



Saint Ignatius' College
RIVERVIEW

The Kircher Collection

MAJOR WORKS FROM THE CLASS OF 2023



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MAJOR WORKS FROM THE CLASS OF 2023

The Kircher Collection

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Saint Ignatius' College Riverview

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Saint Ignatius' College Riverview acknowledges the Cammeraigal people who are the Traditional Custodians of this land upon which we are privileged to live and educate. We pay our respects to the Elders past and present and extend that respect to all First Nations people who dwell on this land.

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DR PAUL A HINE, PRINCIPAL

Foreword

John O'Malley SJ, one of the foremost authorities on Jesuit history, asserts that "Ignatius and his companions from the very beginning advocated and exemplified a learned ministry"¹. Because of this, the Society of Jesus grew from its foundational days to embrace reason and scholarship of all forms with a reflective and constructively critical impulse to learn. Indeed, the earliest Jesuits such as Matteo Ricci, who travelled to the Far East in the mid 16th century, were among the finest scholars of their day, schooled in cartography, astronomy, mathematics and linguistics. A brief glance at Jesuit history across the centuries will reveal that it is enamoured with those who have made great discoveries and explored contemporary fields of research, from telescoping and physics, to art, philosophy and literature.

The tradition of scholarship and the desire to learn remain deeply embedded in Jesuit education. Four hundred years after Ricci, at a major international conference that foregrounded the 21st century, the Congregation asserted that "In all of its endeavours, Jesuit education is distinguished by intellectual excellence and academic rigour"², and because of this, "the schools set demanding standards for both students and faculty"³. It is this ethic that drives the education program at Saint Ignatius' College Riverview and generates the quality of work contained in this publication.

Named after Athanasius Kircher SJ, a Jesuit of prodigious intellect in the 17th century, *The Kircher Collection* is testament to the aspirational scholarship that is alive and well at the College. It profiles key fields of academic pursuit and endeavour—Literature, Visual Arts, History, Drama, Music and Science. More than just a compendium of student work, it is a manifestation of the desire to enquire, to experience, to comprehend, to analyse, to interpret, to explore—all corollaries of creative cognition in the quotient of learning.

As you read this publication, it is my hope that you will enjoy the sophistication of the work, remembering that these young men are still of a tender age with so much potential in their chosen fields. Who knows, they may reach some of the lofty heights of illustrious alumni such as Robert Hughes, Alex Seton and the seven Rhodes scholars who have given so much to academic pursuit and artistic expression in their personal and professional lives. These are early days in disciplines still seminal to the contributors, but a discerning appreciation of their work augurs well for all that lies ahead.

Special thanks are extended to the many staff who contribute with great generosity and professionalism to this publication.

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- 1 John O'Malley SJ. (1993). *The First Jesuits*. In Traub, George, W. (Ed). *A Jesuit Education Reader*. p 7
 - 2 *Communal Reflection on the Jesuit Mission. A Way of Proceeding*. From the Jesuit Conference, 2002. In Traub, George, W. (Ed) op. cit. p 179
 - 3 Mitchell, Robert, A. (1988). *Five Traits of Jesuit Education*. In Traub, George, W. (Ed) op. cit. p 111

FR TOM RENSHAW SJ, RECTOR

Introduction

In the middle of 2021, the second global colloquium on Jesuit education was held virtually. In responding to Father General's question of "**How do we accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future in our education apostolic ministry?**", the response was the following,

**We ought to educate for a hope-filled future
by educating for depth and global citizenship
in faith and in reconciliation
in the context of our Education integrated (Holistic) Perspective.**

Jesuit education seeks to do this through four interrelated strands:

1. Educating for faith;
2. Educating for depth;
3. Educating for reconciliation; and
4. Educating for global citizenship.

The goal of Jesuit education today "is to educate for human excellence that leads to a hope-filled future: persons who are compassionate, competent, conscious of God in themselves and in the world around them, and committed to seeing all things new in Christ".

This collection is named after a 17th century Jesuit, Fr Athanasius Kircher SJ, who is the embodiment of depth and the *magis*. I congratulate the students whose works appear in this collection and for the differing ways in which they have used their God-given talents to respond creatively in producing outstanding works of scholarship as part of their Higher School Certificate. Each work is an inspiring expression of human excellence. In the next section, one of my predecessors, Fr Ross Jones SJ (College Rector 2011-2017), outlines most eloquently the life of Fr Athanasius and his extraordinary contribution, as a polymath, to many different fields of learning.

¹ Vision Statement, Second Colloquium JESEDU-Global 2021, <https://www.educatemagis.org/jesedu-global2021/colloquium-hub/>, accessed 27 November 2021.

FR ROSS JONES SJ

Athanasius Kircher SJ

“The last man who knew everything”

“

It was because
of Kircher’s
work that
scientists
knew what to
look for when
interpreting the
Rosetta Stone.

”

Athanasius Kircher;
The Kircher Museum in Rome

Athanasius Kircher, born in 1601, was the complete Renaissance man, the *uomo universale*, a polymath—widely regarded as the physical embodiment of all the learning of his age. Deservedly known as “the Master of One Hundred Arts”, he taught in the Colleges of Würzburg and Avignon, before being posted to Rome (where he died in 1680). In bridging the sciences and the humanities, Kircher has been compared to da Vinci. Stanford professor, Paula Findlen, entitled her recent biography of Kircher *The Last Man Who Knew Everything*. But as a young man, Kircher was, according to his own account, an accident-prone dimwit.

