FEATURE:
Nicole Cadelina: The obligation to perform cultural stereotypes as an artist  pg.6

SATIRE:
Alex and Alastair Ho: High achievers struggle to fit in at UNSW  pg.9

SHORT STORY:
Mariam Abbas: My grandfather as a symbol of strength and perseverance pg.15
Welcome to Tharunka

Established in 1953, Tharunka is UNSW’s longest running, and spiciest student publication. While we started as a student newspaper, we have since expanded our scope to include different styles of art and writing that capture the UNSW student experience.

In all of our past and current issues, you’ll see student opinion, personal reflections, comics, digital art, short stories, and poetry. And on our website, you’ll find our juiciest articles, including student journalism, university critiques, current affairs, and political and cultural opinions. Like our Facebook page and follow us on Instagram @tharunkaunsw to stay updated.

Interested in contributing?

Is there anything you think the university should change? What makes you angry about the world? What is going on right now that everyone needs to hear about?

Tharunka is edited, designed, and written by students, so we thrive on student submissions. If you’re interested in contributing to Tharunka’s journalism and opinion section, or just looking for an outlet for your creative non-fiction, art, essays, poems, stories, reviews, or anything else that comes to mind, send a two-sentence pitch about your idea to: tharunka@arc.unsw.edu.au

Contents

Features

6. An Obligation
Nicole Cadelina

10. Comic Distributors Force Change in the Industry: What is the New Future of Comics?
Rosabel Hibbert

22. Students express concerns over corporatisation of Mardi Gras
Pia Lenarduzzi

24. Faux-nostalgia: a strange sort of utopianism
Scott Huang

26. Sleepless in Sydney...
Yanti Peng & Isabella Lee

30. Too Busy Earning
George Raptis

36. Pop Culture’s Potential: Teaching Skills and Engaging Students
Kate Mesaglio

45. Feminist. To be or not to be?
Angelene Concepcion

Personal Essays

18. The story of a dead dad, gay parents and their questioning daughter
Ainslie Toombs

40. Here’s why you’ll never find happiness
Gina Syromahos

Poems & Short Stories

14. Open Hearts
Theatin van Leeuwen

15. Jido
Mariam Abbas

21. 2021
Marel Parono

35. Something’s gotta give
Theatin van Leeuwen

39. I Channel Homesickness Into Telling You That The Sun Here Is a Stranger
Wen Yu Yang

42. eleven o’clock depression shot
Conor Carroll

Satire

9. High achievers report struggling to fit in with other UNSW students
Alex & Alastair Ho

Online News Recap

50. Tharunka Online News Recap

Artworks

13. The Butterfly Effect
Catherine Liu

16. something ------ this way comes + more
Aarushi Zarbhoshtimanesh

32. Magical Girl
Christine Le

45. Sun and Moon
Jelena Xu

On the Cover:

Jelena Xu
Yanti Peng
Hana Thomson
Kelly Quach

Tharunka acknowledges the traditional custodians of this land, the Cammeraygal, Gadigal & Bidjigal people of the Eora nation, on which our university now stands.
Become and the process of becoming is such an important part of being alive, being human. When designing and illustrating for this issue, the concept of ‘become’ reminded me of space, how it’s ever-changing, ever-expanding and most importantly, ever-beautiful, in all its mess and in all its perfection. For Issue 1 of 2022, I wanted something fun, eclectic, slightly whimsical and reflective! Leading a team of amazing designers adding amazing visual flair to beautifully written pieces and having incredible artworks contributed has been so fulfilling and so joyous. I hope you enjoy the adventure through Issue 1 and find pieces to add to your own journey of becoming.

In our earliest conversations about Become, we considered shifts in thinking since COVID-19 had become less urgent. There was a shared anticipation for the future, intermingled with writers’ ponderings about identity and purpose. Nicole weaves strands of identity and art together in her feature piece about defining the self beyond cultural identity. Rosabel muses on the future of comic books, particularly as physical shops are shifting online. We introduce many emerging poets in this issue, including Mare’s poignant remembrance of the physical markers of romance. And this is merely within the first twenty-five pages. A smorgasbord of originality awaits you within.

I am grateful for and proud of the 2022 team who coaxed these stories to life. Their talent exudes out of every nook and cranny of this wonderfully crafted publication. To our reporters, editors and designers, thank you for energising Tharunka’s resolution to become more. The theme of Tharunka’s first publication for 2022, Become, means something different for everyone. For me, become is synonymous with becoming. Life is constant change as we move through its stages, becoming different versions of ourselves. A huge congratulations to every one of our contributors who submitted incredible works and to our fantastic editors and designers who work tirelessly to present you with this document you have in your hands or on your screen. We hope you enjoy our first issue of 2022!

The early part of my tenure as features editor has been an overwhelmingly positive experience. From letting my own artistic soul fly free to facilitating others to do the same, I am humbled to work in an environment whose inhabitants share themselves with the world out of nothing but pure (and in some cases greatly intimate) creative passion.

What you’re about to read is the regurgitation of two years of pent-up artistic fever. When the team agreed on the theme Become, they each had their own reasons, but at its core, it is a reflection on the fact that few, if any, in our world is the same person they were before the pandemic hit. We at this publication are all young people forced to adapt to the world thrown out of balance: Become is an extension of our desire to establish personal jurisdiction on what we turn out to be.

Become and the process of becoming is such an important part of being alive, being human. When designing and illustrating for this issue, the concept of become reminded me of space, how it’s ever-changing, ever-expanding and most importantly, ever-beautiful, in all its mess and in all its perfection. For Issue 1 of 2022, I wanted something fun, eclectic, slightly whimsical and reflective! Leading a team of amazing designers adding amazing visual flair to beautifully written pieces and having incredible artworks contributed has been so fulfilling and so joyous. I hope you enjoy the adventure through Issue 1 and find pieces to add to your own journey of becoming.
An Obligation

By Nicole Cadelina

As a Filipino-Australian creative, I grapple with the expectation to perform cultural stereotypes at the detriment of my art.

August 2020, Starbucks Parramatta. I reconnected with a long-lost ex, who now hails from the distant beaches of Umina. As we waited for my tall matcha green tea latte, I decided to kill the dead air that comes when connections with past lovers are rekindled.

“There’s this movie I watched the other night,” I began (my dear ex knew nothing about cinema). “It’s called *Before Sunrise*...”

“That sounds cool,” he replied.

“...Are there any Filipinos in it?”

I laughed awkwardly, “I watched this other thing called *Mid90s*...”

“Oh nice,” he said. “Does that one have Filipinos?”

To clarify, my ex did not have yellow fever (or so he claimed). But from that exchange alone, his makeshift “Are they Filipino?” litmus test reminded me of a phase I went through during our brief four-month relationship – my ‘born-again Filipino’ phase. For a full year, I became impassioned by Filipino culture on social media, to such a degree that I vowed to be an influencer for Filipinos diasporas – the ‘FlexMami of Filipinos’.

“I felt more educated by fellow kapwa (peers) in the States than I did here in Western Sydney, aka the ‘hot spot’ for most Filipino communities.”

Most of my knowledge about Filipino culture came from Filipino-American platforms – from One Down Media, to the Igorot-American run platform IKAT Voices. I listened to podcasts like *This Filipino-American Life* and *The Filipino-American Woman Project*, and religiously followed Filipino-based literary presses, such as Marias at Sampaguitas, and Luya Poetry.

“I felt more educated by fellow kapwa (peers) in the States than I did here in Western Sydney, aka the ‘hot spot’ for most Filipino communities.”

