

tharunka

UNSW STUDENT PUBLICATION ISSUE TWO VOLUME 56

TASMANIAN
FORESTS

BEHIND THE
BLOCKADE

ISLAMIC SOCIETY
VS UNSW

PRAYER AND
PROTEST

DON'T YOU
WANT ONE?

GOLDEN
SHOWERS

ATC

UNSW Student Life



Editorial

It's funny how the 'Science' theme of this edition was interpreted by nearly all our contributors as meaning 'Sex'. On page 14 Alice Lang ponders small breasts, female ejaculation and the do's and don'ts of censorship in Australia. Wilfred Brandt chooses for some reason to talk about boobs. On page 10 Alan Zeino explores the pseudo-science of attraction, while Matt Kwan engages in his usual frenzied ejaculations on a topic of topical interest.

We also have some good juicy University news. There is a stoush brewing between the Islamic Society and the University – read all about it on page 16. Finally, we even have some serious stuff. On page 11 Kylar Loussikian presents a thoughtful essay on Naomi Klein's Shock Doctrine, while our favourite investigative journalist Else Kennedy treks down to Tasmania to learn about the forestry blockade.

Read on, friends, read on!

Tharunka Editorial

tharunka

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Effective Detention

DEAR EDITORS,

I refer to Kristyn Glanville's article 'Don't Throw Away the Key' (Issue 1). Whilst I can appreciate the need to generalise somewhat to get one's point across in a short article, and I agree with Ms Glanville's overarching argument that juvenile incarceration too often serves only to make the situation and circumstances of young offenders and their communities worse, I must object to a number of her claims.

Yes, it is true that those who end up in these centres are overwhelmingly from disadvantaged and marginalised backgrounds, often suffering from mental illness and rarely attending school. It is true that they will inevitably meet 'bigger and badder' offenders on the inside, continuing their spiral towards a lifetime of crime and disadvantage, and that the rate of reoffending amongst former juvenile inmates is a blunt reminder that the system is not benefiting those who enter it. Like Ms Glanville, I believe these facts to be reason enough for juvenile detention to be a measure of last resort.

I remind her, however that those who serve time in them are not first time shoplifters or unlucky party drug users. Although the numbers of juveniles being incarcerated is increasing at a worrying rate, those who end up inside are repeat offenders whose problems have not been dealt with successfully through other measures. If a child hasn't owned and lost property, doesn't have a stable family, is dealing with mental health problems and addictions and can't read, it's no wonder adhering to bail restrictions and following the advice of counsellors, lawyers, police and court staff proves difficult.

Having visited a number of Juvenile Justice Detention Centres and spoken with inmates and correctional staff, I have also heard the other side of the debate, not addressed by Ms Glanville - that when properly staffed and resourced, and when run according to rehabilitative ideals, such centres have the potential to serve some good. Consider that for many, this is the first place where they've had breakfast everyday, been told to get up at 7:30am and go to bed at 10pm, been made to attend school, not had to steal the footy they want to kick around, spoken with the same psychologist for a worthwhile stretch of time and had their teeth and asthma problems attended to. Consider why many reoffend just to return to them. Consider the rehabilitative potential that exists.

Juvenile Justice Detention Centres are horrible places, and I openly admit to feeling scared when visiting, and ashamed of having let down those who end up inside them through my own inaction. To effectively argue for a better, more productive deal for young offenders, she might have considered the rarely acknowledged (at least by those of us pushing for a more rehabilitative approach) possibility that for some young inmates, detention sadly enough, is the only stable part of their lives. I suggest that rather than fighting against the populist appeal for tougher penal punishment, that the key to legislative and social change may in fact be acknowledging the validity of some of the opinions from the other side of the debate, and that juvenile detention could be used in a more productive and rehabilitative way. Perhaps, Ms Glanville could try accepting the upsetting reality that it will always be around, and instead, argue to make it more effective for young offenders.

MICHELLE BROUGHTON-ROUSE



Fear and Loathing in Honduras

DEAR EDITORS,

When I grabbed the last issue of *Tharunka* and skipped to Ms Wong's article on the Honduran Coup, 'Repression and Resistance in Honduras', I honestly thought someone had mistakenly slipped in a Socialist Alliance pamphlet into the middle of my magazine. This was disturbing, given that I had worked so hard to avoid the phalanx of pamphleteers during O-Week. Have SA covered so many walls on campus that they're now trying to find other outlets for their work?

The article is a mind-bogglingly one-sided take on the events in Honduras. Manuel Zelaya isn't exactly known for being a democrat. In 2007 he attempted to order that all public and private radio and TV stations in the country carry ten two-hour government broadcasts, à la Hugo Chavez. The OAS called him out in 2008 for indirect censorship of the media.

His conduct with regards to the coup is even more odious. He choked off funding to the country's electoral tribunal. He refused to publish the executive decree that authorised the National Statistical Institute to hold the referendum on the 4th ballot box. Most egregiously, he held the referendum in direct contravention of the Honduran Supreme Court's ruling that stated that the referendum could not go ahead. The Congress, the Attorney

General of Honduras and the human rights head of Honduras all stated that Zelaya had broken the law. Zelaya forced the military to distribute ballot boxes and when the head of the army, General Vasquez, refused to collaborate, Zelaya had him fired.

When she writes that all Zelaya wanted to do is have a simple referendum, Ms Wong is either naive or being duplicitous. I tip the latter. Why else would he go to the trouble of undergoing an action that was contrary to the wishes of Congress, the judiciary and the Attorney General? For exactly the same reason that Hugo Chavez and Alvaro Uribe have previously engaged in these sorts of measures with varying degrees of legality. They want to hang onto power at all costs. This was the first step in a method patented by Hugo Chavez - call it 'Becoming President for Life for Dummies' - which could well have led to an unravelling of Honduran democracy.

The rational response to the Honduran Coup is 'a plague on both your houses'. Neither side gets to walk away from this smelling of roses. The steps taken to remove Zelaya were dubious at best. Brutality against pro-Zelaya demonstrators did happen and is utterly deplorable. But this sad event isn't the one-sided injustice that Ms Wong paints. Fortunately, Honduras is moving forward, with a new president, Porfirio Lobo, elected in circumstances that observers from the EU Parliament called democratic and transparent. I think both Ms Wong and I can agree that Honduras should continue that way.

MATTHEW COBB-CLARK



Osman Faruqi
Student Representative Council President
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Hopefully by now you've all settled comfortably into University life and have discovered the basics of being a student – lectures aren't compulsory (yay) and being poor is the norm. Luckily, there's plenty of things to get involved in on campus over the next couple of weeks now that you have all this free time since you won't be going to class. And some of the things your Student Representative Council is working on might help the having no money situation.

In Week 3, Womyn's Week was organised by the Womyn's Collective of the SRC, and it was full of events, including debates and forums on womyn's issues and free breakfasts.

In Week 4, UNSW is celebrating Harmony Week, another SRC event run by the Ethnic Affairs Collective celebrating the cultural diversity of our community.

Recently, the Welfare Collective had its first meeting for 2010 and began organising the National Union of Students' National Day of Action which will be focusing on student welfare and Youth Allowance. If you're interested in this campaign or any other issues on campus then get in contact or come and visit us at Level One of the Blockhouse.

Marita Morgan
Students with Disabilities Officer
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Wheelchair Basketball was a success during O-Week with many students and staff wanting to play! We will be hosting another event during Week 8!

Week 8 of Semester 1 will be Disabilities Awareness Week and there will many different workshops, such as sign language! If anyone has any suggestions of other workshops and events please let me know. A reminder that the Welfare and Disability Room is now open in the Blockhouse (Level One, East Wing) so go check it out!

Alice Lang
Student Development Committee Convenor
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Hi everyone!
 I hope that a lot of you have found a club or volunteer program that really gets you going! If not, why not jump on to the Arc website and find something interesting? It's a great time to get involved with some of Arc's freshest programs, such as Global Village, Relay for Life and the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme.

If you're part of a club, remember to get along to the Clubs General Meetings (write to clubs@arc.unsw.edu.au if you don't know what I'm talking about), and keep an eye on when applications are due for grants. Above all, keep enjoying all that university has to offer outside of classes!

James Still
Welfare Officer
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The Welfare Department has been über-busy yet again over the last month! O-Week was a huge success for us as we unleashed 10,000 Cheapskate's Guides to UNSW. Given the surge in interest, we will be doing another print run of 5,000 copies in a few weeks with updated information. The Student Welfare Room has opened. Also during O-Week I got 157 students to complete a survey on their housing and Youth Allowance circumstances. The data collected will prove useful ahead of a vote in the Federal Parliament for a better Youth Allowance package. I have also finalised details for the Calculator Borrowing Scheme, which will allow student to borrow calculators from all Arc stalls on campus for up to 72 hours. I also ran the first Free Breakfast stall of the year outside the Library.

Coming up on March 24 will be the Student Poverty Noodle Day of Action, where we will attempt to set the world record for the most amount of people eating noodles simultaneously! Its going to be a great event with good media coverage and it will be held outside the main library so if you want to register, or offer to help out, please send me an email!

