter, and God can still use them. One can only pray against the Bill, and show the love needed to the people who may be lacking it.

Thanks to Michael Quinlan and Lydia Shelley for providing some of the inspiration here, and to the Attorney-General's Office's website for showing the second-exposure drafts of the Bill and related legislation. See Shelley's article in The Guardian, 'We're being sold a convenient lie in the religious discrimination debate', for further reading.

¹ N.L.T. is the New Living Translation, by Tyndale House Publishers.

² The Bill, s. 3 (1) (b), 2nd Exposure.

³ The Bill, s. 46, 2nd Exposure.

⁴ *Religious Discrimination (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2019*, Schedule 1.14, 2nd Exposure.

SPILLING THE TEA ON INSTAGRAM'S DETOX TEA OBSESSION

by CJ Tulong

Instagram users may have come across influencers or celebrities promoting so-called 'detox teas' or 'slimming teas', where the products are said to give instant weight loss results. However, the rise of detox tea advertisements have sparked criticism. One notable instance occurred in 2019 when Jameela Jamil, actress from *The Good Place*, criticised Khloe Kardashian's Instagram endorsement of Flat Tummy Tea.¹ Replying to Kardashian's post, Jamil wrote:

"If you're too irresponsible to:

- a) *own up to the fact that you have a personal trainer, nutritionist, probable chef, and a surgeon to achieve your aesthetic, rather than this laxative product... And*
- b) *tell them the side effects of this NON-FDA approved product, that most doctors are saying aren't healthy,*

Then I guess I have to."

A few months after the incident, Jamil was interviewed by Elle UK regarding her vocal criticisms towards the weight loss industry, which resulted in a petition calling Instagram to ban social media platforms from promoting weight loss products.² This highlighted how social media's influence can damage self-esteem in its users, especially young women.

There are two reasons why it is dangerous for influencers and celebrities to promote detox teas. Firstly, these detox teas carry little to no scientific evidence that supports their claim. Some ingredients are dangerous when consumed in excessive amounts. Jebeile and Paxton note that products that are marketed as "miraculous weight loss" solutions such as detox teas contain laxative properties that can cause dehydration.³ Furthermore, certain components cause severe side effects such as abdominal cramps, diarrhoea, and muscle spasms from electrolyte imbalance.⁴

Another concern is that detox teas perpetuate the 'thin is beautiful' narrative that negatively affects body image. While numerous studies have been conducted on the media's influence on body image, Cohen et al. found that social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram further perpetuate the idealised thin body via curated messages and pictures.⁵ Holland and Tiggemann also found that these curated images contributed to body image concerns.⁶ As a result, the constant marketing of detox teas emphasises the idealised thin body narrative, which leads to young people struggling with their body image.

The negative influence of social media platforms on users' self-esteem indicates that these platforms have a responsibility to their users. This leads into a serious question - are social media platforms doing enough to monitor their content? According to Jameela Jamil's interview with Elle UK, Instagram began releasing two key policies revolving detox teas: prohibiting minors from viewing weight loss and cosmetic surgery-related products and banning posts with 'miraculous claims' on diet and weight loss. While both policies can be seen as a stepping stone into regulating Instagram's content, there are concerns over users finding loopholes to promote unhealthy diet methods. According to Gerrard, a blanket ban does not eliminate negative contents altogether.⁷ Therefore, social media companies should consider methods to regulate non-hashtag posts as well.

In short, there is nothing inherently wrong for those who want to improve their diet and exercise habits. However, one must be careful not to be lured by detox teas that promises instant results. We as social media users have the responsibility to exercise caution while online. While influencers and public figures have an impact on their followers, it is possible for the reverse to happen when their own followers influence them through critique and discussion. This is how we users can shift the narrative of social media's beauty standards.

¹ McNamara, B. (2019). Jameela Jamil Called Out Khloé Kardashian and a Detox Tea Company For Promoting Unhealthy. Teen Vogue. Retrieved from <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/jameela-jamil-khloe-kardashian-detox-tea>.

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⁴ Cirino, E. (2019). Detox Tea: Side Effects, Purported Benefits, and How They Work. Retrieved 18 March 2020, from <https://www.healthline.com/health/detox-tea-side-effects#side-effects>.

⁵ Cohen, R., Fardouly, J., Newton-John, T., & Slater, A. (2019). #BoPo on Instagram: An experimental investigation of the effects of viewing body positive content on young women's mood and body image. *New Media & Society*, 21(7), 1546-1564. doi: 10.1177/1461444819826530.

⁶ Ibid., 1548.

⁷ Gerrard, Y. (2018). Beyond the hashtag: Circumventing content moderation on social media. *New Media & Society*, 20(12), 4492-4511. doi: 10.1177/1461444818776611.



SPACE: THE FINAL NEXT FRONTIER

by Jordan Barnes

The news cycle at the start of this new decade has undoubtedly been dominated by very earthly concerns: the spread of COVID-19, the US Democratic Primary race, Lady Gaga releasing 'Stupid Love', etc, etc. However, what has largely escaped media scrutiny as a result is a profound development in one of the most important emerging fields of influence in the last decade: the creation of the United States Space Force.

In signing the Space Force into US military policy in late-December 2019, Donald Trump has taken an (excuse the pun) enormous leap into militarising one of humanity's last domains untouched by the influence of war. In doing so he also joins a number of other international actors, both public and private, looking to exert influence into the great unknown. Elon Musk's SpaceX, Virgin Galactic and even the Australian Government (did you know we opened a space agency in 2018?) are all realising the potential of outer space for economic and political profit and are acting accordingly.

But how will this affect our lives? In a cultural landscape dominated by global pandemics and climate change, what can outer space bring to the table? These questions will become more and more pressing as we move further into the 2020s.

WHAT EXACTLY IS THE SPACE FORCE?

On the 20th of December 2019, Donald Trump signed the 2020 National Defence Authorisation Act, establishing the United States Space Force (USSF) as the sixth branch of the US military. However, despite the Star Trek-esque name and Trump's

militaristic fanfare, the Space Force is not actually the army-in-rocketships it may appear to be. Rather, it's simply a re-classification of the already existing US Air Force Space Command as an independent service, still under the remit of the US Air Force (Koren, 2020).

In meetings with the US National Space Council way back in 2018, Trump outlined his goal for the force to be the front line of America's "dominance in space", implying its participation in some form of futuristic space combat, but the truth is far more banal (Ferreira, 2018). The Space Force will do much the same work as the Air Force Space Command, mostly to do with upkeep and monitoring data collected by US military satellites (Koren, 2020). However, even if the force is not guns (lasers?) ablaze just yet, that Trump characterised space as a "warfighting domain, just like the land, air and sea" in the same meeting is deeply troubling, and such goals mark a notable shift in how countries have approached space in the past (Ferreira, 2018).