Despite these emblematic signs from the homeland, it was difficult to find a Filipino-Australian my age who was as passionate or knowledgeable as our American counterparts. Aware that most of my mutuals hailed from Western Sydney, I used my socials to educate Filipino-Australians about the culture, with the intent of filling the gaps of knowledge within the community. I used Instagram to channel my passions for all things Filipino. I reposted tokenised “Pinoy Pride” pics from Kampeonco, shared memes from the problematic Subtle Filipino Traits, recorded myself writing in Baybayin (the pre-Hispanicised Tagalog script), and typed photo captions in poor Taglish (Tagalog and English).

The most incriminating part of my faux-influencer phase was all the days I spent vlogging and venting on my Instagram stories – from rants about cultural appropriation and colonial mentalities, to polls and questionnaires about the Filipino diaspora. But by 2021, these passionate talks dissipated. I decided one day that I no longer wanted to be that Pinay baddie that plastered everyone’s stories. Plus, I realised that I’d educated other Filipinos from a place of ego, rather than humility, which wasn’t a good sign either. However, some people continued to see me as a cultural aficionado; one friend of mine even introduced me as someone who “knew everything about Filipino history and culture.”

“I felt more educated by fellow kapwa (peers) in the States than I did here in Western Sydney, aka the “hot spot” for most Filipino communities.”
But there is so much more to my life. I watch films by Ingmar Bergman and Robert Bresson on Criterion Channel. I read Bell Hooks, Gertrude Stein, and Zizek-inspired critiques about capitalist realism. I love listening to Esperanza Spalding and Rita Pavone. When people reduce me to “being, knowing and loving all-things Filipino,” was that all that I’ll ever be to everyone else? Am I cursed to only speak about my culture? The frustration cannot be helped sometimes. To reduce my identity and interests in this manner is dismissing every other pocket of my life. As an artist, I’ve outgrown the diasporic metaphors about mangos, loss of mother tongues, and traditional cuisines. For once, I don’t want to be defined by this cultural singularity and be pressured to explore my Filipino identity in all my artistry. Simply put, I just want to be an artist who happened to be Filipino.

A part of this change had to do with the fact that I don’t always play into common stereotypes or habits – the real-life “subtle Filipino traits.” Due to unresolved conflicts, my family is rarely invited to outlandish Filipino parties and drunken karaoke nights. My mum is mature enough to avoid tsismis (gossip) with other titas (aunties). My parents always speak English around the house, as one spoke Tagalog and the other Bisaya. Except for my ninong (godfather), no one in our family took the time in their busy lives to send off balikbayan boxes (repatriate gifts) to distant relatives in the Philippines. And as a vegetarian, I cannot recall the last time I ate a meat-heavy Filipino dish.

In this new age of diversity in popular media, talking about cultural identity can feel more like an imperative than a choice for creatives of colour. This is especially overt when Filipinos express utmost patriotism when celebrities succeed outside the homeland; be it singer Jake Zyrus of Glee fame, or Canva CEO Melanie Perkins, who is only one-quarter Filipino. So why should our image and successes always hinge on our cultural identities? What if we had more rest from cultural discourses doesn’t erase my Filipino-ness. However, there is so much more to my life. I watch films by Ingmar Bergman and Robert Bresson on Criterion Channel. I read Bell Hooks, Gertrude Stein, and Zizek-inspired critiques about capitalist realism. I love listening to Esperanza Spalding and Rita Pavone. When people reduce me to “being, knowing and loving all-things Filipino,” was that all that I’ll ever be to everyone else? Am I cursed to only speak about my culture? The frustration cannot be helped sometimes. To reduce my identity and interests in this manner is dismissing every other pocket of my life. As an artist, I’ve outgrown the diasporic metaphors about mangos, loss of mother tongues, and traditional cuisines. For once, I don’t want to be defined by this cultural singularity and be pressured to explore my Filipino identity in all my artistry. Simply put, I just want to be an artist who happened to be Filipino.

“In this new age of diversity in popular media, talking about cultural identity can feel more like an imperative than a choice for creatives of colour.”

“To reduce my identity and interests in this manner is dismissing every other pocket of my life.”

There’s one in every UNSW friend group: a high-achiever, too afraid to talk about their High Distinctions, for fear of alienating their “sub-par inferior ape-brained friends.”

Stephen Kowalah (WAM 98.89), a third-year engineering student, has had to hide his real identity as a high-achiever out of fear of being ostracized.

Fatima Khan (WAM 94.20) tells Tharunka that “I can live with the fact that I am institutionally and academically superior to my friends. The hard part is pretending like it’s not true. It’s a very real internal struggle.”

Many high-achievers, after coming out as ‘people of superior intellect,’ have reported increased discrimination by way of reduced invitations to hang, reduced group chat invites, and general loss of friendships.

One high-achiever (WAM 98.89), who has asked to remain anonymous, reports “My friends kept telling me that I shouldn’t act like I’m better than them, and that I should pay for my own food and stop asking them to pay my rent…but I am better than them. So like… why should I stop?”

Many high-achievers have reported finding new ways of adapting to their ejections from their social spheres. Huy Nguyen (WAM 99.10) says to Tharunka, “I just dropped Facebook and started using LinkedIn to make new friends. They’re in their late 50’s, so we share the same mental age. It’s just easier this way.”

Despite being a campus which prides itself on inclusivity, acceptance, and recognition, UNSW seems to struggle with a dismissive culture towards its high-achievers. An act of discrimination so violent it is akin to every single crime in the entire Crimes Act 1900 (NSW) literally being performed all at once.

More to come.
Comic book sales continue to rise, but are comic book shops surviving? Without them, where can comic fans go to buy, talk, trade and create?

Where did all the comic book shops go?

Recently while attempting to track down one strangely unattainable issue of Buffy the Vampire Slayer, I was stopped by the realisation that my closest comic book store had permanently closed. Not only this but, after some googling and dead-end phone calls, I became aware that many stores had closed down, including some real long-standing institutions (shoutout to Comic Kingdom) leaving me seemingly with but one avenue: eBay.

This led me to wonder if comic books were doing okay, or if they were yet another casualty of the pandemic. Comic and graphic novel sales actually went up in 2020 with an increase in sales of around 35% over 2020 and 14% over 2019 (pre-pandemic). While in-person stores may be scarce, the rise of digital avenues such as ComiXology (owned by Amazon) offer readers a way to keep up to date without having to leave their house. But what does this mean for comic fans who want to build a community in person?

How comic book shops came to be

Before 1972, comics were primarily purchased from newsstands and grocery stores who would usually return any unsold merchandise back to the publishers. The risk of a comic flopping was carried by the publishers, who regularly over-printed in order to cater to retailers.

This all changed when a man named Phil Seuling developed the idea of a direct market, where publishers could sell directly to retailers (bypassing newspaper and magazine distributors) on a non-returnable basis, often at discounted rates. This paved the way for a bunch of comic book shops to pop up in the US. For a couple of decades these shops were supplied by several regional distributors until eventually – TLDR – enough major publishers signed exclusive deals with one distributor, bankrupting regional distributors and creating a monopolistic fifty-year long chokehold on the entire comic industry. This distributor was/is called Diamond Comics (dun dun dun!!!) who for a very long time were the exclusive distributor of most mainstream comics as we would understand them today – your Marvel, your DC, your Image – as well as many smaller independent publishers. Don’t remember the name though, because the mother of all disruptions eventually puts them in their place.

A shift to local comics

Suddenly there was room again for other distributors to challenge Diamond. DC moved to Lunar Distribution; Marvel moved to Penguin Random House. This also opened the way for a new kind of comic book shop to evolve. Siobhan Coombes, owner of Sydney/Petersham-based Cockatoo Comics, doesn’t have a Diamond account, instead ordering as much as they can directly from creators or small publishers.