Shuang Guo
International Students Officer
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The Ethnic Affairs and International Students stall did well for O-Week. The petition for international students' travel concession received about 300 active responses during O-week alone. This appears to be a very good start of the international students travel concession campaign.

A photography competition, Shoot International, is being planned for Weeks 3 to 6 during the first semester. The theme has not yet been decided but the basic premise is to showcase the University life of international students here in UNSW. The first collective meeting was held on 8 March from 1-2pm at the Quad Lawn. It was determined in the first meeting that transport concessions for international students are the most important issues. Ideas of how to publicise the issue were also brainstormed.

Also, the issue of Friday prayer space for Muslim students on campus was brought up and it was stated that a majority of Muslim students on campus are international, and therefore this issue was a relevant one.

Ben Noone and Nicola Karcz
Environment Officers
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It was suggested in the previous issue of *Tharunka* that these OB reports serve only to glorify the SRC and inspire confidence in the members of this council. In sticking with this trend I would like to announce that the SRC is doing an absolutely smashing job! No slackers around here, everyone has been hard at work as I'm sure the other columns on this page will attest.

Of course the Enviro department is no exception. The Enviro Collective meets every Monday 12pm until 1pm on the Quad lawn. We've been stuck in to planning for Enviro Week in Week 5, liaising with the new Sustainability Office, and organising UNSW participation in a number of off-campus events. Get involved! This column is too short for me to explain how rad all this stuff is so you should probably check out our website and subscribe to our e-list.

Oh, and join us every Wednesday at 5pm at the Uni Bar for Green drinks. Green, drinking. Hope to see you there!

Our website is: <http://unsw.envirocollective.com>

Jess Mobbs
Womyn Officer Report
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Greetings to the Womyn of UNSW!
I might just explain before I get on with the doings of the month, why I have changed the spelling of 'women' to 'womyn'. It is for the same reason that female-identifying students are offered a safe and secure womyn-only room on campus. Sometimes we just need to take the 'men' out of the equation and have some 'y' time. But that's not what we are doing over the next couple of weeks. Womyn's Week was in Week 3, and was full of forums, events and workshops that explored what it is to be a womyn, at uni and in the 21st century. There was belly-dancing, self-defence classes, free pancakes (vegan and non-vegan varieties) as well as the Religious Womyn Forum, the 'Hussy, Whore or Homemaker' Forum, 'Our Times and Sexual Assault' and Post-Grad Movie Night. Collective is running every Monday at 2pm in the Womyn's Room; come and get loud and get proud!

Anh Pham
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Hi! As some of you might have noticed, hundreds of students from the Islamic Society at UNSW (ISOC), and other students and staff, have been praying on the Main Walkway near Anzac Parade every Friday afternoon, to protest against the closure of the Muslim prayer room on campus.

This is such an inspiring action from them. This campaign has gained support from the Student Representative Council (SRC) and the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU). Last week, I and members of ISOC organized a banner painting and a successful speak-out with speakers from the SRC and NTEU, and we have been able to distribute hundreds of flyers to the students during O-week.

The students and staffs will continue praying on the Main Walkway every Friday between 1pm and 2pm till they get their prayer room back, so come and show your support!

BEAKERS, BOOBS, AND BELLY LAUGHS

WILFRED BRANDT

Were the 1980s the most scientifically advanced decade EVER?!?

Yes.

Along with neon, asymmetrical clothing, and incredibly, incredibly bad music (which we are still reliving, unfortunately), the 80s had an unhealthy obsession with science. Well, at least if you go by what was portrayed in that decade's equally terrible teen comedies.

Blame it on video games, synthesizers, Bill Gates and the advent of the home computer (with its creepy, cultish 1984 commercial), or desperation for a firm hairspray; for whatever reason, the 80s produced a disproportionate number of films about geeky guys with mad science skills who somehow get to see lots of boobs. These films are 80% awful, 20% amazing.

So come with me to a mythical land from before you were born, where homemade robots served drinks, there were laser sets of whoopee cushions, and a giant marshmallow man attacked Manhattan.

REVENGE OF THE NERDS - 1984

Techno-fear must have been running rampant amongst the Alpha males of America. What else could prompt this tale of terror re: a group of pocket protector dorks? The hot girls and sporty jocks pick on a nerd-based fraternity so relentlessly, they are forced to retaliate by putting liquid heat in their jock straps and surveillance cameras in the girl's change room. How the surveillance cameras actually count as "revenge", I'm not sure, but this plot point provides access to copious boob shots. Boob shots, I did those at a bar in Tijuana once... long story... The nerds also build a robot that serves drinks, create "wonder joints" and get super stoned, and scheme to win the annual frat decathlon by inventing a super high tech go kart, and playing a bitchin' electronic rock tune (complete with robotic dance moves). Scientific advances these astute, we would never see again!



SHE BLINDED ME WITH SCIENCE THOMAS DOLBY - 1982

In this classic music video, Thomas Dolby (besot with oddly swept strands of Flock of Seagulls hair) arrives at a home for "deranged scientists". He tells a shrink his tale of woe, which basically involves ballroom dancing with a girl painted like a violin. Weirdo. To round this out, maniacal scientists traipse the lawns in smoldering roller skates, and a four-pronged butterfly net. Hey, this was the 80s, where high concept video making meant nonsensical pretense. Go figure.

“ABOUT AS MUCH CHARM AS A DIGITALLY ANIMATED TURD.”

ZAPPED! - 1982

Nothing else says 1980s like Scott Baio. In this lighthearted comedy about levitation and boobs, the former “Chachi” from Happy Days (nee Charles from Charles in Charge) is a horny teenager whose science experiment accidentally gives him telekinetic POW-ERRRRRS! Like any good old-fashioned American teen, Baio doesn’t use his new powers to stop dams from flooding in third world countries or prevent earthquakes. Instead he makes girls’ tops flop down and skirts fly up. I learned more in this 96-minute film than all my years of sex ed.

GHOSTBUSTERS - 1984

Blockbuster geekdom! Dan Aykroyd, Bill Murray and Harold Ramis run out of grant funding for their wacky science experiments and have to go into business. As paranormal investigators who kick ghost’s asses! (or, their transparent asses, or their lack thereof) Of course, coincidence! There’s a spiritual uprising of a long-dead Babylonian demon who possesses both hot-tottie Sigourney Weaver and nerdlinger Rick Moranis, and before you know it Manhattan is over-run with ghosts. “Who you gonna call?”

WEIRD SCIENCE - 1985

Gary and Wyatt are two lovable high school geeks (played by Anthony Michael Hall and some guy with a whiny voice). They are also, as the French say, “suh-pair hor-nay” (are you noticing a pattern developing here?). So they do what any science dork with more floppy discs than chest hairs would do – they build a woman! Some computer hacking and paranormal activity lead to super model Kelly Le Brock busting into their room. Of course it all goes wrong and before you know it its snowing in the living room and there’s a nuclear missile coming out of the floor, and they have to get it all cleaned up before Wyatt’s parents come home!

REAL GENIUS - 1985

High school student Mitch gets recruited to a high profile uni because of his science fair project working with laser beams. His roommate is senior party animal Val Kilmer, who is like, SO over being responsible and wants to be wacky and funny and annoying 24/7. They freeze their dormitory hallways and ice skate, grow oversized fruit (why?), build their own beds, and throw a pool party in the gymnasium - you know, the usual - before discovering that their professor wants to use their research for an outer space laser beam! What a dick. The good guys misdirect the laser, so that (spoiler alert!) it fills the bad guys’ house with instant popcorn. THE END.

BACK TO THE FUTURE - 1985

What is it with ‘mad scientists’? Half these movies have a genius with wild hairdo who is socially inept. Back to the Future is a compelling artifact in that it combines the 1980s fascination with revisiting the ‘wholesome’ 1950s (Happy Days, etc) with the equally 80s fascination with science, time travel, and more. Improbably geeky Michael J. Fox accidentally gets transported back to the ‘50s during a time machine experiment (in a sports car) with wacky next-door-neighbor-mad-scientist-type Christopher Lloyd (“Doc”). Problem is, not only does Marty now have to get back “to the future” (title!), he also needs to squelch his mother’s growing desire to hump him (eww!) and redirect her interest to his intended father... otherwise Marty will never be born! Huh? Existential crisis, time travel, Huey Lewis and the News, skateboarding, and the always unavoidably fantastic Crispin Glover cement this film’s status as a “two bag o’ potato chips” rental par excellence.

SHORT CIRCUIT - 1986

With about as much charm as a digitally animated turd, perky puppetized robot sidekick “Number 5” stars in this comedy alongside 80s staple Steve Guttenberg (“Guttenberg” surely has to be slang for some gross sexual fetish by now). Stevie G. works for the government building Number 5, who, after being struck by lightning, Number 5 comes to life and escapes. He befriends Ally Sheedy and hilarity – or eye-gouging, bile-inducing, cringe-filled viewing – ensue!