While mid-20th century Space Race between the US and the USSR was no doubt tinged by the militaristic interests of the Cold War, national governments have in the past championed outer space as a shared domain for the mutual benefit of humanity. This sentiment is encoded into the Outer Space Treaty (OST), a UN treaty originally signed into force in 1967 which has since been ratified by 109 countries (UNODA, 2020). The leading piece of international law governing space, the OST bans the transport of weapons of mass destruction through space as well as the establishment of military bases on celestial bodies like the Moon (UNOOSA, 2020). The Space Force technically doesn't break any of the OST's articles, but if Trump continues to champion it as a means of US "dominance" in space, then it certainly could in the future.

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AND 'OWNERSHIP' IN SPACE

One area in which the Outer Space Treaty is decidedly less specific is that of private enterprise. The treaty was drafted way back in 1967 and hasn't seen really any adjustment since then. It is thus woefully outdated and, as in the case of private enterprise, entirely inadequate for the regulation of space and the actors influencing it. While it does state that countries may not claim sovereignty over territory in space, this hasn't stopped private companies pushing these vague boundaries in specific ways, like Moon Express seeking to mine the Moon for water and Deep Space Industries prospecting asteroids.

Of course, one can't mention 'space' and 'private enterprise' in the same sentence without thinking of Elon Musk and SpaceX, arguable the most prominent private company in the outer space industry. Over the last few years, Musk has made extravagant claims about SpaceX's future goals, which include private voyages to the moon and eventually un-manned and manned expeditions to Mars (SpaceX, 2020). While none of these

goals are necessarily bad, it is concerning that such pivotal future moments in humanity's space history (like landing a human on Mars) could be entirely privatised. The Outer Space Treaty's inability to regulate how private companies like SpaceX exert influence in space is, for lack of a better word, inconvenient, with countries like the US resorting to drafting national legislation that allows their citizens to mine celestial bodies for resources (Cookson, 2020).

Unless an intergovernmental actor, like the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) for example, were to draft a new treaty that properly regulates space how it ought to be regulated in the 2020s, we may end up with an international space law regime made up entirely of national laws that only seek to benefit individual countries' citizens and national corporations.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME RIGHT NOW?

I know it can be difficult to imagine the relevance of outer space when we're all locked up in our homes, knowing that once the global pandemic has passed, we'll be right back to worrying about climate change. But I feel like that's precisely why space is so important. Earth is our home, but further development into outer space activities may prove vital if climate change renders our home unliveable. Thus, when we start to rely on potential resources from the Moon or the ability to live on Mars, the proper regulation of the laws and accountability mechanisms that bind the actors that are exerting influence in this space become exponentially more significant.

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ELON MUSK & THE BOLIVIAN COUP – INNOCENT BUSINESSMAN OR OPPORTUNISTIC NEO-COLONISER?

by Juwariya Malik

In November 2019, Bolivia was upheaved in a coup that saw the military prompt the resignation of indigenous President Evo Morales of the Movement for Socialism (MAS) party, with Jeanine Anez, a far-right religious

¹ Conese, Ignacio. "Was Bolivia's Coup over Lithium?" TRTWORLD. <https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/was-bolivia-s-coup-over-lithium-32033>; Manzanaro, Cereceda & Amiel. "Was Bolivia's ousting of Evo Morales a coup by the US for lithium?" Euronews. <https://www.euronews.com/2019/11/21/does-bolivia-s-ouster-of-morales-have-anything-to-do-with-lithium>

² Manzanaro, Cereceda & Amiel. "Was Bolivia's ousting of Evo Morales a coup by the US for lithium?" Euronews. <https://www.euronews.com/2019/11/21/does-bolivia-s-ouster-of-morales-have-anything-to-do-with-lithium>

conservative, replacing him. The coup was spurred by allegations of electoral interference which led to Morales' victory in the 20 October presidential elections, but these remain unproven.

International journalists and political editors have speculated that the primary reason behind the coup by is the 'lithium theory.' Bolivia's lithium resources comprise the world's largest reserves.¹

This lithium is essential for the production of smartphones, laptop batteries and - most importantly - electric cars. It is also essential to the continued production and operation of Tesla products, whose CEO is none other than Elon Musk. It is referred to as 'white gold' due to its critical part in creation of renewable energy, with increasing demand since 2016.²

The theory begins with analysis of Morales' resource nationalisation policy to ensure government control of lithium resources. Morales believed that this would minimise foreign exploitation of national reserves, benefiting the Bolivian people and taking profits away from transnational entities such as Eramet (a French company), FMC (a US company) and Posco (a South Korean company), which had moved to Argentina to pursue more profitable lithium-mining.³

When Bolivia made plans with a Chinese investment firm to mine the lithium and share its profits, the transnational mining companies found the new socio-economic compact. These companies would undoubtedly lose power and influence in the global sphere if a new mining relationship was created which benefited the indigenous populations.⁴ Among the companies that had exhibited interest in a direct stake in Bolivian lithium was Tesla. But it would be impossible for Tesla to establish a deal within Morales' nationalisation program, thus placing the Bolivian president as an impediment to the procurement of lithium.

The claim made here is that the coup was financed by Musk and/or other U.S backed militias to ensure the beneficial procurement of lithium reserves without the obstacle of Morales or his nationalising policies.⁵ What 'proves' this even further is that after the coup, lithium reserves were 'returned' to transnational entities, a backflip from the indigenous-benefiting nationalising policies of Evo Morales.⁶ Simultaneously, Tesla stocks climbed exponentially, and the boost has continued.⁷

During his term, Morales had cancelled an agreement with a German transnational entity known as ACISA, which provides batteries for Tesla. After his decision to cancel the agreement, the German company allegedly told Deutsche Welle (DW) that the company was 'confident that our lithium project will be resumed after a phase of political calmness and clarification'.⁸ Soon after the coup occurred, which saw the institution of a far-right government in Bolivia, the provision of lithium to transnational entities resumed. Subsequently, Musk announced the establishment of new factory in Germany.⁹

Many of these claims cannot be proven, given the secretive and classified nature of international deals and the coup itself. Nonetheless, if they were to be proven, public perceptions of Tesla as a responsible corporation would suffer. However, at the same time, many transnational organisations such as Nike and Apple have continued to utilise 'sweatshop' factories, including child labour, with some negative PR but a maintenance of overall profit and sales.¹⁰ So the question remains, how willing are individuals to boycott unethical corporations with a wealth of influence at the risk of leaving their own comfort zones?

Whether this is merely conspiracy spurred by a few political editors and Bolivian social media, or has semblance of some truth, there is no denying the existence of competition over profitable resources. We can only hope that international actors have learnt from the past and will be fair and equitable in all their dealings to preserve a harmonious international society.