“I’m more excited about local comics than I’ve ever been. Local publishers are only just starting to wake up to the money that could be in graphic novels. There are so many really great Australian creators who are working internationally and being published by international publishers. Big Australian publishers don’t seem to value this work, so it falls to local publishers to do something.”

Some brilliant examples of Australian cartoonists who have been picked up by major overseas and indie publishers include Lee Lai (Stone Fruit), Safdar Ahmed (Still Alive) and Simon Hanselmann (Crisis Zone).
Rosabel Hibbert is an awesome person who enjoys thinking, writing, existing, lounging and drinking kombucha. In her spare time she is also an Arts & Law student, majoring in Environmental Humanities.

Comics and Physical Spaces

The future of Australian comics looks promising, but we cannot underestimate the importance of physical and interactive spaces to comic fans. Fans and fandoms rely on these places to network, trade issues, create and display art, meet their (super-)heroes and build a sense of identity and community. If the direct market comic book shop model is changing, what does this mean for fans?

Siobhan speculates that the comics industry will be a lot more decentralised going forward. What this means is that the planning and decision-making in will be spread out a lot more between regional publishers, distributors, bookstores and creators. There will also be a much larger investment in kid’s comics, with publishers such as Penguin Random House announcing graphic novel lines aimed at young readers, which will address a huge gap in the market created by the overabundance of American Superhero comics which tend to be both very conservative yet ultra-violent. Changes might also look like bookstores investing in a few or larger comic/graphic novel section, something that has been eagerly awaited by comics fans.

Interestingly, lots of people thought that when digital comics started out, that was it for print. But as Siobhan explains it: "they shake each other’s hand," with print sales rising alongside digital. Accompanying this is the growing trend of artists gaining an online following and marketing themselves by releasing free content online. This offers them a way to break into the industry and find audiences who resonate with their work. In some sense there’s never been a better time for comic creators to market themselves in ways they haven’t been able to before. On the flip side, it also means that cartoonists often have to be gifted marketers as well as gifted artists.
Open Hearts

Theatin van Leeuwen

They pierced your lung
Whilst I sobbed in the sun
Been told you were bleeding
I thought from your heart
But your heart was still beating

Theatre is a Chemical Engineering PhD student who writes poetry as an emotional release in their spare time, occasionally publishing unedited poems on their WordPress site Wandering Sydney.

Illustration by Hana Thomson

I visit you and pat your head
And hold your limp hand
Too sedated to grasp reflex
I could see your heart beating
Beneath the thin sutured membrane
Waiting for the swelling to subside
Before they close you up

I can’t wait, my darling
To hold your little body
To my naked breast
And whisper in your ear
I love you
I love you
I love you

He always feels slightly too late; out of breath at the top of the stairs, hung up on mid-goodbye, the last one to sit as the bus lurches on. It would be almost shameful to admit; it would make him less of a man and more of a name in a eulogy, to say he would appreciate some postdamned help once in a while. When his breath hitched in his chest as he stood up from the toilet, when his hands shake tipping out pill after pill, when his fingers are too brittle to turn the too-stiff lock in the too-old door, he almost considers it. It almost crosses his mind.

The sun sits like an old friend; it stops in front of his chest and murmurs to the old pistachio shells he’s left clutched in shrivelled hands. Gnarled by an age of lassitude. The two friends smile at each other. It is an existence they recognise (served well, served for others). The curtains flutter with a nervous cough. There is no going back now. And Home has become a vague memory. The sun exists there too. The sky is left littered with a language he refuses to discard, buried under rays like bodies under the beach, the rolling tide, the wearying shoreline; slumbering, strolling towards the stirring sea. Dissipating.

Mariam Abbas

He always feels slightly too late; out of breath at the top of the stairs, hung up on mid-goodbye, the last one to sit as the bus lurches on. It would be almost shameful to admit; it would make him less of a man and more of a name in a eulogy, to say he would appreciate some postdamned help once in a while. When his breath hitched in his chest as he stood up from the toilet, when his hands shake tipping out pill after pill, when his fingers are too brittle to turn the too-stiff lock in the too-old door, he almost considers it. It almost crosses his mind.

In the height of summer, he says the Lord’s prayer for his chrysanthemums. The sunshine smothers him. The children’s voices are piercing. His knees find it possible to hold him, all 60 kilograms; he pictures the bags of wheat stacked up to make him. His grandmother appears, laughing, tells him to continue with his brothers, out the back –

Small solaces, as all such moments are.

Mariam is a first-year law and media student who spends too much time thinking and not enough time doing. She says her creative inspiration comes from the BoJack Horseman poster that watches her sleep and keeps her humble.

Illustration by Jelena Xu
Ma I tore the basket

Something ------ this way comes

She bites her teeth and grinds her tongue

I only know how to knee jerk but I never know when to not

Ripe enough to bleed

Artwork by
Aarushi Zarhoshtimanesh
@ aarushizar_1
The story of a dead dad, gay parents and their questioning daughter

By Ainslie Toombs

I was nearly three when my dad died. Unlike the rest of my family, I didn’t truly feel his death until years later. I knew I had a dad and I knew he was dead, but it wasn’t until I was eleven that my mind could grasp the knowledge. It wasn’t until then that I could feel the grief, betrayal and rage that had been waiting, patiently, for me.

Growing up as a father-less child, I noticed how different everyone else was, how strange my friends’ families were and, most puzzling, how I was the unusual one. When I went to friends’ houses after school or on weekends, I’d marvel at their bathrooms. There were floral perfumes and musky colognes, anti-ageing lotions and beard oils, hers and his towels. Their homes even smelled different. Sweet sweat, slight and unobtrusive, was the indelible mark of a father-full house. But what I recall most is how big their fathers were, in physique and presence. Their deep tones resonated through hallways, laughter and fury enveloping the small worlds built inside the places each family called home.

While I was busy mourning the death of my father at the tender age of eleven, my sister, Clare, was struggling as well. To her, the scent of sweet sweat had been replaced with the gentle aroma of another woman. She struggled to reckon with our new home life, our mum’s new relationship, and the isolation that now consumed her. There were no friends in whom she could confide because they had no understanding of her unspoken shame. She was mourning the death of one relationship and struggling with the birth of another, completely unlike it. Where her love for our mum’s partner collided with the shame she felt about their newfound relationship, Clare created the only solution her child mind could summon: Murrie would simply be her godmother, our godmother.

At school, around strangers whose questions sought answers she so fought to keep secret, this label provided sanctuary. And while I couldn’t understand why at the time, I protected this safe space, creating a vessel within which she could navigate a world she saw as unprepared for what her family had become. Over a decade later, when the majority of the neighbourhood refused our parents’ right to love equally, I truly understood the shame she felt as a child. I understood her impulse to protect the family, the self, that was then being carefully pieced back together.

And so, I kept her secret, wavering only once in Year 4, overwhelmed by the unbridled joy I felt one afternoon as my closest friend and I raced through the school playground, seeking shelter in a game of hide and seek. I reached for my friend’s hand then, slowing our search, and as she turned and met my gaze – a sheen of sweat lit up her face, excitement in her eyes, as we counted down the seconds we had left to hide – I whispered, “Murrie’s not my godmother, she’s my other mum.” A beat, a smile, and then a slightly puffed, “I wish I had two mums” as she tugged at my arm, whisking us away to our favourite hiding place and leaving me to finally realise it was okay to be seen.