YOUNG EINSTEIN - 1988

Young Yahoo Serious (yes, that was his name) wrote and directed this fictional bio-pic of everyone’s favorite bad hair day, Albert Einstein. But this time, Einstein ain’t from Germany, mate. He’s from Tassie. And he doesn’t waste time with crap like the theory of rela-shit-a-ty (BORE-ING). He invents rock and roll, diffuses an atomic bomb with his guitar, and discovers the secret of “splitting the beer atom”. Whoa-ho! Who wants to party?

Head over to Dr. What video store in Bondi Junction to rent all these and more. Seriously, I love Dr. What, I could live there.



NAOMI KLEIN IN HAITI

KYLAR LOUSSIKIAN

Free-market economists love to hate her, but anti-globalisation activists think she couldn't be more right. Naomi Klein, the foremost critic of corporate globalisation, argues neo-con governments and big business use catastrophe to force through agendas that would be unachievable in times of stability. Some see a paranoid conspiracy theorist, others a beacon in a world that skewed towards the very rich. Both positions are wrong. Klein often does make a good point – and then goes on making it and making it till it's unmade.

On 13 January, a little over 24 hours after the devastating Haitian earthquake, the right wing think-tank the Heritage Foundation already had suggestions for the reconstruction. The Foundation, whose mission statement includes 'free enterprise, limited government, traditional American values and a strong national defence', wrote that the disaster offered 'opportunities to the US' in the form of re-shaping Haiti's 'long-dysfunctional' government and countering Hugo Chavez's attempts at destabilising the region. Klein's response was immediate and reflexive. She claimed that instead of Haiti owing debts to the IMF, it was the victim of failed policies imposed by that same organisation.

Who could blame her? In Klein's book *The Shock Doctrine*, she reels off a long list of ties between the U.S. political establishment and corporate interests. The Iraq war was one of Halliburton's most profitable years ever. Famously, Dick Cheney is a former Halliburton former CEO, and still owns company stock. It is also true that IMF restructuring policies in the 1970s and 80s caused huge detriment in the developing world. In Haiti, the price of staples like rice collapsed after tariffs were cut from 35% to 3%, resulting in impoverishment. In Malawi, similar 'restructuring programs' brought poverty and starvation.

“Klein often does make a good point – and then goes on making it and making it till it’s unmade.”

The problem is that Klein applies the shock doctrine as a blanket criticism of the entire crisis. As a critique of the IMF and a warning of the dangers of political lobbying in Washington and around the world, the shock doctrine works well. As a critique of a global conspiracy by multinational corporations to impose globalisation across the world at a time of disaster may be stretching the point.

Klein has made a career out of, as author and filmmaker Stephen Marshall put it, ‘mining the deep discontent of her progressive audience’. Others on the left, however, don’t see the rebuilding of Haiti as an exercise in neoconservative invasion; Mark Engler and other journalists may admire Klein, but disagree with her simplification of complicated relationships between disasters and globalisation.

On Klein’s connection of the Iraq War with a gang of George Bush’s neoconservative organizations, Engler argues that there is no group of monolithic co-conspirators. ‘Aside from a few billion dollar contracts awarded to companies with close ties to the Bush Administration, the adversarial, unilateral approach taken by the neoconservative authors of the conflict has deeply rattled the multinational consensus that is the framework and foundation for the globalisation effort’. American companies such as Disney or Coca-Cola depend heavily on ‘the quotient of goodwill that America secures from the rest of the world.’ Global capital was, according to Engler, against the war, and would ‘prefer Clinton’s multilateral globalisation to Bush’s imperial vision’.

It’s also worth questioning whether the impetus for invasion came from corporations or governments. The Iraqi constitution has been desecrated to allow foreign ownership, privatise all state companies, give out massive tax breaks and reduce a progressive tax system to a low flat tax. But in many ways this is nothing more than opportunism, and pales in comparison to the goal of securing American hegemony over a strategically important region. Stephen Holmes writes that if Cheney “followed any example in his dim plans for post-invasion Iraq, it was not Milton Friedman’s but Ariel Sharon’s.”

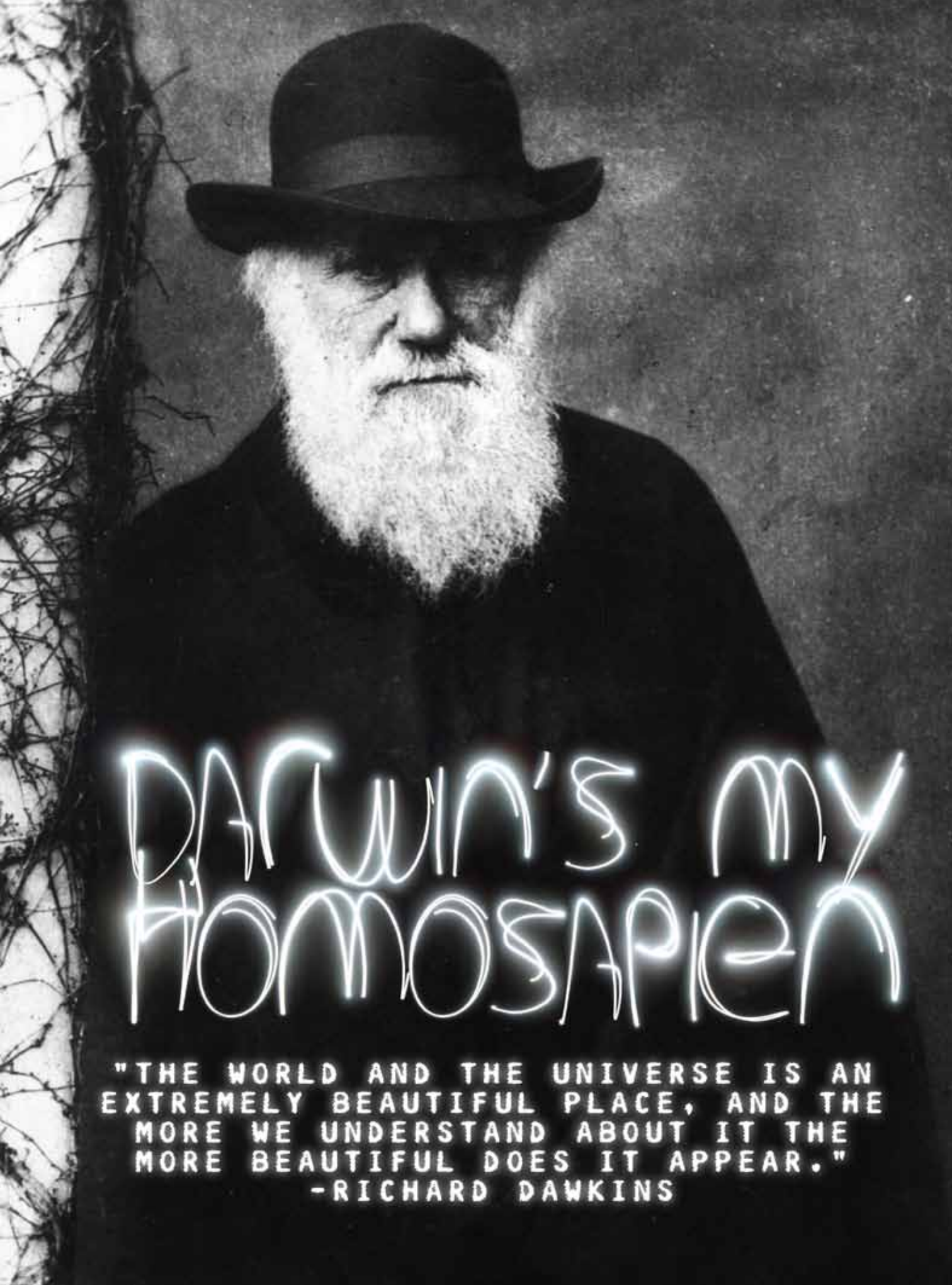
Finally and most obviously, disaster will always discriminate against the poor as the rich are better equipped (disaster insurance, normalisations funds etc) to absorb shocks.

Crucial to the Shock Doctrine is an ability of shocks to ‘depattern’ minds, a concept Klein drew from CIA experiments on electroshock therapy from the 1950’s. Klein argues, for example, that the looting of the National Museum in Baghdad was a form of “cultural lobotomy”, a collective shock treatment meant to “depattern the minds of Iraqis and reduce their capacity to resist free-market reforms.” It doesn’t quite follow how access to ancient manuscripts in a library would have allowed Iraqis to resist a radical economic agenda. Her own interviews, according to Holmes, “show that the victims of Katrina, while too poorly organised to fight the wealthy forces arrayed against them, didn’t not have their minds ‘depatterned’ by the storm, but understood from the first exactly what was being done to them.” Values such as helping others in need are not eroded overnight, no matter what the shock.

It’s also worth noting that the Shock Doctrine runs both ways. According to the New Republic: ‘The notion that crises create fertile terrain for political change, far from being a ghoulish doctrine unique to free-market radicals, is a banal and ideologically universal fact...Liberals could not have enacted the New Deal without the Great Depression’. As ideologically grotesque as The Heritage Foundation manages to be, it makes a valid point when it labels Haiti’s former government as dysfunctional. Haiti will change, and must change.