³ Prashad, Vijay. "After Morales Ousted in Coup, the Lithium Question Looms Large in Bolivia" Common Dreams. <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2019/11/12/after-morales-ousted-coup-lithium-question-looms-large-bolivia>

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Will Scotty. LOOKS LIKE YOU CAN'T ESCAPE TO HAWAII NOW, CAN YOU?

by Shajara Khan

The vague nature of COVID-19 has created a storm of panic and confusion across the globe. Australia is no exception. Panic buying of toilet paper, flour, and pasta have turned supermarkets into gladiator arenas.

None of this panic is aided by the government's lacklustre response to the spread of the virus. After weeks of downplaying the severity and lethality of COVID-19, the Morrison government has enacted some measures – albeit fairly meagre in comparison to other countries who have put in place strict lockdown laws in order to #flattenthecurve. From 17 March, the federal government's stance on COVID-19 has ramped up in terms of urgency, but it has not been enough to curb the spread of the virus.

The government's strategy of focussing on economic compensation in the fight against COVID-19 is a kind gesture for those who will face an extreme financial burden, but it is not going to alleviate the burden the healthcare sector is already facing.

It is in the healthcare sector where the largest trauma is being felt, with doctors and nurses having to turn away those who present flu-like symptoms at the hospital due to the lack of testing kits. Stringent criteria are limiting tests to people who have returned from overseas in the last month, and display flu-like symptoms.

Speaking to ABC News, immunologist John Dwyer warns of a lack of available testing kits, and cautions that tests take up to three days to provide results. Newer testing kits have been developed that provide results in 15 minutes, but again, widespread testing is not being conducted and the Federal Government has not given any indication that testing will increase in the foreseeable future.

It is not just testing kits that are in short supply; disposable masks are also being rationed at hospitals and clinics nationwide. The World Health Organisation (WHO) have urged the public to reserve masks for those who are presenting symptoms or those who are caring for patients with COVID-19. Again, the Morrison government has not addressed how they will combat the lack of resources for medical staff.

Schools have also felt the burden of COVID-19: the initial stance was that as an essential service, particularly for parents who work in the healthcare sector, school buildings would not be shut down and moved to online classrooms. Scott Morrison went so far as to threaten schools who did shut down with fines. This led to #closeschoolsnow and #shuttheschools to be trending topics on Twitter during this past week.

However, in the span of four days, the federal government has allowed for states to shut down all schools, effective from 24 March. Whether this was due to those trending hashtags or the fact that the number of confirmed cases nearly doubled within a week, we will never know...

In the span of a single week, the nation has witnessed their leader go from proudly announcing his attendance at an NRL match in defiance of all logical reasoning, to enacting lockdown policies that have been described as "draconian". During the bushfire crisis, Scott Morrison and his Cabinet showed Australia that their strategy in a crisis was to retreat and only face accountability when they had no other option. They are doing the same in the face of the COVID-19 emergency that has been public knowledge since January.

AGAINST AUSTRALIA:

A Call for Indigenous Sovereignty

By Gloria Guo

As more privileged Australians were confronted this year with apocalyptic scenes of raging fires, choking cities, and empty rivers which Aboriginal people have faced since colonisation, a movement for Indigenous sovereignty continued to emerge. At this year's Invasion Day/Survival Day rally in Sydney, I listened as Alice Haines, one of the speakers, strongly condemned the Australian government: "Our land is on fire because of lack of management where the government has assumed ownership over lands we did not sell, and they have completely desecrated our lands and waters." Another speaker invited non-Indigenous Australians to join the movement against the incarceration and killings of Indigenous people, and the destruction of the environment.

SUGAR



CONTENT WARNING:
SUBSTANCE
ADDICTION

Sometimes, the air tastes so sweet,
like a mouthful of cotton candy.
As it rots my teeth I can't help but think,
I am a child, naive,
allured by simple pleasures.
If I could, I would,
sacrifice this confection
for something more nourishing.
But then I think,
What of those who cannot enjoy this delightful decay?
I must seize it and hold it, bite down, never let go,
if only for them.
I will fall into the comforting lap of my vices
until one day, it all runs dry
and the bitter taste that's been there all along remains.

Luis Lopez

LIFELINE: 13 11 14
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS: 1300 652 820 OR 0488 811 247
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS: 1300 22 22 22

TRUNCATED

Wilted like blackened
fingerprints on lilly skin
and all that remains

Sixteen and restless
Did it matter? Where your words
paused and mine began?

What dreams did fill our
hearts when all we'd do was lie
awake at dusk. Don't

Let the sun go down.
I'm a thousand words away.
O light reveal me.

For our tongues were tied;
my eyes closed. I'm reminded
you were still alive.

We dared to believe
we danced the fine line between
naïve and reckless

We dared kill the dawn
Unrelenting dawn. Breaking
where darkness finds you.

We dared to hold on
A tethered rope between hands
But I was too scared

As if your bleeding
hands were not enough to keep
my feet from falling

Phoebe Au



Shape of I

by Wen Yu Yang

It started when I fell from my mother.

I was big, so naturally, the ground took a hard hit. Pebbles screamed and scattered. The ground shrank as far as possible. And there I was. Tall and awkward, an unpleasant presence that was hard to ignore.

As the days passed by, I would sneak glances behind me, where mother stood, watching, her presence dominating the narrow valley. I wished I had wings like the sparrows who swooped freely between arches and caves, wings that would take me back to the crook, crested between soft moss and vines.

The more the days passed by, the more I ached for those wings. Not that it'd make a difference - I could no longer balance on that ledge as I once had. The crook had reshaped itself before I had fully comprehended what was happening, or perhaps something had reshaped me. It was hard to tell.

The pebbles despised me. They chattered amongst themselves when winds and rain travelled by the valley, knowing that I wouldn't be able to hear over the howls and roars of the rowdy crew. As more of them passed by the valley, I prayed that I'd grow smaller. Insignificance was easier than scorn.

recognised the awkward angles, the impossibly crude lines and the painful curves in places that looked as if they'd been pummelled. My shadow, my reflection, my double, surrounded by its own cluster of pebbles. We were designed to do nothing but watch one another, a river apart.

The river was a silver ribbon that graced the valley. It sang its soul, a shimmering veil that warped around the merry tunes of rainbow-winged thrushes. Fish, gold, red, blue, green, raced as far as I could see, unhindered and alive. How I envied their glistening scales, their nimble bodies. I stood, so close.

My wishes were soon granted, though. I was remade, thanks to the dripping water above that penetrated through to my core day after day, chipping away, unnoticeable, just the way I wanted it. Before I knew it, I was a pebble. My edges smoothed, size rendered, colour faded. Strange, how joy and sadness could coexist.

My time came with the storm. Inside, I roared my triumph with the wind. I rode above all the other pebbles, just like all others have done before me and dived into the river.

The rush! Everything was moving, fast. Pebbles churned at the bottom, river crabs hooked their claws in mud, and reeds bent in an impossible angle by a force that was driven with a desire to have it uprooted. Zeal made everything stark. Lightning flashed above the surface, throwing everything into sharp focus, just as quick as to cast the world into darkness. There wasn't a break. There was just me and black and white and nothing in between.