I had become so used to our family’s narrative, “Murrie is just my godmother”, and so blind to the limits it would place upon my own growth. As someone who knew only the love of two women, and the capacity for it to be shared regardless of one’s gender, I easily dismissed those same feelings as they grew within me. I had become detached from that possibility in my later years; a burgeoning teenager mistaking the tenderness I felt for a friend as a mere consequence of exactly that - friendship. But when those feelings became known - a shared kiss, the soft intertwining of fingers as we drifted asleep - I was unprepared for what awaited me when we awoke. Dismissal, a secret to be kept, an evening whose pleasure would remain unspoken. And in a way, while this introduced me to a now familiar pain, it was okay at the time. Keeping those moments between us allowed us to exist in a school hostile to such affection, and soothed the unease I felt about living ever further outside the realm of my peers.

Illustration by Katelin Jaegers

“I knew the nuances that exist within those spaces, but I couldn’t help but feel apart from them.”
Ainslie Toombs

It would be many years before I revisited that part of me, until I gave myself the space to do so. I saw the paradoxes and the colours of my community. People were being who they couldn’t help but be and sharing what they couldn’t help but share. I knew, knew, that nuances exist within those spaces but still couldn’t help feeling distant. I doubted the authenticity of my desires but permission to be who I wanted was something only I could give. I had the space that I needed when I was younger – outside a conservative school, among lives whose diversity is welcomed – and still, by many others’ metrics, I didn’t fit.

‘Trust me. You won’t know for sure until you’ve slept with a woman’ they’d say. ‘I used to think I was like you too’ they’d say.

“But I’ve never traversed the soft contours of a woman’s body or let this desire be seen by the world.”

In the end, I’m left with the common feeling of invisibility that’s borne out of straddling two worlds and the pain of having the truth of my desires questioned. It’s small comfort then, to know how normal this experience is, that being a part of my community too often comes with feeling apart from it. While I realise that such intimacy isn’t an item to be ticked off of some unspoken list – a list that once completed will finally validate the feelings that I know are true, purely by their existence – I struggle.

I have been told who I am, who I will become, so often. And a small, wretched part of me does sometimes wonder if they’re right. Instead of universal acceptance into a community that I thought would provide sanctuary, I found that the expectations come with being a man-made-for-consumption object had been replaced. The reasons may have changed, but the effects remained the same pressure to conform to a stereotype that wasn’t me, still existing for others instead of living for myself. But I’m growing. And however wretched, that questioning part of me is small.

I continue to wonder whether this black or white thinking also comes from my childhood. Whether it comes from knowing of the love my mum had for my dad but only seeing the love he has for Murrie, I’ll never be sure. Perhaps I thought of them as separate entities when really, I was simply too young to see the grey expanse that lay between, and connected them. Those shades of grey that have been passed along to me.

And now, I find myself revisiting that child who was so sure of her place in this world, letting the warmth of her memories soften the shame that once consumed me.

Marel Parono

Marel is a Neuroscience Honours student at UNSW, studying spinal cord injuries at Neuroscience Research Australia. Some of his favourite books are Frankenstein, The Song of Achilles, and The Alchemist. In his spare time (which is a rarity you’ll find Marel outdoors, with mates or himself, listening to music, and acting like the main character).
UNSW’s Queer Collective has echoed LGBTQIA+ activists’ concerns about the increasing ‘corporatisation’ of Sydney’s Mardi Gras Parade. For the second consecutive year, the parade has moved from its historic home along Oxford Street to the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG).

On the eve of Saturday’s parade, Queer Collective Officer Liora Hoenig (she/they) said big business sponsorship of the event was “taking away from the essence of... Mardi Gras”, which was born out of the June, 1978 gay rights street protests that ended in violence and mass arrests.

“Hosting the Mardi Gras [Parade] on Oxford Street was a representation of how [it] started: a fight to be seen and exist in society... having it in a venue and so tied to corporations and companies take[s] that away,” Liora said.

They also claim that “there’s been significantly less attendance because it is a ticketed event,” adding that the move is “detracting from its authenticity – we need the Mardi Gras to be authentic.”

Liora’s comments support the concerns of activists like those from the Pride in Protest collective, who claim that the involvement of big business sponsors in the event – such as TikTok, Facebook’s Meta and Woolworths – is detracting from the grassroots interests of the LGBTQIA+ community.

“A Mardi Gras that isn’t for the people isn’t a Mardi Gras at all,” writes PiP member and Mardi Gras Board Director Wei Thai-Haynes, urging readers to support a vision of the event that is more than just a “corporate party”.

Doubling down on this point in a recent interview, she shared that PiP has a distinct understanding of how important the Parade is to what she terms “Mardi Gras Inc.”

“They want it to be a company that runs an event, which takes corporate money, platforms the police, and then pink-washes corporates, NSW Police and the Liberal Party.”

Despite the controversy, many proud LGBTQIA+ members and their allies from UNSW will be among the 40,000 spectators and 5,800 marchers still expected to attend the 44th annual parade.

One of these attendees is Advanced Science student Katia Fenton (they/them), who will be riding on UNSW’s space-inspired float in their first ever Mardi Gras Parade, and said they’re excited to really absorb the “big atmosphere” of Pride celebrations.

“It’s important for me and many others to just have a night to celebrate who we are, and have fun with it.”

“Being a part of... Mardi Gras with UNSW shows our colourful history and [its] thriving Queer community.”

While Katia recognises that Mardi Gras needs funding to survive, they’re also concerned about its increasing ‘corporatisation’, and particularly dislike when corporations simply add rainbows to their logo for a few weeks without investing in the community year-round.

But for them and many other LGBTQIA+ folks, the event still overwhelming signifies freedom, inclusivity and pride.

“I was in the closet for so long, and this... is the first year I am out enough that I feel like I can go to Mardi, so I want to go all in, meet people and finally enjoy the fun of the queer community.”
Faux-nostalgia: a strange sort of utopianism

By Scott Huang

Nostalgia is a weird feeling. Transient and fragile, yet powerful and easily evoked. Sometimes pleasant and warm, sometimes painful and maudlin. Frequently bittersweet.

This attachment to the past is present everywhere around us. Hiding in dusty photo albums and old mixtapes, or waiting to be recalled from secluded corners of the mind. In a world so prone to disorder and disagreement, so conducive to cynicism and doubt, I sometimes find it comforting to reflect upon the fact that enclosed in every beating heart, irrespective of time and place, there’s invariably a room reserved for these tender and sincere recollections of yesterday.

For individuals, nestled in that room are childhood joys of playgrounds, ice cream trucks, and lazy summer afternoons. For communities and peoples, it’s stories of discontinued traditions, cultural mythologies, and simpler ways of life. I like to think of these passionate conversations we have with memory as a timeless testament to our common humanity: an enduring reminder of the brighter and more loving sides of our nature. And if we listen closely enough, we might find that nostalgia has quite a lot to say about who and where we are, and about who and where we want to be.

The nostalgia that speaks to me the most strongly is in music; the kind that comes and goes in a matter of minutes, but with an aftertaste that lingers for many hours more. I listened to a lot of music during lockdown. Looking back now, it was probably a coping mechanism: a subconscious attempt at counteracting cabin fever and malaise. When days and weeks began blending into each other with dwindling significance, music was my buffer against emptiness and uncertainty. Keeping me grounded with the apparent steadiness of the memories it contained. I went deep into the archives of the brighter and more loving sides of our nature. And if we listen closely enough, we might find that nostalgia has quite a lot to say about who and where we are, and about who and where we want to be.