Klein makes several valid points, including her most important, that Haitians should have a voice in where the relief money should be spent. At her urging, popular pressure stopped the IMF from granting additional unfavourable loans. Johan Hari of the London Independent reported that the IMF had backed down on its new loan issue, and publicly renounced all the conditions to the debt. It even said ‘it would work to cancel Haiti’s entire debt’, showing how public pressure can be used to oppose vested interests within the IMF and its paymaster, Washington.

The problem with the Shock Doctrine is that it conflates disasters, wars, and societal ills into a single, straightforward explanation. It would be better for Klein to stop confusing her rhetoric and history, and begin focusing on using the obvious support she enjoys to sway the agenda in favour of liberal, non-vested interest.



DARWIN'S MY HOMOSAPIEN

"THE WORLD AND THE UNIVERSE IS AN
EXTREMELY BEAUTIFUL PLACE, AND THE
MORE WE UNDERSTAND ABOUT IT THE
MORE BEAUTIFUL DOES IT APPEAR."

-RICHARD DAWKINS

SMALL BREASTS AND GOLDEN SHOWERS

Alice Lang wonders why you can't see them.

How much do you know about what is permitted in adult videos in Australia? Did that question make you blush? Did you gag when you heard recently that films depicting female ejaculation and small breasted women are refused classification? The thrust of the censor's argument is that small breasted women may be mistaken by viewers for underage girls. Female ejaculation can be mistaken for urination – and 'golden showers' are also banned.

The Office of Film and Literature guidelines say films should be judged on 'the standards of morality, decency and propriety generally accepted by reasonable adults'. This means that the censors need to take account of community concerns about depictions that condone or incite violence, particularly sexual violence; and the portrayal of persons in a demeaning manner.

Further, the Office does not allow consensual depictions which purposefully demean a person for the viewers' enjoyment. Fetishes such as 'golden showers' are not permitted. Neither are depictions of non-adult persons, including those aged 16 or 17, nor adult persons who look like they are under eighteen. It is stated in the ratings guide that if a film promotes or provides instruction in paedophile activity, involves gratuitous, exploitative or offensive depictions of sexual violence, or depicts bestiality or other fantasies and fetishes which are offensive or abhorrent, then it will be refused classification.

Now, aside from the fact that one person's abhorrent fetish is another person's dream date, there is more at stake here than the right of an adult to watch whatever he or she likes.

Let's deal with female ejaculation first. The reason this is an issue is that the Board views depictions of female ejaculation as being, in fact, depictions of urination. Before you say that sounds like a reasonable mistake, consider the fact that one of the reasons they made that decision was because they doubt the science of female ejaculation. In short, they do not believe it exists. The British Board of Film Classification was the pioneer behind this thinking.

Does this represent simple sexism - an unwillingness to believe in the full range of female sexual experience? Why it should be necessary to censor an involuntary act on the part of a woman? This suggests that she is some sort of freak, and should be ashamed about the way her body functions. This isn't, and shouldn't be, how we seek to represent people in our new and enlightened age.



There is controversy about female ejaculation, with some seminal research conducted by Whipple and Perry in 1981. However, even if the Office doubts the existence of female ejaculation, it does beg the question of why male, and not female, ejaculation is permitted on screen. Arguably, it should be equally difficult to distinguish what's coming out from urine if you're not up close and personal.

'Golden showers', between consenting adults, and in the privacy of...wherever, are not illegal. When they are used on screen as an expression of domination, there is an argument that the film should be refused classification. But when that refusal is based on scepticism about whether or not women can ejaculate, it's time for the Board to reconsider what paradigm they're working with.

Now onto breasts: discussions about this have prompted some fabulous statements, including a denial from the Office that there was a defined breast size at which point the censorship curtains came down. Obviously I don't condone paedophilia. But it's hard not to see the message this could send: if you're not well endowed, you're not a real woman. Without big breasts, you're unattractive. Not to mention the fact that it makes partners of women with comparatively small breasts look like perverts and paedophiles.

No one condones the exploitation of children. It's difficult to countenance a situation where films containing sexual material also include people who are child-like in appearance. But we should also feel great concern about insisting on an arbitrary standard of 'womanliness', and classing a normal female body as obscene.

It's difficult to tell how much traction this issue is going to gain in the Australian public. Female ejaculation and golden showers are probably a niche market, and child pornography an illegal one. Still, it's worth considering the implications for how this country approaches classification: with immense fear and skepticism about the ability of adults to judge what they watch and how they act. When government body implies that a man who sleeps with a small-breasted woman is a paedophile, this does not help anyone make healthy decisions about sex.

Although there's always the option of individual breasts tattooed with a date of birth, flashed to the camera before the film gets underway. That could start a whole new niche in itself.





Prayer
and
Protest



Prayer
and
Protest



Prayer
and
Protest



Su-Min Lim investigates a dispute between the Islamic Society and the University.

It is a hot Friday afternoon during O-Week and there are 300 men kneeling in prayer on the main walkway. Their shoes have been removed and lie in neat piles to the side. At the head of the congregation an imam in a long white garment and conical cap issues an ululating call which is echoed through a set of speakers. It is a peaceful scene except that it is also a protest. The Islamic Society of UNSW (ISOC) has gathered its members to express anger at what it perceives to be anti-Muslim discrimination by the University administration. On the other side of the walkway, a small group of non-Muslim student supporters have erected a placard reading 'FIGHT UNSW RACISM'. The men bow and touch their heads to the ground in unison.

The situation is thus. Muslims at UNSW have long had permission to pray in the Anzac and Kensington rooms of the Squarehouse. In November, however, that permission was revoked. The University said the space was needed for exams. At the end of the examination period the ban continued, and the University says that due to construction at the Paddington campus the building is now required to house COFA students. The University has offered the Sam Cracknell Pavilion as an alternative prayer location. ISOC regards this venue as inadequate.

ISOC's response to the perceived injustice has been both indignant and coordinated. In January this year it issued a press release entitled "Discrimination against Muslims from the University Administration", alleging, amongst other things: that the 120-person capacity of the Sam Cracknell Pavilion is too small, that the University is actively discriminating against Muslim students and staff, and that female students in particular are suffering discrimination. Weekly 'prayer protests' have been held on the main walkway, a YouTube video purports to document 'The Real Situation Faced by Muslim students at the University of New South Wales', letter writing campaigns have been orchestrated and disgruntled remarks about Fred Hilmer have even found their way onto SBS.

“The Islamic Society is rather good at complaining.”

Just before O-Week I met with the president of ISOC, Elias Attia, to discuss the dispute. Small, friendly and carrying a half-drunk iced chocolate from the Coffee Republic, Elias cut a likeable figure as he explained his position and the demands that ISOC has placed upon the University. I asked him what the protests were about. “We’re protesting the fact that there are no adequate facilities being provided for Muslim students to perform their Friday prayers.”

What has been the university’s response?

“Fred Hilmer personally said, and you should get this in quotes, that ‘The provision of prayer facilities is a courtesy, and not a right of students.’ Our argument against that is threefold. We disagree... because prayer facilities add value to the university. Secondly the University says over and over again in its online advertising, in its YouTube video, ‘Muslim Life On Campus’, in its advertisements in Middle Eastern newspapers that it will cater for the needs of Muslim students... Thirdly, other religious groups have their needs taken care of and we don’t see why we should be the only ones who are excluded.”

I asked in what sense the Islamic society has been excluded in comparison to other religions.

“What it [the University] can do is provide a reasonable accommodation for the needs of the students in proportion to the number of students that are available and in proportion to the need that the students have. So when we say that other students’ needs have been met, we mean that there is a Unichurch on campus... The Buddhist students have a place in Level 3 of the Squarehouse that has meditation rooms...and that is able to cater for their needs, given their numbers are not as large as ours.”

Listening to Elias, I found it difficult to justify his claim that Muslim students are being victimised in comparison to other religious groups. The Islamic Society already enjoys greater privileges

than, say, the Buddhist Society, which conducts events in the Lodge of the Squarehouse – a much smaller venue than Sam Cracknell. Elias, however, has a more extensive definition of the University’s obligations. He claims that it must provide religious services in proportion to the “need and numbers” of students available. I asked him how many Muslims students there are at UNSW. ‘The University thinks there’s around 5000 students... [but] we don’t want to concede that. We don’t know how many students there are.’ He offered no alternative figure. Neither did he provide a means of defining religious “need” other than saying that other religious groups “are not complaining [about] the level of services they have been provided with.” Apparently the act of complaining in itself generates a right to services, and a corresponding obligation on the university to provide them.

It soon became clear that the Islamic Society is rather good at complaining. A YouTube video endorsed by ISOC, ‘The Reality of Muslim Life on Campus’, features footage of students praying in the corridors of the Squarehouse, an act of protest against their ‘banishment’ to Sam Cracknell. A looping melancholy piano track plays over the indignant text – “Where do they pray? Toilet corridors!” – while the camera lingers over the Male and Female signs, for all the world as if praying in a hallway with access to bathrooms were the same as the dank wet passage to a public latrine.