The currents had me jostled back and forth, up and down, side to side. It was refreshing, at first, being a part of movement. For the first time since I fell, I was moving. Yet, I was going fast, so fast, too fast. I rammed into other rocks that sat on the bottom of the river, scarred myself as I was knocked against half-sunk trees and tangled amongst drifting twigs.

By the time the storm stopped ahead, I'd woken up to an unknown land. It was darker partly because it was deeper, but also because a looming object above the surface casted a jarring, shifting shadow that claimed every inch of the underwater realm. Gallons of water straddled me, I never knew that weight such as that existed - its existence seemed to have become the only thing I was concerned with, since I was no longer moving.

There were days when the winds were strong enough to set the river's depths into motion. I'd crawl forward one or two inches, only to be thrown back three or four more. Eventually, I'd given up trying to keep track. Time didn't exist down in those parts, there was only the agony of grinding, scraping and tossing. How I longed for the wind's caress, the harmony of the woods.

Fish still swam ahead and above me, and I couldn't help wondering why I had wanted the glamour, the agility. What a ridiculous notion it had been. I was not a fish. I used to marvel at the river from ashore, but it wasn't the same, now that I was actually in it. It had lost its glamour, or rather, I could no longer see it. Now, I was one of the pebbles among pebbles, among pebbles.

I recalled my shadow across the river and saw proud angles, pronounced lines, strong curves. They were always there.

A stronger current came.

It swept me away from my usual spot and carried me downstream. It brought me over the edge of the waterfall, and I fell, fell, fell. I was falling again and it felt like flying.

The river sloped downwards and gradually, I met the lake, where things were quiet and still. I sighed as the gentle waves brushed me to shore and felt the air breathe against my skin. I would wait and wait as I grew smaller and smaller, until I was dust in the wind, where I was nothing, but everywhere.

INBETWEENNESS

by Madeleine Martin

Can't fit *Pattern Recognition* in my backpack.

William Gibson's 2003 prescient techno-fable follows Cayce Pollard, a marketing consultant and 'cool-hunter' with an unbearably useful pathological sensitivity to corporate logos. Cayce is tasked with tracking-down the maker - distributor? - of a series of anonymously published video clips which have surfaced on internet forums.

Cayce inhabits liminal spaces. Airports. Hotels. Cyberspace. Places of inbetweenness.

Part-way through reading, I set off for Venice.

This last week, international press and social media have been flooded with images of the Veneto capital's *acqua alta*.¹ Military personnel thigh-deep in water in front of the Italo-Byzantine Basilica di San Marco. Marooned vaporetti, the Venetian public waterbuses, emblazoned with *Biennale Arte 2019*. Outdoor bistro stacking chairs bobbing along il Piazza San Marco. Ill-prepared tourists hauling giant hard-shelled suitcases on their backs like turtles.

Determined not to be one of those turtles. Instead, like Gibson's Cayce, I will navigate the path of global travel as a minimalist.

My copy of *Pattern Recognition* awaits my return.

Forty hours of travel and five modes of transport lead me to Via Garibaldi. To a French-themed, but inescapably Venetian, cafe-bar called CheBon. Drinking a Cynar spritz. Two ice cubes, slice of orange, green olive. Soul is AWOL. Body is cruising on auto-pilot. Capacity to affect and be affected is compromised.

Cayce, too, has experienced this:

...her mortal soul is leagues behind her, being reeled in on some ghostly umbilical chord down the vanished wake of the plane that brought her here ... Souls can't move quickly, and are left behind, and must be awaited, upon arrival, like lost luggage.²

With soul separated by sixteen-thousand kilometres from owner, it proves difficult for affect to arise. Beings are constituted "not by an outer skin-envelope or other surface boundary but by their potential to reciprocate or co-participate in the passages of affect."³ These, reciprocation and co-participation, are roles for the soul, not the body.

Body plus soul equals cognitive being. Body minus soul equals ... something fragmented. Don't have an ETA for my soul.

Three cities later.

Arrive at a tiny ground-floor apartment on Rue Véron. Dispassion of the entryway is eerie. The soul of the apartment is separated by modern security technology from the body of Paris.

Inside, backpack down. Take stock of utilities. Not quite like the pictures. Less art direction. Less art. Less direction. On the bookshelf, printed detritus, floating remnants of anonymous travel.

And one novel.

Anotherbody's copy of *Pattern Recognition*.

In that moment, intensities pass from body to body, from book to me and back again, circulating and sticking to whatever it can. Coincidence is an obvious manifestation of "the world's apparent intractability".⁴

It is clear now that soul and body have re-coalesced. Capacity to affect and be affected is optimal.

¹ Pun intended.

² W. Gibson, *Pattern Recognition*, London, Penguin Books, 2003, p.1.

³ M. Gregg and G. J. Seigworth, 'An Inventory of Shimmers' in Gregg, M. and Seigworth, G. J. (eds.) *The Affect Theory Reader*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2010, p.1.

⁴ Ibid.



A Conversation With the Moon

Dear Moon,
Who has time to marvel at your beauty anymore?
But please, be your luminous self anyway
Your 360 degrees of champagne white.

We may have forgotten you stole the sun's shine
So we may drink in some stolen moments of beauty
But dear moon, wax, wane, crescent or full
Shine away
Because Jupiter may have 79 and Mars may have 2
but we have only you.

Darling Moon,
Do not submit to the halogen lit conversations
and lithium powered connections
Off when they die in the middle of the night
your glory is our only salvation.

Rubana Islam

OUR PROTAGONIST

By Pranika Nayyar

The truth was that for the first time in her life, our protagonist simply did not know where she was. Nor did she know the reason for her sudden departure from her world. There would now be a petite, protagonist shaped hole in the previous universe. Curious, very curious. After a minute of calculated deliberation, she decided it was not important because this was a novel, and if her creator designed for her an existence in an alternate realm, so be it. She hoped that this time, it wasn't just any novel, but in fact hers. After almost five hundred pages of being the token side character with neither substance nor subplot, she had grown irritable at her own triviality.

She found herself seated in an unadorned room, hands neatly clasped on her lap. As if celebrating some unknown kaleidoscopic affair, the ceiling seemed alive, fluttering with all the sapphire iridescence of the sea, morphing the space into a glistening underwater mirage.

"Ahem."

The abrupt noise startled her terribly, causing her to spring up from her seat and hastily scan the room.

A great ivory coloured door had conspicuously opened up a little way away from her, and standing beside it was notably the most impressive man she had ever seen, wearing a broad smile, sparkling champagne in hand. If she did not know any better, she would assume that he was born into an estate of tremendous wealth, but she did. What she did not know, however, was why this man, Jay Gatsby, charlatan and pauper in fine silks, came to be out of all places, written into the same novel as her, especially when he was first written almost a century before her. Brows furrowed into a frown, she looked up at the 'ceiling' as though searching for someone, and wondered what the hell her creator was plotting.