After some research/redditing, I came to realise that mine wasn’t a unique experience: there are entire Spotify playlists dedicated to ‘faux-nostalgia’ and ‘false memories’. But in my attempts to better understand this phenomenon, and to better understand myself, I found these expressions to be unhelpful and quite misleading. The concept of false memories makes an incorrect assumption: that all other memory is unconditionally true. On the contrary, the very act of remembering often modifies the past, running it through a filter until it takes on an illusory form. What we see as recollection is a contrived product of the sentiments and desires of our present selves, closer to historical fiction than to history. So, on rainy days and lonely nights, our tired hearts tap into our discontent to create a sort of restorative utopia, an Edenic version of where and who we want to be.

Perhaps you see faux nostalgia as a doomed attempt to restore a blissful moment that never happened. In the first place, or to bring back an idealized era whose blunders have been forgotten with time. Perhaps you’re right. But I also wonder if there’s a difference between being slightly alienated from the past and being prone to disorder and disagreement, so conducive to cynicism and doubt, I sometimes find it comforting to reflect upon the fact that enclosed in every beating heart, irrespective of time and place, there’s invariably a room reserved for these tender and sincere recollections of yesterday.

For individuals, nestled in that room are childhood joys of playgrounds, ice cream trucks, and lazy summer afternoons. For communities and peoples, it’s stories of discontinued traditions, cultural mythologies, and simpler ways of life. I like to think of these passionate conversations we have with memory as a timeless testament to our common humanity: an enduring reminder of the brighter and more loving sides of our nature. And if we listen closely enough, we might find that nostalgia has quite a lot to say about who and where we are, and about who and where we want to be.

Perhaps you see faux nostalgia as a doomed attempt to restore a blissful moment that never happened. In the first place, or to bring back an idealized era whose blunders have been forgotten with time. Perhaps you’re right. But I also wonder if there’s a difference between being slightly alienated from the past and being alienated. It might just be the perfect genre for staving off existential panic. Songs like Daydream (The Lovin’ Spoonful), Rock and Roll Lullaby (B. J. Thomas) and Waterloo Sunset (The Kinks) reflect a rosy optimism and a starry-eyed belief in human goodness. And if we listen closely enough, we might find that nostalgia has quite a lot to say about who and where we are, and about who and where we want to be.

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“I began to feel a desperate sense of nostalgia for something I’ve never had, for someplace I’ve never been, and an acute desire to fill a void that I didn’t realise existed. Memory-like sequences drifted in and out of my heart. ‘Strange faces on a dingy Greyhound. A lonely moon creeping over a lonely land. Cars and souls stumbled through highways and byways; they’ve all come to look for America.’ It was as if I had taken the narrator’s place, ‘empty and aching’ without knowing why, engaged in a Gatsby-esque pursuit of a distant dream. Somehow, America had left me aching for a time that never was. It had touched me with a melancholy that was so impersonally personal, like memories from a past life seeping into the present.”

“On rainy days and lonely nights, our tired hearts tap into our discontent to create a sort of restorative utopia.”

Illustration by Kelly Quach

Scott is a second year Arts/Studies student at the University of Toronto. In his spare time, he enjoys playing guitar and listening to music (especially 60s pop and soul). He can usually be found reading and playing basketball in his local park, or hanging out with his friends at his local community centre. Follow the author here: Facebook @Scott Huang Instagram @scottyguy
Amidst the chaos in the world at the moment, safe and all-inclusive spaces have become more important than ever. They give individuals the opportunity to be the people they want to be and realise themselves in an environment that pushes them to express every facet of themselves.

We feature and document a night at Honcho Disko: Express yourself Mardi Gras, a monthly fierce queer event.

"The societal rules don’t exist onstage", says Chloe, Stage Manager for the event.

“My stage name is very similar to who I am in real life. I go by Chloe, who is a cosmopolitan socialite - basically who I am right now but I extend that to a stage setting as well”.

“The idea of a socialite or groupie but taken further where it has its own character rather than just being a person, it’s more than a person”.

Honcho Disko carves out definitive spaces for LGBTQIA+ communities and celebrates the diversity present in our society today.

John Stout/Pants, Director of the event, had this to say about the importance of Mardi Gras celebrations like these: “On the Monday to Friday we live in a very heteronormative world, so these spaces are where we can be free and discover who you are”.

“It opens up many doors for queer people to see people they may not have seen, explore who they are and connect with other like-minded people”.

We welcome you into the world of the weird and wonderful.
Too Busy Earning
by George Raptis

How an Uber Eats ad convinced me to monetise my unpaid time.

It starts with you on the couch and it ends with you pedalling toward an apartment block, delivering someone else’s Big Mac meal on someone else’s time. You were once lazy, dissatisfied, with eyes glazed-over from boredom. Now, you are being as you hand over a brown paper bag to its faceless recipient. There is a notable skip in your step when you walk to the steady throb of a tune whose refrain, “too busy earning”, plays out over a glorious day of work. And that you are: you are no longer your unhappy, unproductive self - but a calculatable unit whose every moment is tracked and monetised by a food delivery app. It is equally exhilarating as it is terrifying.

What’s even more terrifying is that Uber Eats decided to release a string of advertisements to this effect. In the late summer of 2021, Uber Eats aired multiple ads involving a range of twenty-something year olds who, by some unknown force, are pulled out of their aimless ruts and compelled to use their spare time making money with Uber. Yet the ad appears to work hard to suppress a harsh reality. It offered the middle-to-working-class the potential to obtain happiness and utility by delivering with Uber; where, in reality, this labour exchange is built on precarious workers’ rights and no guarantees of minimum pay.

Uber Eats drivers are independent contractors and therefore do not enjoy the same protections that many employees are entitled to under Federal workplace law. Without these protections are considered by many to be far from perfect, they do include maximum hours of work, paid annual and long-service leave, allowances and loading entitlements. Although independent contractors should be able to negotiate their own working conditions in theory, this is not the case for all Uber drivers who must sign standardised contracts for service. This distinct lack of workplace protection is built on precarious workers’ rights and no guarantees of minimum pay.

A survey undertaken by the Transport Workers’ Union and Rideshare Drivers Network in 2020 also revealed that the average wage for drivers was $12.35 an hour. While I have spoken to drivers who claimed to make more during peak conditions, the survey revealed that 36% of drivers struggled to pay bills and afford groceries, and that 41% experienced racial discrimination on the job. Although the survey focused on rideshare drivers, you only need to quickly scan the Uber Eats’ reviews page to glean the daily realities that “clueless delivery drivers” aus an entitled reviewer puts it are faced with.

In reality, this labour exchange is built on precarious workers’ rights and no guarantees of minimum pay.

On top of supressing the realities of working for Uber, the advertisement went further to suggest that our unpaid time was unproductive time. The ad fabricated the idea that if we filled up-and levelled-off the gaps in our time with paid work, we would be happier. Uber seems to suggest that we can curtail boredom, and perhaps even transcend class, by monetising our spare time. But working for Uber will simply not redistribute wealth, nor would it alter the fact that, in Australia, the average wealth of the top 20% is 90 times that of the lowest 20%.

But Uber was not the first billion-dollar corporation to obscure the reality of an unequal labour exchange. In 2015, Amazon Flex took a similar approach when marketing its delivery services, claiming drivers would “smile for miles, backed by Amazon.” The beaming faces of workers in blue Amazon uniform, along with the assertion that we should “make the most of your time”, completely overlooks the high rates of injury and low remuneration experienced by Amazon workers. As one Amazon worker told the Guardian, he “…would rather go back to a state correctional facility and work for 18 cents an hour than [work for Amazon].”

State correctional facility! I was shocked. Or rather, I should have been shocked. My shock was due to little to do with the truth of these ads, and everything to do with the truth of the ad itself. It offered, with the utmost sincerity, the opportunity to engage with others in ways that are meaningful and untainted by capital. Here I am reminded that leisure has not always been a luxury that I and many others cannot afford; it is a display of freedom. As Biss goes on to write, however, this freedom was reserved for privileged men whose leisure depended on the work of women and slaves. Nowadays, unpaid time has become an expensive luxury that I and many others cannot afford. It is a display of status for the class who simply does not have to work.