ISOC’s website also alleges particular discrimination against female Muslim students. The website features a selection of ‘Emails from Sisters’. Some excerpts:

“It...concerns me that I am restricted from attending the Obligatory Friday Prayer as there is insufficient space for the men, so what space is left for the woman [sic]? Has the university taken this into consideration when providing the Islamic Society on Campus a venue to pray at? Or are woman completely disregarded?”

"I find the issue of insufficient prayer space appalling. We come to university in order to empower ourselves and step out into the world and make a change in society. However if we cannot do this in the realm of UNSW and if we cannot exercise our right to practise our religion to its fullest, then I don't see any point in pursuing further education."

Several things disturbed me about these letters. How, I wanted to ask, is it the University's fault that women are restricted from attending Friday prayers? The University merely provides access to a space. It does not stipulate how that space should be used. If the Islamic Society decides that prayer space should be allocated firstly to men and only secondly to women, then it is they and not the University who are guilty of discrimination.

When I asked Elias about this he explained that, "In our religion, Friday prayers are compulsory on men [sic] but optional on women [sic]." Fine. But if those are your beliefs, then don't hold the University responsible for them.

Another thing I found bothersome was the use of the language of rights in support of ideas which are the opposite of the human rights philosophy. It's strange to see words like 'empowerment', intended to connote strength and self-reliance, co-opted for what can only be described as petulant whining. Why get educated if you can't pray at Uni? Maybe for the academic challenge, financial independence and intellectual capacity to engage in a reasoned debate. If empowerment means defining your destiny according to your abilities, then a university education is pretty damn empowering, prayer room or no prayer room. It's clear the writer of that letter has not the faintest idea what the word means.

The irony of the whole dispute is that the University seems to be bending over backwards to accommodate the Islamic Society's demands. The Scientia building was offered in weeks 1 and 2, and a project is underway to upgrade the women's toilet facilities at the Sam Cracknell in order to accommodate female worshippers. Not bad for a racist organisation. The response of the Islamic Society was predictable. That two weeks in the Scientia is only a 'short term solution'. That the Sam Cracknell was unavailable during O Week. That they want a permanent space to 'consolidate the society'.

It's important to note that not all Muslims on campus should be held responsible for the prayer room campaign. Due to dwindling membership the Islamic Society executive were not actually elected this year, despite claims to the contrary on their

Facebook page and website. This means that the majority of the five thousand Muslim students at the University had no say in choosing the people who now claim to be their representatives. Neither is the Islamic Society itself a homogenous group. I got the impression that Elias himself is much more reasonable and open to compromise than other members of his society. Nevertheless, the public face of ISOC as represented through its press releases, protests and media campaigns seems to be one of obstinacy, obstructionism and an overdeveloped sense of entitlement.

Which brings us back to the idea of rights. Crucially, human rights are about empathy. They are about identifying inequity, putting yourself in another's shoes and imagining ways in which we as a society can render abuses unthinkable. This is what makes the Islamic Society's behaviour so frustrating – the sheer refusal to imagine the needs of other students at the University. Nowhere in ISOC's press release, Facebook group or website does it acknowledge the possibility that at a busy University there are many groups competing for space, that the needs of these groups need to be balanced and that everyone needs to show flexibility.

Human rights are also about language. They derive a great deal of their power from rhetorical force, channelling the instinctive sense that 'this cannot be' into words which describe where injustice comes from. Discrimination. Disempowerment. When groups such as the Islamic Society take the concept of rights and cheapen it by reducing it to a tool in service of their own self-interest, they have the potential to damage the movement for human rights as a whole.

Of course Muslim students should not be made to feel inferior to those from other religious groups. But neither should they enjoy special privileges on campus. The University is a secular institution. Its purpose is to provide an academic education, not to further the cause of any particular religion or of religion in general. Non-discrimination means that no religion should be victimised or excluded. It does not mean handing a particular religious group everything that they want at the precise moment that they want it.

I spoke to a friend who is a seasoned worker in several human rights organisations. I told him about the dispute, and the claim by the Islamic Society that they are victims of discrimination. His response:


"It's like a child crying when they don't actually have a broken foot."

Behind the Blockade

ELSE KENNEDY



Images of the battle between the Tasmanian logging industry and community protestors have cycled through the media for years. Forestry Tasmania and logging companies have supported the island's economy for generations. But with increasingly mechanised processes and the threat of a pulp mill in the north, the forests are set to disappear faster than ever. Else Kennedy travelled to the Upper Florentine Valley to visit 'Camp Floz', the longest ongoing forest blockade in Tasmania.



I travelled to the Upper Florentine blockade in a beat-up old plumber's van, painted a mottled blue by its previous owner, a French backpacker. There was a red kangaroo and the words 'You can run but you can't hide' on the side door. Groaning and rumbling, the van rattled slowly through the grassy paddocks and old timber towns with their closed timber mills and populations that are dwindling as the timber industry moves further west.

I first heard about the blockade at the Southern Forests Convergence, a gathering in Hobart of conservation groups working to protect Tasmania's forests. Campaigners on all kinds of environmental issues had travelled through the valley and been inspired or compelled to action by what they found. I was curious to visit this place for myself. I wanted to hear how it got to this point, and why people have chosen this way to 'speak out'.

A winding forest road took us past the Styx Valley and up and over a ridge into the Florentine, where a banner strung high in the trees announced: 'Still Wild, Still Threatened'. The next banner along the road read 'Toot for Old Growth!'.

There are many conservation organisations in Tasmania working to protect old growth forests from logging, but this group was taking the campaign straight to its source. Lauren, a campaigner with Still Wild Still Threatened, explained that "Direct action is really important, especially in Tassie forests. We can't just write a letter to a minister, because the government condones what is happening here. If we write to the government we are writing to Forestry Tasmania. I am on the blockade because everything else seems futile. We need to tell the rest of the world what is happening - the government isn't going to do anything."

Inside the gates of the blockade, behind the camp kitchen and a cozy campfire, a trench has been dug through the gravel road, wide enough to sink the wheels of a bulldozer and passable only by a thin wooden footbridge. Behind the trench a colourfully painted 'dragon' forms a second roadblock - a beat up old car buried in the road and set with concrete, with a metal 'lock-on' pipe inside. Above this, attached to the frame of the car, is an enormous wooden structure, suspended with ropes and attached by a cable to a tree sit hidden in the forest. Should the Structure be moved, the tree sit will fall, along with the person inside. These techniques have been developed over years of blockading. They are designed to hold the logging trucks off for as long as possible.

According to Still Wild Still Threatened, the Upper Florentine Valley "contains hundreds of hectares of threatened old-growth forest and is bordered on three sides by the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. It is home to globally significant tracts of ancient forest, one on the most extensive cave systems in Australia, pristine wild rivers and creeks, spectacular mountain ranges and outstanding examples of Indigenous and European cultural heritage. It also provides habitat for native fauna including the endangered Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle, pink robins, echidnas, wombats, possums, wallabies, pademelons and Tasmanian devils."

According to Nish, "You don't see instant change. I've been blockading for 3 years, and half the places I have lived in don't exist anymore, they've been smashed. The camps have been destroyed and the forests have been logged. It's hard to take." It makes me wonder at the mentality of the activists living on the blockade. I have been here only a few days, and every time a loaded logging truck rumbles past a sad little frown creeps across my forehead. I ask them if they get worn out.

“Even if they’ve smashed everything,
at least you’ve said no. At least
you’ve done something.”



“Absolutely” says Mike, “but at the end of the day, even if they’ve smashed everything, at least you’ve said no. At least you’ve done something.”

And what about the forestry workers? A lot of people in neighbouring towns make their living from logging. Mike tells me “I hate stopping a person trying to do his job. I’ve met logging contractors who aren’t happy working in these areas. Rainforest wood is good timber. It’s good for boats and furniture, but 80% of what they log here is going to woodchip. It’s an incredible waste. According to legislation, [a logger] has done nothing wrong, but I think what he is doing is morally wrong. It is the industry we are trying to stop, but we have to stop contractors in the process.” Jess agrees “We know we are targeting the wrong people. It’s Gunns [the timber company] and Forestry Tasmania who should be seeing us every day. But if we’re not out here 24/7, it’ll be gone”.

Nish tells me how he became a forest activist. “I was at uni, but I dropped out. I had an Environmental Management course and my lecturer told me ‘you need to get out there and do something’. So I did. I couldn’t sit at uni, I didn’t have that mindset”. He explains the impact of different forest blockades he has observed over the years:

“I could give you a list of areas that are now on the map, places that are up for logging that 5 years ago nobody had heard of. The Upper Florentine, the Wedge, the Styx, the Weld, the Picton, the Arve, the Council, the Esperance. Because of blockades and actions, these names are now on TV, in newspapers, on the radio.