The interval of silence stretched on while they studied each other. Literary seconds were beating by. A single golden butterfly fluttered to a rest on the rim of his champagne glass.

He finally broke the silence, breaking into a good natured smile and extending his unoccupied hand. "Ah, welcome old sport, don't mind the wait, it's been a long day. I'm presuming you have many questions."

She didn't see how another literary construction could possibly answer her queries or measure clockwork time in this freshly fabricated world, but she shook his hand nonetheless.

"I'd be concerned if you didn't." Gatsby released her hand and turned the pearly doorknob behind him, opening the

door wider. "Even the most knowledgeable personas need a thorough briefing." He gestured for her to go through first.

"After you, old sport."

She obliged, and followed him into a room, which, besides from a pompously carved table and two mahogany chairs, was identical to the one she had spent the last, well, she didn't know how much time.

"So," he began once they had settled comfortably into the chairs, "I might be known to you as Jay Gatsby, from *The Great Gatsby*."

She nodded.

"Ah, so would it be accurate to assume" - he reached into a drawer and plucked a cigar, not offering her one - "that you are aware that you and I are but mere literary constructions birthed from the imagination and intellect of a composer?"

"Fully aware, Sir."

He waved his hand at her across the table dismissively. "Ah, no need for formalities, it's 'Gatsby' for you, old sport." He lit the cigar and brought it to his lips, liquid eyes piercing into her. "Thus, you believe that each course of action we take and thought we have are consequently birthed from these composers?"

She thought about this carefully. "Would it be wrong to believe this?"

"Yes, somewhat. Let me explain. We are indeed simply products of imagination and intellect, and therefore, in usual circumstances, our actions from the time of our initial conception to the completion of our persona, are indeed wholly controlled by our composer. However, that is not to say that our thoughts and inner desires are wholeheartedly the product of such composer." He lowered his cigar, smoke curling into tendrils around him. "The composer does not account for our capacity as literary characters. We are created by them and utilised by them in their works, and while this is occurring, we are for the most part under their command, but, as many presume, the process does not simply halt there. Our personas continue to develop and expand, completely of our own accord, separately, especially after our composers have departed from us. Are we keeping up, old sport?"

"We are," she replied. "But I don't understand why this conversation is happening, nor do I understand what my function in this world is."

He studied her for a second. "The voice that resides in your head, the one that sometimes does not entirely feel like your own, that would be the composer. In this world, that voice does not exist."

She gave him a quizzical look.

He nodded understandingly. "I don't blame the confusion, old sport, took me a while to fully comprehend it myself. This world is where literary characters reside after their composer has exhausted the character to their fancy. This is not simply a world that is created by another composer, this is the world, the only world that a composer is not able to access. We"- he gestured to her - "live on after the piece of work we are featured in has been completed. This is the world we inhabit, exclusively our world. Once our potential as characters is exhausted and the story our composers create for us has been told, we reach this world, which more or less best mirrors the world we wish to reside in, as a chance to live out our own stories as the people, or, well, characters, we truly are. Especially in your case, you are not a function any longer; you are the protagonist of your own story, and you don't serve to enhance another."

She paused before tentatively asking, "Does that mean I'm free?"

"Well yes, that's certainly one way to describe it. Many folks share that stance, and I understand why you especially would. When Heathcliff arrived he was relieved beyond words, poor chap, now that's certainly a case where the composer has not done the character justice."

"Are there assigned places here for each of us?" She wondered if there would be one for her, and if she would be forced to accept it as her home.

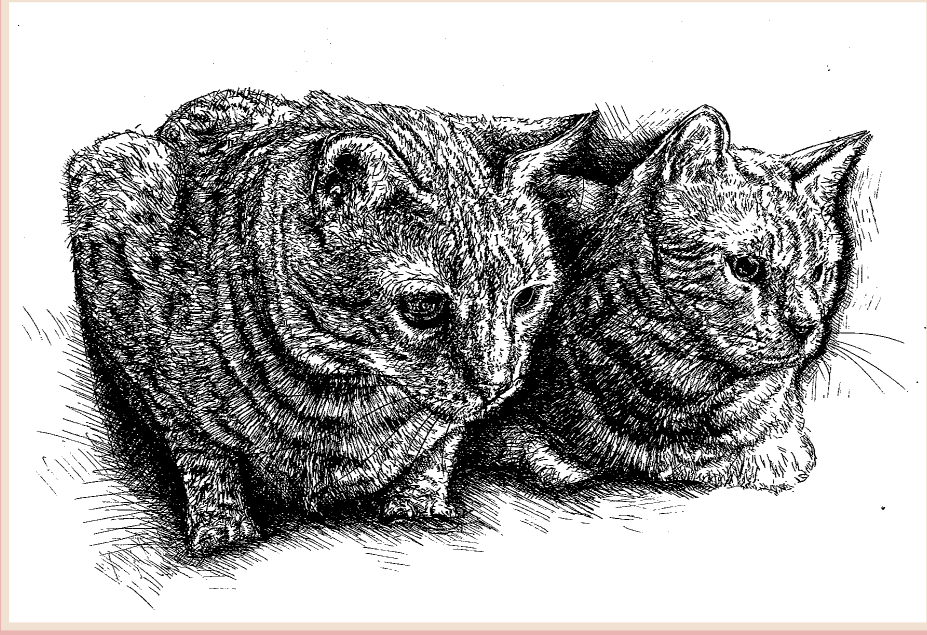
"Glad you mentioned that old sport, there are specific sub-worlds yes, but where you live for the rest of literary eternity is up to you. There doesn't even need to be a definite choice, some of us decide to spend our days traveling through each world before settling into a home, and many of us never do. Take Heathcliff, he has chosen to reside rather traditionally in his characterisation trope, Sub-world 004 of the Byronic hero, although I daresay that his growing fondness of Mr. Darcy may very well be the cause of that."

He paused, bringing the cigar to his lips and taking in a satisfied breath before continuing. "You have your own agency here, what you do with it is up to you. Besides, yours is a different case entirely. I'm pleased to say that there isn't a sub-world for token characters, but this is mostly just because we have yet to receive individuals who wish to trivialise their own existence by validating the ignorance of their composer's experimental attempt at equality."