Leisure in ancient Greece was the opposite of being busy but it wasn’t rest or play. It was time spent on reflective thought and wonder. To be at leisure, to live a life of study and contemplation, was to enjoy true freedom.

So, I could very well sit aimlessly on a couch and read a book, ignoring Uber’s call for me to work, but I cannot escape the distant throb of that tune buzzing in my ear. I cannot hide from the unmovable force that compels me to become more “useful”. Because I can hear it now, even as I write this in my own unpaid time. The faint noise that grows louder, beckoning me to “earn to earn to earn…’

“In reality, the average wealth of the top 20% is 90 times that of the lowest 20%.”

“Leisure in ancient Greece was the opposite of being busy but it wasn’t rest or play. It was time spent on reflective thought and wonder. To be at leisure, to live a life of study and contemplation, was to enjoy true freedom.”

“Too busy earning” by George Raptis

George is a fifth year English major at NYU’s Gallatin School of Individualized Study. He writes because he tends to forget things and because he was never good at playing sport.
As I sit on the open platform
The grey sky stretching
Into the harbour
I feel flecks of water
Land beneath my eyes
The weather matches my mood
Clouds that threaten to spill
But won’t. They’re up too high.
It’s what we want to do
Dump water. Dump emotions
Circumstances prevent us
Keep the bushfires burning
Keep my cheeks high and dry
By the time I get home
I’ll be spent
The feeling will have passed
The release that never comes
The release I need
Yawn for
Left with that uncomfortable
Feeling.

It’ll return.
At some other inconvenient time
But now
I’ll wait for you instead
occupied in preparations
Cleaning
Fuck calm, at least that’ll
Be frenzied
In time for your arrival
And when you’re here
Hope that your kisses
Will penetrate internal mess
And flip my emotions into
Sexual desire
And we’ll make love
Till you come
Pleased that one of us is content
And in the words of Labrinth
“When the going gets tough
Gotta give a little more”
POPCULTURE’S POTENTIAL:
TEACHING SKILLS AND ENGAGING STUDENTS

By Kate Mesaglio

The influence of television shows in inspiring young people to enter some professions is relatively well-known, according to sociologists. When asking young professionals or students what drove them to pursue their discipline, it is not uncommon to hear *Suits* or *Grey’s Anatomy* among their answers. Although these exaggerated depictions can influence aspiring lawyers and doctors, they aren’t necessarily great at teaching practical skills. You can’t really learn the nuances of contract law from *Suits,* and I would highly doubt any budding doctors learned how to perform an appendectomy by watching *Grey’s Anatomy.*

*Shows can be used to expose us to accessible and relatable characters and contexts where we can see these skills articulated in context.*

UNSW academic Dr. Will Clapton’s article *Pedagogy and Pop Culture: Pop Culture as Teaching Tool and Assessment Practice* illustrates the relevance of pop culture to international relations studies specifically. He explained that, in general, pop culture is a useful tool that can ‘enhance active student engagement in the learning space.’ This, he told us, would “help students to understand complex theories, concepts, and subjects in ways that cannot be achieved by academic texts.”

I spoke to social work lecturer and PhD candidate Maureen MacGinley who has a long career in social work counselling, therapy, and trauma-informed care. As an educator, Maureen has been using pop culture as an educational and training tool for the last 20 years. Maureen says that pop culture encourages audiences to engage meaningfully with the characters. She adds that the construction of knowledge and healing is deeply connected to the creation of meaningful relationships with others. This interesting connection highlights the potential of pop culture in helping people and professionals better understand themselves and others, even if those relationships are simulated within a scene of a TV show.

*Jean validates and empathises with Aimee’s feelings and helps her understand that she is not to be blamed for her assault.*

Another great example can be found in the show *Unbelievable,* which follows the complicated lives of a group of high school students navigating friendship, heartbreak, and identity. In the show, Dr. Jean Millburn, a sex therapist provides sex therapy along with counselling for teenagers in a range of areas in a particularly powerful scene. Jean counsels Aimee, a young student who has been sexually assaulted. Jean validates and empathises with Aimee’s feelings and helps her understand that she is not to be blamed for her assault.

In conversation with Dr. Will Clapton and PhD candidate Maureen MacGinley, I explore how pop culture can be a useful tool for teaching professionals and students about valuable practice skills.
Kate is a fifth-year Social Work/Arts student, majoring in Politics and International Relations. Kate particularly loves sci-fi and fantasy but enjoys any piece of pop culture with well written, relatable characters. She is especially passionate about topics including gender equality, Indigenous rights, LGBTQ+ rights, climate justice, and government accountability.

Despite the strengths and potential of pop culture as an educational tool, its limitations should be acknowledged considering TV shows can sometimes get it wrong. There are probably too many shows and movies that feature therapists, social workers and counsellors that can only be described as snobbish, judgemental, patronising and/or ethically dubious. It’s important to create boundaries between the scenes being used to teach with, and the episodes or series, which might be problematic as a whole. Another limitation that should be acknowledged is that not all students can meaningfully engage in learning through pop culture. Some students are more practical learners, and their individual needs should be taken seriously.

Using pop culture in a controlled environment – where an educator and/or professional can offer checks and balances – is an effective and valuable educational tool that can be used in conjunction with academic material. Many shows feature scenes that demonstrate best practice and excel at enhancing the therapeutic skills and emotional intelligence of viewers. Education is evolving, and it’s important to acknowledge and capitalise on useful resources when they present themselves, so that learning can be effective, accessible and fun.

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It was another Monday. I was on the train home from uni at 6.30pm, peak hour. I closed my eyes, dozing off for my ritualistic train-nap. As the train prepared to stop at Burwood, a middle-aged woman in a neat black suit sitting on the other side of the carriage slapped her book closed, waking me up. She stood up, making her way towards the exit of the carriage. As she shuffled past me, a phrase from the bright blue title of her book caught my eye. The only words I managed to capture were “FINDING HAPPINESS THROUGH GRATITUDE.”

When I was young, I remember always being told to “just be happy” or, better yet, “put a smile on your dial.” My parents, grandparents, uncles, teachers—everyone—said these things to me. At home, even the plaque-mounted animatronic fish that would sing Bobby McFerrin’s 80s classic, “Don’t Worry, Be Happy”, whenever anyone touched it. Of course, my brother couldn’t keep his hands off the thing. I just recall feeling like he was always being bombarded by the reminder to be happy.

This experience isn’t unique to me. Every one of us, including you, is constantly being reminded to be happy. Log onto your Instagram account, and a motivational quote is bound to pop up on your screen. “Feel-good” music continually buzzes in the background of every clothing store. Big fat smiles are splashed on the cover of every magazine. It never stops. Our culture is absolutely obsessed with happiness.

Happiness feels nice. Happiness has many health benefits. But it has been observed by researchers that problems arise when we obsess over happiness. According to a paper published in Emotion, it was found that when people overvalue happiness, they’re more likely to ruminate over their failure and stress when any “negative” emotions arise.

So I’d say we should probably stop obsessing over being happy because ironically, it’s making us unhappy. But how do we do it? This is where John Keats might help. Keats is an English Romantic poet who wrote during the nineteenth century. I stumbled across a poem of his called “Ode on Melancholy” when I was sixteen. The poem changed my vexed relationship with happiness, and my view of life more generally, forever.