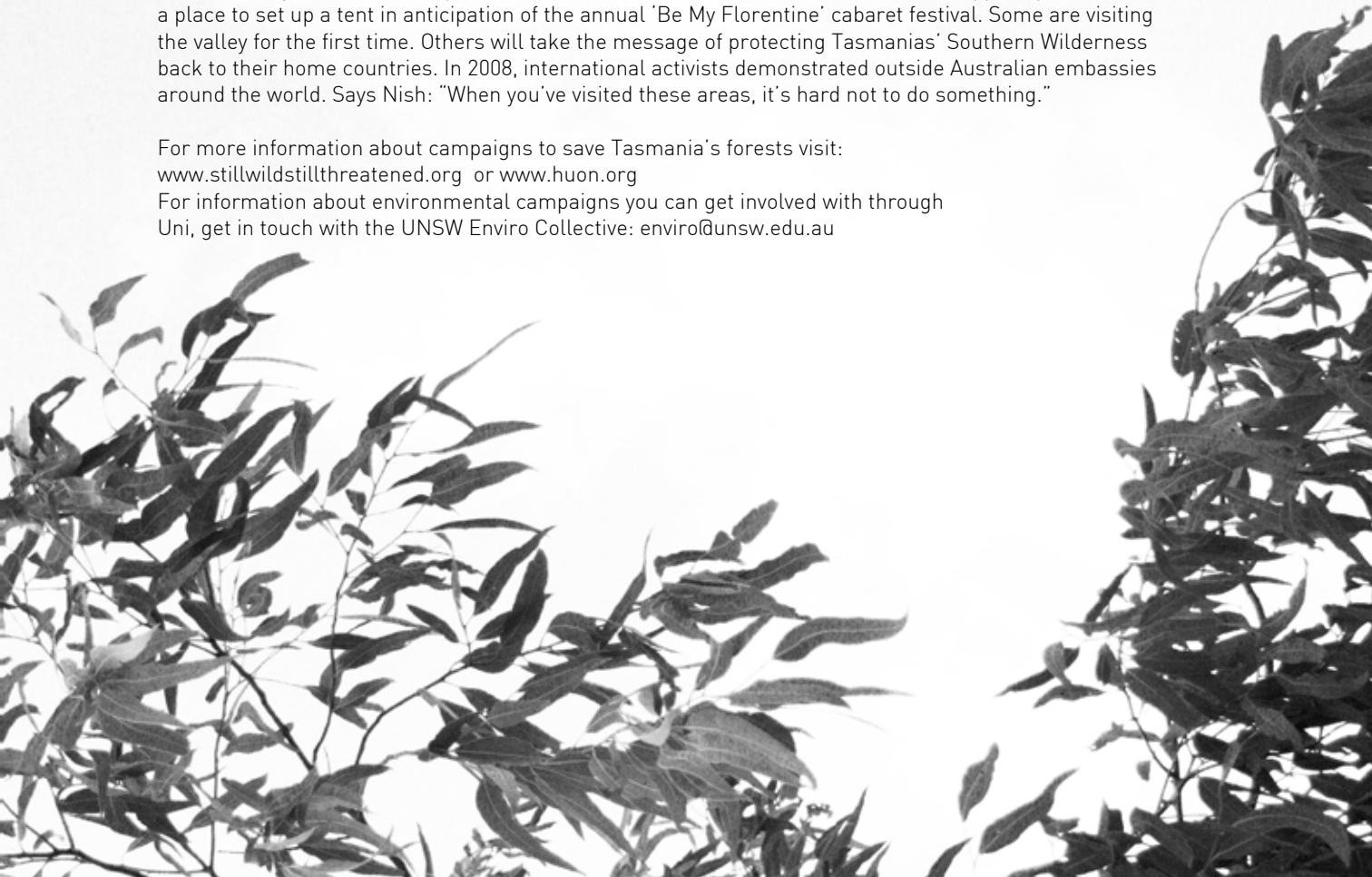


"[The Florentine] is a valley that people would not have known about. People drive past and don't know what is happening here. We are able to tell them what's happening, to walk them through and show them the areas that are going to be destroyed."

In the evening the Forest Camp comes alive. Tourists from all over the world have stopped by for a meal and a place to set up a tent in anticipation of the annual 'Be My Florentine' cabaret festival. Some are visiting the valley for the first time. Others will take the message of protecting Tasmania's Southern Wilderness back to their home countries. In 2008, international activists demonstrated outside Australian embassies around the world. Says Nish: "When you've visited these areas, it's hard not to do something."

For more information about campaigns to save Tasmania's forests visit:
www.stillwildstillthreatened.org or www.huon.org

For information about environmental campaigns you can get involved with through Uni, get in touch with the UNSW Enviro Collective: enviro@unsw.edu.au



YOU GET LOST - IT! GET OVER IT!

Matt Kwan says things.

The world is full of people who can't get over the fact that they just lost. This happens a lot in sports, where instead of blaming their own lack of skill, they blame the officials. In these cases, it usually doesn't matter a great deal, as most sportspeople are generally incapable of much verbal expression and are not taken seriously as a result. However, it is very worrying and problematic when large organisations and even countries fail to accept defeat.

The Sea Shepherd Organisation is one of them. They spend lots of money in an effort to stop Japanese whalers from killing whales. Their modus operandi is to use large black ships to ram whaling vessels or otherwise block their path to cetacean slaughter. They claim great success, but the Japanese still manage to kill many whales all the time.

Recently, the Sea Shepherds foolishly attempted to use a small fibreglass speedboat to block the path of a large whaling vessel. Unsurprisingly, this puny boat lost when the whaling vessel carved through it. In a case of the pot calling the kettle black, the Sea Shepherds quickly accused the Japanese of attempted murder and then sent a member of their eco-terrorism department onto the whaler to perform a citizen's arrest on the whaler's captain. In a foregone conclusion, he failed.

This is an example of an organisation which just doesn't know when to give up. The Japanese are not going to stop whaling. Eco-terrorism makes you look stupid. Further, when you lose a fight you started, it is a bit silly to accuse the other side of not playing fair when they didn't even know they were in a fight in the first place.

It looks much worse, however, when countries cannot get over defeat. Take the Argentines and the Falkland Islands, a British colony. In 1982, they went to war over them, successfully invading the Falklands, but only temporarily, ultimately falling to the mighty British force sent to recover them.

Recently, Argentina floated the idea of a blockade of the Falklands, presumably to offer its inhabitants no choice but to submit to Argentine rule. This is a silly idea. As every successful coloniser knows, the trick is to make the inhabitants like you, not hate your guts because you are the reason that their guts are devoid of nourishment.



More worrying is the Argentine failure to recognise when it is time to give up. It is clear that their military is not up to scratch. Most Argentine people do not care about the Falklands, and never did, even in 1982. The invasion was started in 1982 simply for the government at the time to boost its popularity. Further, the residents of Falkland Islands are very British in many respects, with no ties to Argentina.

The worst example, however, is Palestine. Unhappy with the fact that the new nation of Israel had taken over much of their land, they abandoned the 1948 treaty and went to war, whereupon they lost heavily and ended up with much less territory than they started with – nothing – as Egypt and Jordan ultimately took over their lands. A further war in 1967 resulted in zero gain, as Israel defeated the Arabs and took control of both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Unfortunately, Palestinians do not seem to know the meaning of defeat. Instead, they continue to wage war against the Israeli state, by blowing themselves up at regular intervals, a method that seems counter-intuitive. They also use home-made artillery to shell isolated Israeli villages.

In response, Israel built a big wall to keep terrorists out, and uses high-tech weapons and brute force to annihilate any and all Palestinian terrorists who dare rise up against their mighty nation, provided, of course, that the terrorists have not already blown themselves up already. This seems like a mis-match, because it is. One then wonders why the Palestinians even bother.

The futility of Palestinian resistance is emphasised by the recent slaying of a Palestinian terrorist mastermind on a terrorism-planning excursion in Dubai. Israeli agents, using forged passports, entered Dubai and assassinated him. This was an operation that had the dual purpose of fighting terrorism and providing a valuable lesson about identity fraud. Remember people, keep your passports in a safe place.

Quite simply, there is no way that Palestinians are ever going to win. There is no escape from the far-reaching arms of Israel. They should just get over it and try to live happily ever after. They could even try to be nice to Israel for a change. The power of the art of gentle persuasion is not to be underestimated.



Don't Feed the TROLLS

BART JAMES

Troll v. to fish for or in with a moving line, working the line up or down with a rod, as in fishing for pike, or trailing the line behind a slow-moving boat.

Troll n. any of a race of supernatural beings, sometimes conceived as giants and sometimes as dwarfs, inhabiting caves or subterranean dwellings.

It's very hard for me not to admire a talented troll. Anyone who interrupts a polite and well-informed discussion with some inflammatory or tedious remark is a troll, and not all are good at it, but there are some who dangle their bait, working it up and down patiently until they get the bite they want.

"This plant is basil".

"It's mint".

"It's basil".

"It's mint".

"It's BASIL, BASIL!!!!".

We should do something before it all gets out of hand. We need to learn to swim past the bait. There's no need to let trolls hijack the national conversation – we should study the elements of trolling so we can avoid its traps.