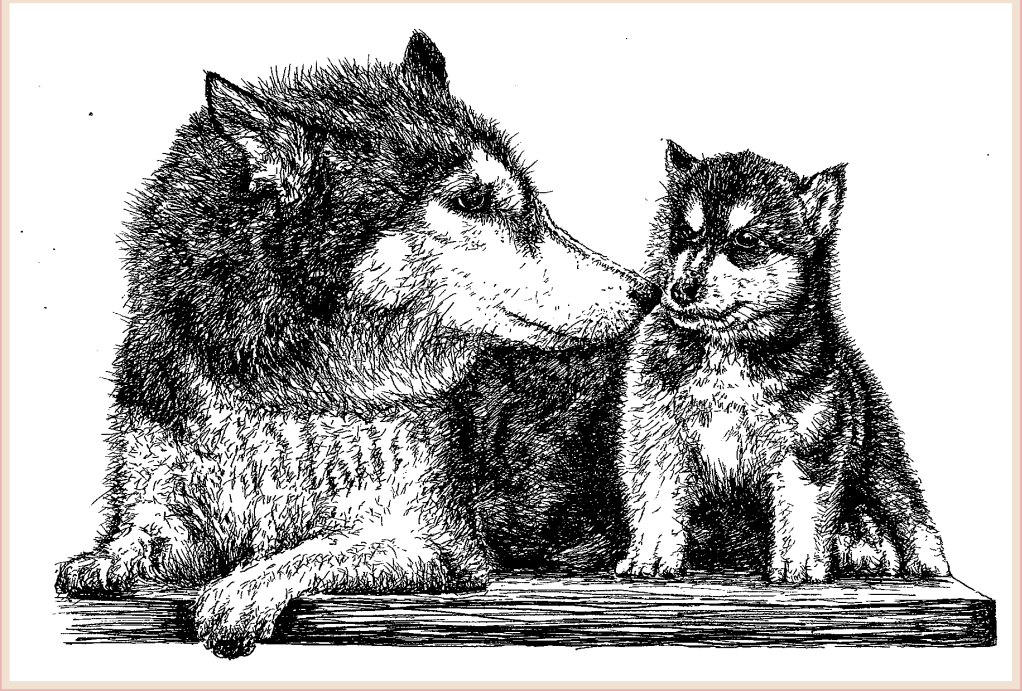
Her attention on Gatsby faltered, emotions greedily bidding for space in her heart. He had not caught sight of the delirious glint in her eye when he told her that now her existence and deeds were just that: hers.

For the first time since her arrival, she felt solace settle into her bones. Finally, finally, there was nothing holding her back. All those pages playing the chirpy background sidekick to the white, heterosexual, cisgender hero would pay off, if she could make it worth her while now. Her life now held a shape and size. She felt its agency saturating her bloodstream, writhing underneath her skin, puckering her flesh. Wild.

She knew who she truly was, without a higher power tucking her into a neat corner of conformity. A villain. The villain. And she was going to be the best literary villain any world had ever seen.



Bengal Cats / Rongxuan Chong



Siberian Husky / Rongxuan Chong

SPOTLIGHT ON:



*S. L. Lim is the author of **Real Differences** (2019). She was Editor-in-Chief of **Tharunka** a decade ago as an Economics/Arts student, and later worked as an economics tutor and policy advisor. **Tharunka** sat down with her to talk about her forthcoming novel **Revenge** (to be published by **Transit Lounge** in September 2020), what uni degrees are for, and where power lies out in the real world.*

What's *Revenge* about, and why should people read it?

Revenge is about someone who was born on the wrong side of the border. It's almost this personal counterfactual, because creating art is very important to me. Like many migrants, I'm probably a generation away from quite severe poverty. I live quite a comfortable middle class life now, so there's this sense that poverty, and limitations on one's possibilities determined by material conditions, shape your ability to pursue a life in art.

Often in middle- and upper-class circles in the First World, people will think of poverty as lacking food, water, a job, etc. But people aren't just mouths, and poor people aren't just mouths either. Everyone has a desire for transcendence, knowledge and beauty.

So *Revenge* is about someone who has that desire, but was born in circumstances that do not allow her to enact that desire. And she ends up fucking furious, and it's about her seeking revenge against her immediate enemies and limits at hand, which just happen to be her family. So it's also about not liking families, because families suck.

Were there any writers that inspired you in particular?

I wouldn't say I was trying to emulate any particular form, but one thing I like about Sarah Schulman is her capacity for directness. This idea that 'subtlety is a literary value above all' has its value. But reality isn't necessarily nuanced, and her ability to convey that with great force and clarity is very mentally cleansing, in a way.

I like Haruki Murakami a lot. I think his books have a harmonics to them, a symbolic or emotional resonance and shape without necessarily having logical shape, and I think that's quite a powerful thing and something you'd have to have quite strong native gifts to achieve.

S. L. LIM

By Henry Chen

Are you looking forward to the release of *Revenge*? What's next?

I actually am looking forward to it! I was a bit iffy about *Real Differences* but I like this one. *Real Differences* is very intellectual and very moral and so on, but fuck that. With *Revenge* I felt more capacity to take my hands off the wheel. My third book, which I'm working on right now, is a novel about antifascism.

Do you actively think about Asian representation in media?

It depends what you mean by representation. Certainly, the fact that I am of Asian ethnicity, and that this shapes my experience and perspectives, is very much a minority thing within the Australian publishing industry.

In terms of my aspirations for my writing, I push back against the idea of representation. There's this aspiration towards transcending the limitations of the self. And I think that is something which it's very hard for people in the publishing industry, or white people in general, to accept from black people, Indigenous people, or people of colour.

So I would say in terms of doing my work, my aspiration is always to live as if you were already free. To write as if these particular constraints did not exist does not mean I'm ignoring my subjectivity as an Asian person, but it means not playing to an imagined audience which exoticises or has a reductionist approach to that subjectivity.

What advice would you give to students who are looking to get where you are?

Oh don't do that, that's terrible! Why would students want to get where I am? That's a terrible idea, I would avoid it if possible! I would say that life honestly isn't very good and lower your expectations, that's my advice. (laughs)

In light of that, what drove you to write these books?

Seeing as life isn't very good, and seeing as people have a desire to be seen in a deep way and to understand each other, one might as well expend one's time and energies in creating beautiful things of lasting value insofar as one has the capacity to do so!

Looking back, what was the most valuable thing about going to UNSW?

I don't know, just the fact that I was young and dewy and shit. I was young and dewy and... was anything of value about going to UNSW? The cookies! Basically that, yeah.

Are you still involved in economics work? How do you manage it alongside your writing?

I am. I try to get the most amount of money in the least amount of time, so that I have the mental space and capacity to write and do other stuff. I'm very lucky that I have earning capacity based on the education which I've had the privilege to have, but if you want to do creative work, I think it's important to keep your expenses low.

I have a great quality of life and I have everything I need. But the idea that certain people have, that you can have a glittering career and also write books – I don't think you can have both, unless you're very lucky or exceptional. There's not that many hours in the day, there's not much capacity in a mind or in a heart.

Were you ever tempted to just drop the writing and be a corporate hack?

No. A lot of people at uni don't realise how bad being in the workplace is. It's terrible. One should never do it. Most jobs are on a continuum between futile and actively harmful. It's not just corporate work – the non-profit sector is full of crap and the government sector is also full of crap. It's a terrible thing to be engaging in a daily way in work that doesn't bring any particular enjoyment or fulfilment, and which is also actively making the world a worse place.