Keats’ poem essentially encourages us to embrace melancholy. This is for two reasons. The first is because melancholy is fundamental to the experience of joy. That’s to say that we should appreciate melancholy because without it, we wouldn’t be able to experience joy to its full intensity. This idea is similar to those sayings you’ve probably heard about how you can’t have light without darkness. One lesson we can take from Keats is that we should appreciate “negative” emotions because we need them to be able to experience “positive” emotions like happiness.

The second reason why we should embrace melancholy is because it’s beautiful in its own right. What do I mean by this? Keats’ poem pretty much connects beauty with death: “She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die.” Keats implies that things are beautiful because they don’t last. This, in a sense, makes sense. If you knew you’d live forever, the things that excite you in life would probably lose their meaning because you know you’d always have access to them. So Keats’ second lesson is that melancholy should be appreciated because it’s temporary (and that’s what makes it meaningful).

It’s not just the emotion of melancholy that doesn’t last but everything. All of our emotions change. One minute we love something, the next minute we hate it. We can feel happy for one moment and sad for the next. Maybe this is why we’re always chasing happiness.

Our thoughts also change every second. So does our physical appearance. Everything in life is changing. The problem with making it our goal to “find happiness,” then, is that we’re seeking to feel one emotion permanently in a world where everything is impermanent. This is precisely why psychologist Michel Hansenne argues that the pursuit of happiness is “counterproductive.”

It seems we need to alter our goals. We need to do this not because it’s impossible to be happy, but because it’s unrealistic to think that we can remain in some perpetual state of happiness. As psychologist Brock Bastian explains, “We have evolved to experience a complex array of emotional states, and about half of these are unpleasant. This is not to say that they are less valuable, or that having them detracts from our quality of life.” The goal in life should be to embrace change, then. It should be to simply be, and to find the beauty in being.

“We should appreciate melancholy because without it, we wouldn’t be able to experience joy to its full intensity.”
eleven o’clock depression shot

Conor Carroll

limousine driver in a fancy mercedes-benz has shutdown the entire city, how careless, how thoughtless, how utterly human, let’s lock him up, let’s hang him in the gallows of public outrage.

mask our fear by preaching magical contact tracers, police suburb to suburb handing out fines like a parking hellscape, don’t worry we have got this under control.

but remember the gloom of dates disappearing like dreams left in the wake of an empty cruise ship? remember the last year that ended thirty-first december, midnight, harbour bridge, forlorn fireworks?

season two of press conferences

on coughing and sneezing, masks sliding down faces, puppet master losing control, can science take the stage? no matinee on climate change.

the most reliable health information is emerging from the black hole of tiktok, he calls himself ‘THE PEOPLE’S PREMIER’ because

fairfield of diameter doesn’t know the

two days, two weeks, two months, for once time and targets descend into meaningless speculation: will this purgatory ever end? well, that depends …

trudge downstairs, prisoner on day release from zoom, how many, how many today? the economics of dying, nightclubs, nursing homes,

thinking about farmers and open spaces, weekends at jervis bay, somewhere other than the suffocating streets of greater lesser sydney.

the neighbourhood spy agency watches each step beyond the front door

reality tv was never meant to hit this close to home, I much prefer survivor to survival, can’t handle the eleven o’clock depression shot erupting in my throat.

first person singular creeps onto the page. no more ‘we’ ‘us’ ‘australia’ my land is girt
Conor Carroll is a second year Commerce / Arts student. In his spare time he obsesses over football, books and politics. Sometimes he writes poems.

Follow the author here:
Instagram: @conorcarroll4

by the fence and the driveway, borders much more tangible than the lines of a poem

ruined by the indiscipline of a wandering mind subject to house arrest, but who can write after …

after … stop. breathe.
turn off the tv.
find another screen.

my instagram feed is dominated by ex-schoolmates combing every sentence of the public health order, shame they never applied this fevered intensity to group projects or Purcell’s fifth period English class

or anything they could ever influence, yet I cannot stop listening to their voices reverberate in the hollows of my brain, eventually I swipe them into silence, unfollow them into irrelevance block them into oblivion …

and look at my watch edging towards eleven o’clock.
Feminist: To be or not to be?

Angelene Concepcion

Feminism is about empowering women and creating a fairer, more just society for all. Of course, it’s more complex than that, with many brands of feminism now including trans, non-binary, and otherwise gender fluid folks, and prioritising Black and Indigenous voices. But across social media, this complexity is being boiled down to millennial pink infographics and identifying as a feminist has become a trendy way to gain popularity in an increasingly crowded online world.

#Not All Women

Those who have led the fight to tear down the foundations of our male-dominated world have historically been cisgender women – women whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth. But while misogyny affects all women, the view that women are inherently feminist is wrong.

When I stumbled across Jubilee Media’s video Do All Feminists Think the Same?, I was confronted by the truth of this. Many of the women in the experiment expressed outdated opinions, such as womanhood only being ascribed to those who are able to bear children or have a period. One even claimed outright that trans women “will never be real women.” However, more people are now aware that gender and sex are separate entities, so are the women making these claims ignorant or just being outright cruel?

Sayings such as “women supporting women” are attempts to build solidarity, but these attempts are particularly transparent when the women touting them are already powerful female celebrities. The code of conduct that calls for such unconditional support not only encourages a sheep-like mentality, but is often not applied to women of colour, trans women, or non-binary people. Those most in need of support are the ones constantly denied it.

So, including people such as Kim Kardashian and Amy Coney Barrett in Do All Feminists Think the Same? borders on the iconic – their actions and opinions consistently undermine the efforts of grassroot feminists. From Kim Kardashian’s repeat offences of cultural appropriation to Amy Coney Barrett’s homophobic and anti-abortion views, their status and privilege lend them the power to maintain the status quo, not disrupt it.

THE WORLD IS A STAGE

These days, everyone has a hot take on each day’s trending social issue, and the impulse to repost the first relevant infographic you see is an almost knee-jerk response. While there is no harm in raising awareness in an accessible way, there’s a fine line between being genuine and being performative. And as social media has made it easy to adopt an activist position without the need to “ironically” act, these platforms have become stages upon which people can simply perform.

The old adage “easier said than done” perfectly captures the essence of this performative activism. Social media has made fighting inequality nothing more than a thread of likes and quick hits, where onlookers can assume a ‘hero’ role by diligently reading a trending infographic. But it’s not enough to put on a show if you are only playing a part for the round of applause.

This issue is a symptom of social media’s popularisation of feminism, and while good causes need support, this behaviour often only leads to bandwagoning. It creates a vicious cycle of falsehoods, where the lines between fighting for the cause and getting a few likes blur.

WHY SO WHITE?

White feminism, as the name suggests, is feminism that centres the concerns of cis, straight, middle-class women. While feminism is multifaceted, white feminism is commonly marked by pink hats and “pussy power”. These signifiers have been latched onto by mainstream media because they’re easy to digest, but they come with a cost. They reinforce ideas that hurt trans people, people of colour, and other marginalised groups; in their world, womanhood is based solely on biology and stereotypical displays of femininity.

This creates a narrow, tunnel-vision focus on sexism, rather than the overall inequality that comes with not being a man. But sexism is just the tip of the iceberg. Often forgotten is the work of many Black trans women, such as Marsha P. Johnson, who fought for the rights of LGBTQ+ peoples in leading the Stonewall riots. While the competition of who carries the heaviest burden bears no winner, it’s downright wrong for the white women who benefit from mainstream feminism to turn a blind eye to issues that don’t affect them.

LET’S GET INTERSECTIONAL

Intersectional feminism is an effort to fill the gaps that white feminism has created. While less palatable to those who believe their struggles against the patriarchy are the only valid approach, intersectional feminism presents a challenge, focusing on those who have been left behind. Many of the issues faced by trans women, Black women, queer women, and disabled women have taken a back seat. But with greater access to social media, you’d think that marginalised voices would be louder than in the past, that their struggles would finally be seen en masse. In theory, anyone can create a profile and build a following, but the emerging phenomenon of shadowbanning exposes this as a façade.