A short time ago I saw the greatest troll in the universe. It was an interview on Lateline. Tony Jones was moderating a debate between two people on opposite sides of the climate change issue: George Monbiot, eloquent adaptive journalist concerned for the planet's future and the misinformation campaign that threatens to ruin everything; and some old white guy with sideburns called Ian Plimer, who has a background in geology and dislikes taxes.

Plimer's assertions were questioned, rebutted, falsified; and yet he kept coming, without regard for personal dignity. When a factual claim in his book was exposed he thumbed through it with some old man mutterings ("now let me see, what page was it..."), as the interview seconds ticked down and the force of the question melted into his brylcreem.

Monbiot's face was red; veins stood out on his forehead. Even Tony Jones got a bit fired up. The theatre was incredible. Plimer was the only one smiling by the end.

I wanted to know how Plimer, who was so wrong, got to have all the fun, and how the people speaking reason got so worked up by his bait. How did Plimer reel in these big fishes?

I think the answer lies in a film produced by John Cleese, called *How to Irritate People*, which taught me the first thing I know about trolling: never let



them know you know. To irritate someone beyond the outermost limits of their human patience, you have to seem completely unaware that you are annoying them at all. If you let the target know it's all just a joke, the game is up. Nobody gets more furious than the fellow whose logic and careful proofs destroys your arguments but sails harmlessly past your willingness to repeat them.

"But we stopped the boats. We stopped the boats".

"But, ah, the evidence..."

"We stopped the boats!".

It's extremely difficult to rebut a really short sentence. In a contest between a carefully qualified, evidenced argument and some troll's one liner, the troll wins every time. Sometimes the troll is your housemate. "Hey I've taken the garbage three times in a row and I'm really tired and I just did all the washing and normally I'd just do it anyway but do you think this time, could you take the garbage this time please?" "Your Mum can take the garbage". Fail!

People won't get angry unless your outrageous statement is plausible. My Mum won't take your garbage, ever, but it's plausible. Go onto a motor sports discussion board and post this: 'Car racing isn't a real sport. Get off your bums and do some exercise'. Then stand back and watch the show.

Because it is a show. It is hard, extremely hard, not to laugh when a sincere moment is destroyed by an act of trolling. Think of the famous Warcraft Funeral Ambush. A player died in real life and her 'horde' decided to hold an online funeral for her in the world of Warcraft, with a pixellated coffin and everything. Then an army of other Warcraft players arrived and massacred everyone. In the words of a troll who was there: "They made a few mistakes: holding it in a contested zone, publicly posting that they were going to do it, and asking that no-one would interfere. How could we resist"?

Trolls do us an important service, in the end. The ones at South Park baited Richard Dawkins until he punctured his own aura of dignity, liberating atheism from a possible cult of personality. If you are depicted having sex with a transvestite, don't complain about it. Know the tricks, smile, and ignore. Otherwise, you deserve to flop and gasp on some gloating idiot's deck.

The Art of Giving (Lawsoc Style)

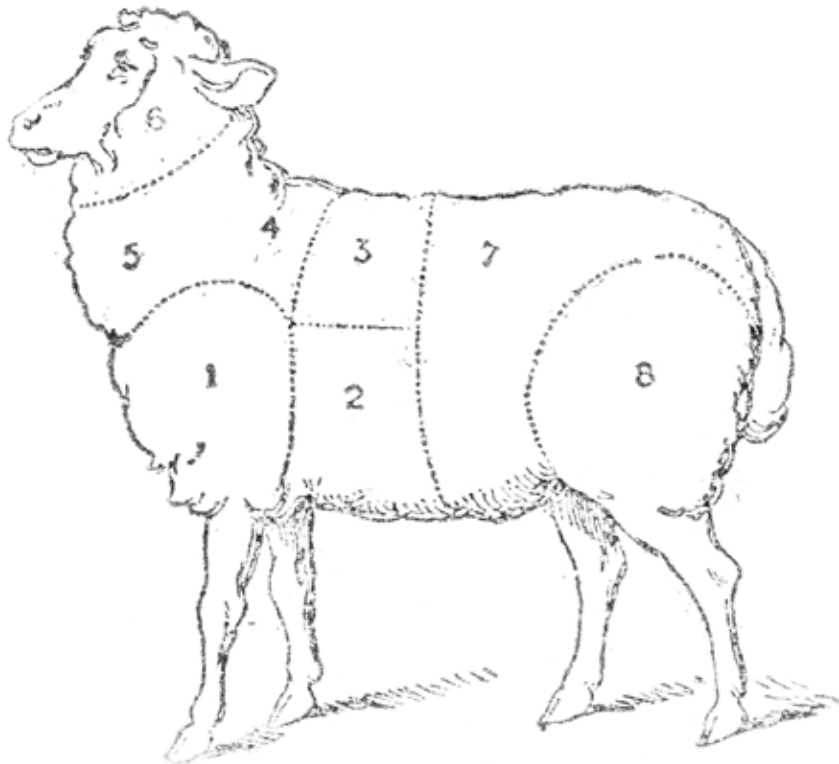
Extract from an advertisement for Shack Tutoring in the Week One edition of 'Innominate', a joint publication of the UNSW Law Society and UNSW Law Faculty:

"Want to volunteer with minimal commitment but lots of rewards? Want to meet new people and make a difference in someone's life?

...

Commitment is low as you only need to set aside 1 hour/week on any Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons between 3.30-6pm. No experience is needed. Training and tutoring materials will be provided, as well as snacks and some refreshments,

Additionally, your participation will be recognised officially in your supplementary transcript along with your academic transcript!"



MORVEN BROWN, I ADORE YOU

Cameron McPhedran declares his love.

It is apparent to me and I'm sure many other UNSW students that the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences is pretty much bankrupt. Reduced courses, larger lecture and tutorial sizes, and this semester we even have to print off our own course outlines! But this quantitatively-framed, neo-liberal assault on the value of Arts is, of course, old news. And while all Arts students and staff would know of and notice the marked cutbacks to their faculty, thankfully there is one key thing the University can't take away from the Morven Brown Building: its heart.

I started my undergraduate studies doing Combined Law. So perhaps a comparison between the Law Building and the Morven Brown Building would be helpful in fleshing out my point. The Law Building is angular, modern and colourful. It has shiny lifts, the office doors are so heavy it feels as if they are designed to survive a full strength nuclear assault and there are bubblers, couches for students and toilets seemingly wherever you turn. It has electronic doors and its own library replete with pages and pages of common law and legislation.

Some of the students and staff are friendly and engaging, many are not. There are Law Soc activities, mooting, Law Journal meetings, guest lectures and probably many other things going on. But, in the end, it always seemed to me that the Law Building (not to mention the Australian School of Business) lacks the most important feature of architectural design – soul. In a world dominated by modernisation and constant technological advancement this is all too often forgotten.

Morven Brown, on the other hand, is a place which generally makes me feel really positive. Not knowing the exact history of UNSW, I would presume based on its physical condition that it is one of the University's foundational buildings. It certainly feels dated. We have to open the doors manually and there is only one lift instead of three. There is also a generally confusing set-up which leads to endless walking round and round through the corridors in the vain attempt of actually finding an academic's office.

But the building has so much vitality. The office doors remain open whenever there is someone inside, students slump down on the floor and chat while waiting for tutes because there are so few chairs in the corridors, there are free academic

journals and magazines which we can pick up and lots of posters and interesting information about events and ways to access further knowledge. Thanks to whoever put up the information about the Melbourne School of Continental Philosophy!

I feel that within the Morven Brown Building there is a genuine desire to share perspectives and cultural artefacts with all, no matter where our particular interests lie. For instance, during aimless wanderings before the start of session, I learnt about a protest in Redfern about the lack of police accountability for the 2004 death of TJ Hickey and the symbolic significance of the Karen flag.

So, to be candid, Morven Brown: I am infatuated by you. You make my stomach quiver with anticipation. You help to add meaning to my days. I look forward to building a caring and symbiotic relationship with you all year long. And lastly, because I'm open to your idiosyncrasies and value your time so much, perhaps one day I will even learn to love how you make me trek up three or four flights of stairs on a hot day just to hand in a history essay!



Science of Sex

ALAN ZEINO

Steven Patrick Morrissey, the god of misery-pop, has had a famous relationship with sex. From the never-ending torment of being asked about his sexuality to proclamations that he is asexual and hates that kind of thing, Morrissey remains among the most stellar love-makers of recent times in print and song.

Sex still seems to be enveloped in a moral moratorium on its discussion. But this isn't in the community you and I live in, it's in that bastion of irrelevance and repression – religion. Take for instance The Smiths' opus 'How Soon Is Now?' Morrissey sings 'I am the son and the Heir/ Of a shyness that is criminally vulgar', which for any sexuality speaks volumes for the manner in which organised religion has consistently denigrated that most important of human acts. Yes, even in the context of the mid 1980s, after the supposed liberation of sex during the 60s, it was a sin to hold such emotions.

What about today? Can you talk about sex without feeling shame or getting flushed in the face?

The science of sex is well understood as a physiological emotion but that's only after attraction is established. Before that I cannot explain.