If there is one good thing that comes out of this whole plague situation, it will be interesting for so many people collectively across the world to observe how much of the work and effort which people undergo every day is not necessary or actively harmful for our collective survival.

How do you avoid complicity with those harmful systems in the workplace?

I think real power, or power to act in solidarity with your own values, comes with building your own relationships and accountability towards people who share those values. You can withhold your complicity from people, organisations or workplaces that engage in negative actions to do with climate, worker's rights, borders or whatever. When people see this, resistance begets resistance.

I think people think that power is vested in corporate or official institutional positions, and once they have that position they can wield that power. That's not actually true. Malcolm Turnbull was always thought to be the greenie, sensible guy on the Liberals, and he was the Prime Minister of Australia! He sought to act to a certain extent on climate, and he was taken down for that. If you derive your power from an institution, then you take on the particular constraints of that institution.

THE 6 SPICIEST MEMES ABOUT UNSW'S RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

By Jo Bradley

It's safe to say that UNSW's response to the Coronavirus crisis has been less than ideal. UNSW's failure to take swift action with shutting down the Uni, and the perceived lack of consideration for student's well-being, particularly UNSW students studying abroad, has caused widespread discontent across the student body. There was the disregard for the health, safety, and financial stability of the UNSW exchange students studying abroad, and the University's lack of clear communication and action about the virus until after the census date. This timing, many students theorised, was to prevent students dropping their courses after the announcement that they would all be placed online.

Many students came to the UNSW Discussion Group (a popular Facebook group with 29,000 members) to vent and share memes about their frustrations with UNSW's slow response. Although the UNSW campus is now closed, we can still revisit and laugh at some of the best memes to come out of this mess.

Ian Jacobs (academic)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Ian Jacobs (born 6 October 1957)^[1] is a British academic, medical doctor, gynaecological oncologist and researcher. He began as the ninth president and vice-chancellor of the University of New South Wales in February 2015. Jacobs has raised controversy for downplaying the COVID-19 situation on-campus and delaying critical updates until students could no longer waive financial liabilities on dropped courses, as well as sending out an e-mail to all students that COVID-19 on campus is "not contagious"^[2]

SHOUTOUT TO THE ANONYMOUS LEGEND WHO CHANGED IAN JACOBS' WIKIPEDIA PAGE (IT WAS CHANGED BACK TO NORMAL SHORTLY AFTER)



Razeen Mahmood

19 hrs

When Dumbledore said "Hogwarts is no longer safe for the students but for now let them dream"

Ian Jacobs felt that 🤔👉



and 520 others

37 comments

HARRY POTTER MEMES PROVED UNEXPECTEDLY POPULAR IN THE GROUP

MANY STUDENTS FOUND HUMOUR IN DRAWING COMPARISONS BETWEEN UNSW AND HOGWARTS



Brigitt Artesi

Yesterday at 3:10 pm · 🌐

@ Ian Jacobs



MANY STUDENTS SPECULATED THAT THE DELAYED CORONAVIRUS ANNOUNCEMENTS HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE CENSUS DATE ON MARCH 15TH...



Jeremy Lim

1 hr

COVID-19 cases when UNSW had a semester system: 0
COVID-19 cases since UNSW3+ trimester system began: 169,915
Don't ever forget our forsaken history.



You

and 411 others

20 comments

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE A UNSW STUDENT'S ABILITY TO MAKE FUN OF TRIMESTERS AT EVERY GIVEN OPPORTUNITY

AND FINALLY, THIS TWEET, WHICH MANAGED TO DELIVERED THE ULTIMATE CROSSOVER OF UNIVERSITY COURSE CONTENT AND CORONAVIRUS HUMOUR



arpita
@wtfarpi

Karl Marx

emails from my
profs during
COVID 19

multiple texts
expressing the dire need &
urgency to rethink class

7:08 am · 16/3/20 · Twitter for Android

27.9K Retweets 147K Likes



Although it's frustrating to be trapped at home, self-isolating in this scary time, at least we can enjoy one thing together: the constant flow of Coronavirus memes on Facebook

PRESIDENT REPORT

Manu Risoldi

Hey UNSW,

What a whirlwind T1 it's been! At times like this it's incredibly important to check in with your friends and family. Social distancing does not mean we cannot be social. Arc is running many initiatives to keep us socialising over Facebook and Zoom. Our collectives are also working on ways to go digital. If you're experiencing mental health concerns reach out to our counselling and psychological services which are still open on campus.

Over the course T1 the SRC has been part of many major discussions with university management in regards to UNSW's response to COVID-19. Our statement to management was released in early March and it highlighted some key issues that the SRC wanted responded to by management. Our call for attendance requirements in courses to be scrapped was agreed to, as well as all courses going online within the week of our meeting with management. Census date was not extended despite students voicing their concerns over the lack of openness regarding what T1 would look like, however a week of flexibility was given to those students who wanted to drop courses without a financial burden.

Accessibility has also been a major discussion point because the SRC is aware that some students do not have access to wifi and laptops. The university is responding to students needs on a case by case basis to ensure all students can access their course work in this newly online environment.

Since our initial discussions with management new policies around grading have been implemented. Students no longer have to worry about their academic transcript being impacted by T1 and the uncertainties that COVID-19 has created as Fail grades will not be recorded this term. Students should be contacting their course convenors if they are unsure about the current grading system for their courses. Not all courses have changed to the SY/FL grading criteria. Moreover, students no longer have to submit medical certificates alongside their special consideration applications. This has been done for a dual purpose: firstly because the university recognises the risk going to the doctors can pose to students. This change was also implemented because we do not want to be burdening the medical system due to the volumes of people already needing to access it.

The National Union of Students successfully campaigned around including Youth Allowance, Aus Study and AB Study onto the governments stimulus package which the UNSW SRC supported. Without this camping thousands of students would not have been eligible for the governments COVID-19 stimulus package so this was an important campaign that put the rights of students at the forefront of the national conversation. This campaign has now grown into a national call for international students to also begin receiving payments from the Australian governments because student unions across the country are seeing some of our most at risk students come from the international community.

The UNSW SRC Welfare Officer has crated a survey for international students (which can be found on our Facebook page) which is collecting information regarding the immediate and long-term needs of the international student community at UNSW. This is helping to shape the SRC's efforts in securing more funding and support for our international student community. Our Welfare Officer has similarly also put together a survey for exchange students. We understand that exchange students have been recalled to Australia and great personal cost and that this is an incredibly uncertain time. This survey intends to collect information from exchange students which can be relayed to management in the hope that we can receive some concrete advice and support from UNSW management that students can then access.