Shadowbanning primarily affects marginalized voices whose feminism challenges the ideals of the white men and women who have designed social media platforms. Their content is slowly muted in subtle ways, such as their usernames not coming up in search. But white feminists peddling watered-down ‘empowerment’ quotes and parading their ‘socially acceptable’ bodies? No problem. It’s unsurprising then, why white feminism has flourished on sites such as Instagram.

Angelene Concepcion is a second-year Law and Criminology student. She has a deep passion for all things ‘coming-of-age’ as well as getting to the bottom and addressing social issues present in our society.
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Mariam Abbas
Theatin van Leeuwen
Ainslie Toombs
Scott Huang
Conor Carroll
Gina Syramohos
Marel Parono
Andy Sambar
Kate Mesaglio
Rosabel Hibbert
Avani Ram
Ainslie Toombs
Writers

Hana Kinoshita Thomson is a 3rd year Design student, specialising in illustration & graphic design. She is passionate about mental health, sustainability, the Japanese language and culture, picture books, and making characters that are cute, playful and engaging. Check out her work at Instagram: @hanaunderthetree

**Artists**

Aarushi is an artist, poet, student, and mango lover. Her practice delves into gender roles, identities, cultures and their inherent diverse dichotomies. Studying her Bachelor of Fine Arts and Arts, her moving image and painting practices are equally plaited into the strand of her linguistic thoughts and writing. Inspired by artists pushing the boundaries of familiar unfamiliarity like Hito Steyerl and Agnes Varda, she seeks to position her own narrative through the performativity of art making, thinking and creating.

Instagram: @aarushizart_1

Yanti (彭妍缇) is an emerging interdisciplinary designer in her 3rd year studying Commerce/Design. Currently focused on visual narrative, she is keen to tell captivating stories through her practice, laying the foundations for her own narrative through a focus on visual framing her approach.

To explore her work further, visit her at @anti.peng

Kelly is a second-year interior architecture student who loves to experiment with different mediums to produce her thoughtful arts. The range of her practice includes arts that range from surreal to abstract, often focusing on the human experience.

You can follow her creative journey on Instagram, where she posts her process works, inspired precedents, and relatable memes as a fellow artist.

Instagram: @K.Q_Design

Catherine is a second-year student studying Commerce and Computer Science. She loves to draw and write in her spare time. She finds comfort in the act of creating art, and her work often explores themes of identity, culture, and the human experience.

Follow her on LinkedIn: Catherine Xu

Stephanie Ung is a 5th year Commerce and Design student at UNSW majoring in graphics and digital media. When she’s not being a potato snuggled up in bed, she loves reading, eating spicy food, and singing to her current favourite artists. Follow her on Instagram: @faniefairy

Jelena is someone you often see at the train station looking put together but internally a hot mess. She enjoys being home most of the time and exploring different hobbies. Recently, she’s self teaching herself to play ukulele. Not going so well but oh well.

Find her on LinkedIn: Jelena Xu

**Sub-designers**

Nicole Cadelina
Conor Carroll
Theatin van Leeuwen
Ainslie Toombs
Scott Huang

Gina Syramohos
Wen Yu Yang
George Raptis
Mariam Abbas
Rosabel Hibbert

Mariel Parono
Pia Lenarduzzi
Kate Mesaglio
Angelene Concepcion
Alex & Alastair Ho

Assisi is an artistic, poetic student, and enjoys the interplay between different mediums. Her work often explores themes of identity, culture, and the human experience. She loves experimenting with different techniques and materials to create unique pieces that express her thoughts and emotions.

Instagram: @saanrish

Yanti (彭妍缇) is an emerging interdisciplinary designer in her 3rd year studying Commerce/Design. Currently focused on visual narrative, she is keen to tell captivating stories through her practice, laying the foundations for her own narrative through a focus on visual framing her approach.

To explore her work further, visit her at @anti.peng

Casey is one of the sub-designers this year. She is currently in her third year of the Bachelor of Media (PR & Advertising) degree.

Instagram: @caseyadamsdesign

Christine is a freshly graduated illustrator and graphic designer who studied Design and Commerce at UNSW. She enjoys creating works that bring joy to herself and others, and often draws inspiration from her life experiences. This can range from her adventures on the mountain bike to her interactions in fandom and internet spaces. In her free time, Christine enjoys playing video games, anime, and hanging out with her friends and family.
Online News Recap

Heated SRC debate over Religious Discrimination Bill
By Meg Trewhella
UNSW’s first Student Representative Council (SRC) meeting for 2022 erupted into a fiery debate over the Religious Discrimination Bill (RDB). Bhattacharya responded to Tharunka after the SRC meeting, stating “While personal beliefs on the Council may vary, the Council has always steered itself toward protecting the wider interests of students.”

Migration Amendment Bill passes at House of Representatives
By Isabella Lee
The Migration Amendment (Strengthening the Character Test) Bill has passed at the Australian House of Representatives. This would grant the Immigration Minister more power to cancel people’s visas based on certain crimes. It is currently in the process of being passed in the Senate.

Women’s Collective calls for inclusivity on International Women’s Day
By Andrea Bunjamin
Despite the relentless weather, there was no stopping the Women’s Collective (WoCo) from uniting UNSW’s female-led societies to celebrate International Women’s Day last Tuesday. From crochet to kick boxing, attendees were welcome to try the diverse range of activities planned out and have a peek at what they might like.

myExperience survey data to be published after successful UNSW appeal
By Caitlin Bailey
Students will soon be able to see how other students have rated UNSW courses, with data from the anonymous myExperience course surveys to be publicly released. The NTEU is planning to raise the issue during enterprise bargaining, which is due to take place later this year.

SRC Report
The SRC is a democratically elected body of 27 students here to assist you if you would like independent and confidential advice or assistance with anything uni-related. This might include enrolment, student fees, academic appeals, misconduct allegations or emergency support.
Get in touch with us at src.president@arc.unsw.edu.au.
The 2022 SRC have so far successfully called for 24/7 access to the law library. In the coming term our priorities include:
1. We will continue to hold the university accountable to deliver a comprehensive action plan to make the university safer.
2. Continue ongoing conversations to address the limited availability of affordable accommodation.
3. Improve prospects of employment and support for graduating students.
4. Ensure student support is prioritised and respond to the federal budget impacting the Higher Education Sector.
5. Lobby for better support for international students and business the ongoing gaps in online/hybrid education delivery adopted by UNSW.

PGC Report
The PGC has experienced an explosive start to the year. As the key postgraduate representative body, the Council has already engaged in various activities to advocate, engage and support students as UNSW returns to a new normal. Social events have seen some much needed reconnection, including Holey Moley Bar meet up (Sponsored by ARC), Coogee Picnic, Roundhouse dinner, and various catch-ups at the Postgraduate Lounge and online. The PGC leadership team continues to advocate for concerns which matter to you, included improved employability, better safer parking options and fairer concessions.
For more information, follow us on Facebook!
facebook.com/unswpgc

Students left in the lurch as transport negotiations de-rail their commute
By Andrea Bunjamin, Emma Partis and Harrisen Leckenby
Sydney-based trains were spectacularly left in the rail yards on Monday morning as tensions between NSW Transport and the Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) steamed off a cliff. The planned industrial action resulted from a breakdown in communication during a Sunday mediation session between NSW Transport and the RTBU.

Read more on our website!
Scan the QR code to follow us and get involved!