From desire to that moment when your heart beats like an indie/afropop crossover, the science is well documented. But what is normal and what isn't? Is there anything that really is sinful?

People tend to list attributes of what they find attractive in another, but have you surprised yourself by your reaction to meeting someone entirely different, yet intriguingly striking? That's not something you should be afraid of. Most people can and do find love with the unexpected. Some Skinheads find black women attractive (though you might never get them to admit it).

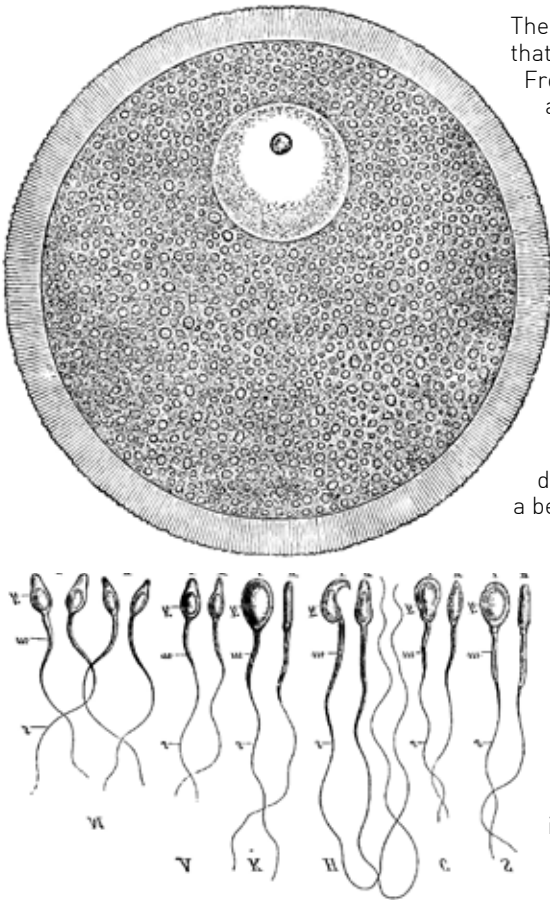
Humans hide behind racism as a shield against what they really feel, and sex is the tool that destroys such barriers. It is said that Thomas Jefferson fathered children with Sally Hemings (a slave owned by Jefferson) all the while writing about how much he disagreed with unions between different races. The next time you find a beautiful, exotic potential mate alluring, chalk it up to evolution.

Indeed Charles Darwin equated much of sex and desire to mate selection: selective women reside in a pool of competitive males every hour of every day. Finding a 'mate' sounds like something more akin to insects and specials on Animal Planet than anything humans do but, this is what we all bottle down to. Not a moment goes by without your eyes narrowing down on your future partner. Even Morrissey would've done so, regardless of the truth about his asexuality.

Moreover, the hormone that gives you your happiest of moments from love to orgasm, oxytocin, is a byproduct of evolution that we all fashion in our bodies. But you won't see much of it until you leave your solitary cloister given that people in relationships produce more oxytocin than single men and women. You need to find someone else first!

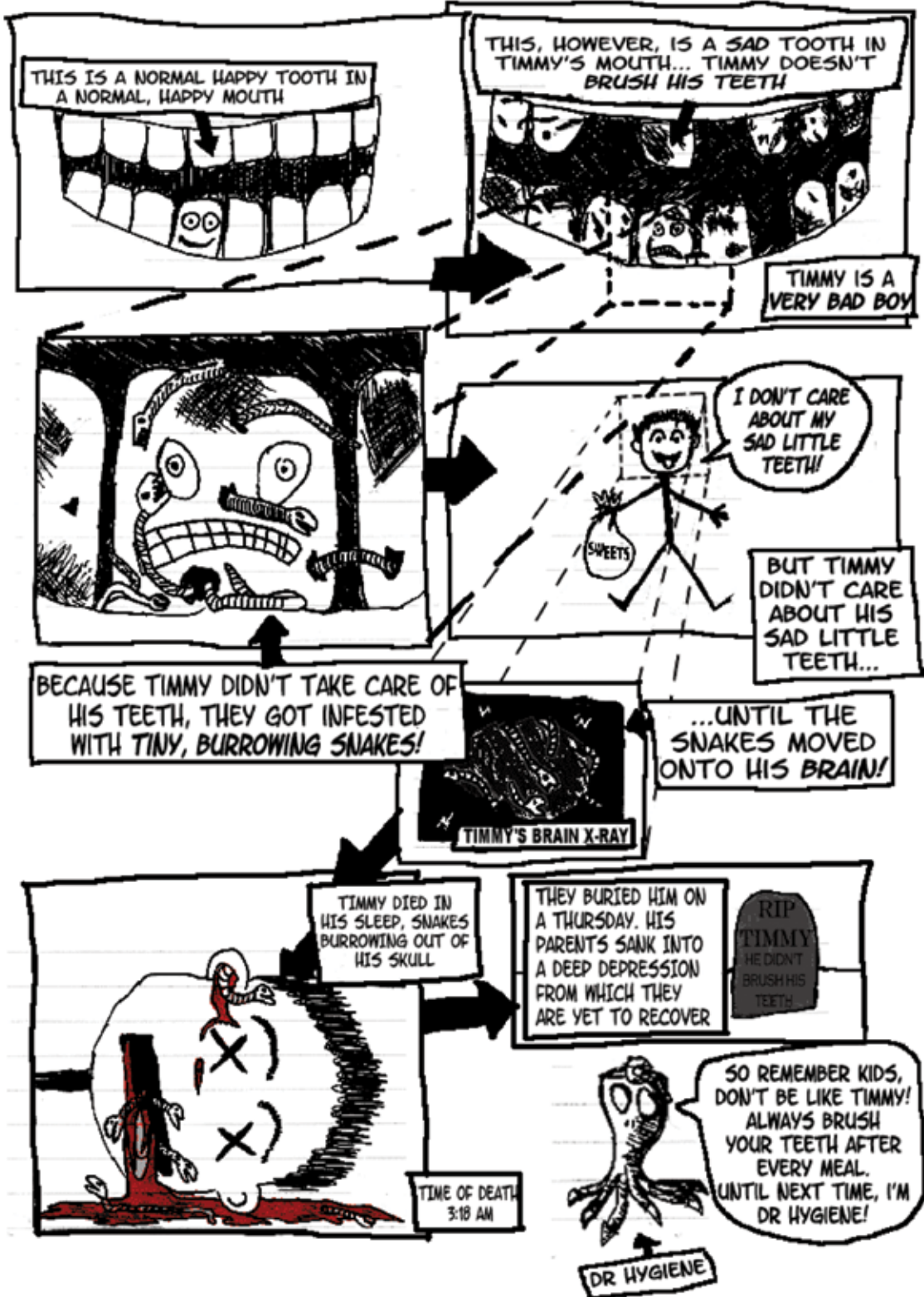
This evolutionary phenomenon might have more effects than you imagine. We exist in a culture where pornography is more accessible and comes with less stigma than ever before. No longer are humans constrained by repressive religious teachings. This however has resulted in men transforming themselves into pseudo porn stars, performing in and wanting sex to run more like a hardcore film than anything else. If the money shot becomes an expected denouement to sex in the minds of men, what's to say that won't become an evolutionary trait embedded in future male offspring?

So, if we've come to the conclusion that science can explain why we love and mate, and can predict what we'll find appealing tomorrow by what we're doing today, why is it that it cannot calculate a perfect mate? I believe that dilemma results from free will more than anything else. Surely as a Computer Science student if that question had an answer I assure you I'd be working on it right fucking now, but if you factor in the strange and unexpected places we find love, why do we even want that? The best love stories are told from diminutive beginnings. And that's something that we should hold onto.



A FRIENDLY WARNING FROM YOUR DENTIST

CHRIS MOORE



SUBMIT TO THARUNKA...

... AND NOT JUST IN A
DIRTY WAY, EITHER.



We welcome contributions including opinion pieces, satire, scoops, fiction, pornographic fiction, artwork and anything else you can think of. If you want to be heard, write for us! Refer to the Tharunka style guide, available at <http://tharunka.unsw.edu.au>, for tips and pointers. Submissions should be sent to tharunka@arc.unsw.edu.au, as an email attachment in either .rtf or .doc form. Please don't send files in .docx format. The computer doesn't like it.

Submissions deadlines for each edition can be found at the website above, or on our Facebook page. Join our Facebook group to receive periodic reminders when articles are due. The deadline for edition 3 is 1 April. If you have a rough draft, an idea or a 'pitch' for an article and want to talk it through with someone, email us at the same address and we can work through it together.

While we do our best to respond to everyone's emails, there are a lot of you and not many of us. We also need to put some time aside for eating and showering. Please take it as a given that we hugely appreciate any expression of interest in Tharunka. And please keep writing, even if you're not accepted the first time.

We do not pay for one-off submissions. Sorry, do we look like blitz to you? Or, write us a letter! Angry letters are always appreciated but if you particularly enjoyed an article, we'd love it if you let us and the writer know.

SCIENCE