WHAT'S ON

At the moment our collectives have moved online, and this will continue until campus is reopened. If you're wanting information and the links to the collective meeting groups please visit the collective pages on Facebook as all information can be accessed from there. On top of this I am involved in Legal Beagles, which is an Arc Facebook live event where the legal and advocacy team and I talk all things Centrelink, Renting rights and your rights as a student at UNSW. For those students who are unsure about their rights as renters, students or as casual workers tune in on Mondays and Fridays from 1:45!

GET IN CONTACT

If you're wanting to get involved in our campaigns or stay up to date with what the UNSW SRC is up to you can follow us on Facebook and you can join the various Facebook Collective Pages. This is the primary way our Office Bearers share news about our campaigns and meetings for the future. Our SRC Spaces also have suggestions boxes if you would like to submit some anonymous feedback or give suggestions about the direction of our council. Our general enquirers line is also always open for students who need assistance from the SRC.

If you're experiencing mental health concerns our counselling and psychological services remains open on campus. To get in contact with CAPS call: 9385 5418. Because of COVID-19 CAPS are taking Telehealth appointments just let them know what you feel most comfortable with.

You can also get in contact with the SRC through our website: arc.unsw.edu.au/voice/src

Or directly email the President's Office at: srcpresident@arc.unsw.edu.au

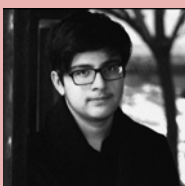
MEET OUR CONTRIBUTORS



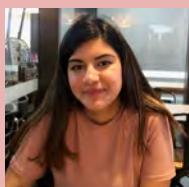
Luis is a featherless biped who studies interior architecture sometimes. Most of the time however he is yearning for indescribable emotions that elude his soul. On some rare occasions he draws and writes mostly about mental health, sometimes about intersectionality. What else can he say to pad this out to 50 words?



Jordan is a fourth-year Arts/Law student at UNSW whose recent interests while social distancing have included: Animal Crossing, Coles-brand chai lattes and staring blankly into space. This is his first article for Tharunka but he's sure it won't be his last! (He's got the time.)



Imagine doing Medical Science when you could be doing literally any other degree. Unfortunately for Aditya, this is reality. He is a self-proclaimed movie critic/enthusiast and the only things that can pull him out of his self-deprecating bubble are good movie castings, along with people who understand his nihilistic sense of self.



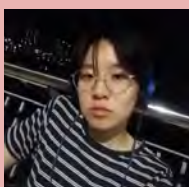
Maha is a first year Commerce and Arts student. She is an avid reader, music junkie, and sometimes like to bake. She has a Persian cat and her favourite past time is sprawling on the couch with outstretched limbs like a sloth in slow motion with him.



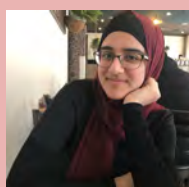
Rongxuan is currently a first-year Engineering/ Advanced Science student who draws as a hobby. He creates artworks of endangered articles (animals mostly) encapsulating their raw beauty. If he ever finds himself stuck in a rut, picking up a pen is an easy cure. He finds it relaxing, meditative and extremely comforting.



Rubana is a doctoral student in Public Health, currently writing her thesis on sedentary behaviour sitting at her desk for 12 hours a day. Poetry only happens to Rubana when she is either despondent with grief or ecstatic with joy. As it turns out, poetry is an extreme sport!



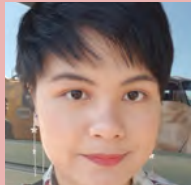
Gloria is a third year student of Politics and Environmental Humanities. Living on Gadigal-Wangal land. Special talents include finding good podcasts and maintaining simultaneous crushes on two hundred kpop boys and Megan Thee Stallion. Very interested in critical race theory, somewhat interested in poetry, not at all interested in math. Inventively unproductive.



Hey there, I'm Juwariya! I'm a third year Bachelor of Arts/Laws student, majoring in Politics and International Relations with a minor in Media, Culture and Technology. With that mouthful out of the way, I have a keen interest in social justice issues, especially how the law interacts with marginalised groups in society.

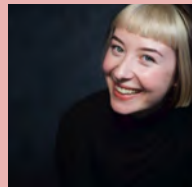


Shajara Khan is currently doing a Master of International Relations. She is a trivia machine and would be a great team member for pub trivia. When she is not rushing to do assignments or drowning in readings, you will find her spending hours binging American political comedy shows.



Full time student and cat enthusiast. CJ goes by she/they pronouns and her main interests are under the 3Ps: Politics, Pastries, and Puns. She is currently in her Communication and Journalism questline in order to obtain the Scroll of Masters Degree.

Thao is a 2nd year commerce student feeling constantly overwhelmed, even when it's the holidays. She will talk your ears off about Sherlock and/or her Dachshund, Rosie. You can find her on campus by following high-pitched screaming.

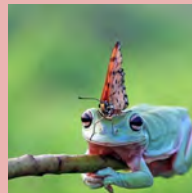
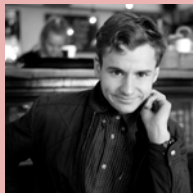


Madeleine is a Bachelor of Art Theory student and budding yé-yé girl living on Gadigal land. Writes mainly about art.

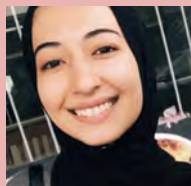


Pranika is a first year Media/Arts student who derives the vast majority of her creative epiphanies from engagement with fanfiction. You'll find her holed up in an armchair reading classics with intense homoerotic subtext or deep in bed submitting several assessments well past the deadline.

Rory Coverdale is a Christian since 2016, and a third year Media (Screen and Sound Production) student. He is passionate about screenwriting, and hopes to get a career in it someday. He is also passionate about social justice and especially issues that relate to disability.

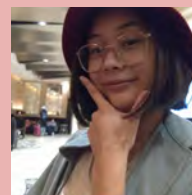
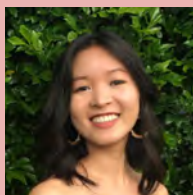


Claire is a UNSW student studying Fine Arts and Arts. Her three true loves are politics, grated carrot, and ceramics. Claire is a confident pistachio ice-cream connoisseur and medicinal hobbyist. Public speaking is not her forte, but she makes up for it in sporadic exceptional karaoke performances!



Batool Aljfri is an aspiring photographer and a writing enthusiast currently studying Bachelor of Fine Arts at UNSW to turn her hobby for photography into a professional career. Mostly importantly, she is trying to explore the possibilities of life and break old habits through creativity and research.

To Phoebe, writing has always been an important creative outlet and medium for self expression. Her work is heavily inspired by paintings and personal experiences.



Jelena is a first year design and media student. She enjoys learning new things especially about art and design. A fun fact is she often doesn't know what she is doing half the time.



Wen is a first-year Commerce student from the Island of Bubble Milk Tea, Taiwan. When she's not writing, she can be found on volleyball courts, by the sea, or wandering in worlds of magic, faeries, and dragons.



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