Kircher wrote over thirty separate works dealing with the widest range of subjects. He invented a universal language scheme, attacked the possibility of alchemical transmutation and devised a host of remarkable pneumatic, hydraulic, optic, and



magnetic machines, which he displayed to visitors to his famous public museum (the first such institution), housed in the Jesuit Collegio Romano. His books, lavishly illustrated volumes, were destined for Baroque princes with a love of the curious and exotic explorations of their time.

Kircher invented the lantern slide (the forerunner of projectors). He accurately estimated the speed of a swallow at 100 feet per second (without a stopwatch). He was a volcanologist (even climbed into the volcano Vesuvius) and wrote the first book on volcanology. Kircher and others like him taught in the Colleges and encouraged the appropriation of the sciences into the school curriculum.

Kircher invented calculators, wrote on symbolic logic, and devised mathematical tables. He understood the evolutionary process and hinted at the germ theory of disease—he attributed the plague to tiny animals which he had observed under a microscope.

His first publication concerned magnetism. Then he wrote of sundials, next on the Egyptian language, then on calendars. He proposed a map of the city of Atlantis. He knew twenty ancient and modern languages. He studied hieroglyphics and it was because of Kircher's work that scientists knew what to look for when interpreting the Rosetta stone. He has been called the real founder of Egyptology.

Kircher always wanted to be a missionary in China, but the importance of his teaching saw this dream never realised. However, that did not prevent him writing a huge treatise on China, *China Illustrata*, which included mythology, accurate cartography and Chinese characters.

While traveling through Italy writing his book on magnetism, he came to the town of Taranto, which gives its name to the poisonous tarantula spider. The region of Taranto was known for the prevalence of a disease called 'tarantism', which induced an hysterical condition in the sufferer, with one characteristic feature being the sudden desire to dance, in a wild and rapid whirling motion. It was commonly supposed that the illness was a result of the bite of a tarantula. Accordingly, it was believed that the cure for the bite of the tarantula was to perform the dance, to work out the toxin. In his book on magnetism, Kircher helpfully depicts the region populated by the spider, and gives drawings of the animal and of its victims being bitten. Finally, should one be unfortunate enough to get bitten, Kircher, composed a piece of music—*Antidotum Tarantulæ*—for the victim to dance to, to cure the bite!

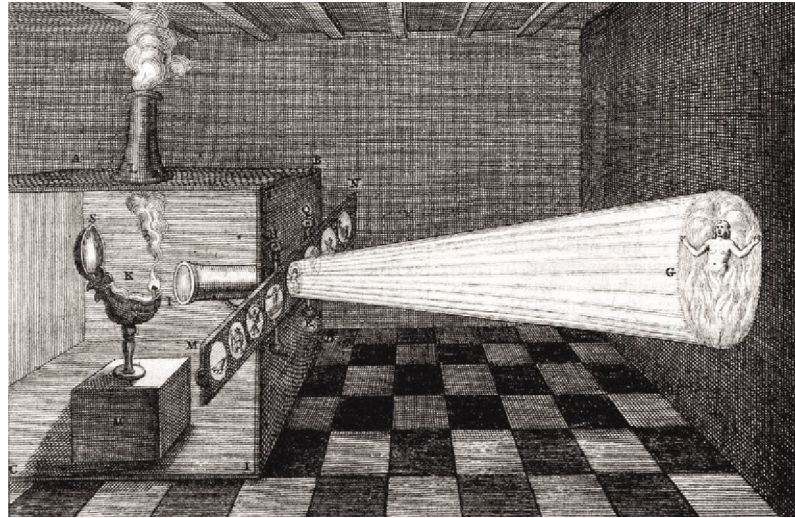
Kircher practised a unique brand of science before the lines had been drawn between it and art and religion. He covered herbs, astrology, mining, dragons, demons, weather, eclipses, fossils, gravity, bioluminescence, the sun and moon, and other topics. For example, spanning scriptures and science, he calculated that the height required for the Tower of Babel merely to reach the moon would catapult the earth out of its orbit.

“

He understood the evolutionary process and hinted at the germ theory of disease.

”

The precursor of the slide,
overhead and digital projector



Visitors to Kircher's impressive museum heard his disembodied voice, fed to them through a hidden metal tube he spoke through from his bedroom. He engineered megaphones with which one of his friends used to bray at wolves and set them to howling. He launched dragon-shaped hot-air balloons with "Flee the wrath of God" painted on their underbellies.

In the Jesuit Archives in Rome there are more than 2,000 items of his correspondence with the most eminent scientists of his time, including Leibniz, Torricelli and Gassendi. In addition, Kircher harnessed the network of Jesuit missionaries in far-flung places to carry out natural observations and experiments on a global scale.

Towards the end of his life, Kircher's stocks fell as the rationalist era emerged. Descartes (himself a Jesuit alumnus) described Kircher as "more quacksalver than savant". Because of his stature and high regard he was also the victim of a number of hoaxes where his enemies attempted to set him up, and occasionally did so.

However, in this postmodern era, many are being drawn again to his eclecticism, transcendence of academic boundaries, taste for trivia and technomania. In recent years his life and works have interested many biographers and authors revealing his myriad areas of interest. There is an Athanasius Kircher Society in Manhattan. Stanford University hosts an Athanasius Kircher Correspondence Project.

Perhaps Athanasius Kircher was not really "the last man who knew everything". But he might have come closer than most.

FR ROSS JONES SJ
COLLEGE RECTOR 2011-2017

VISUAL ARTS

Lachlan Martinez

Conceal, Confess

(Selected for ARTEXPRESS)

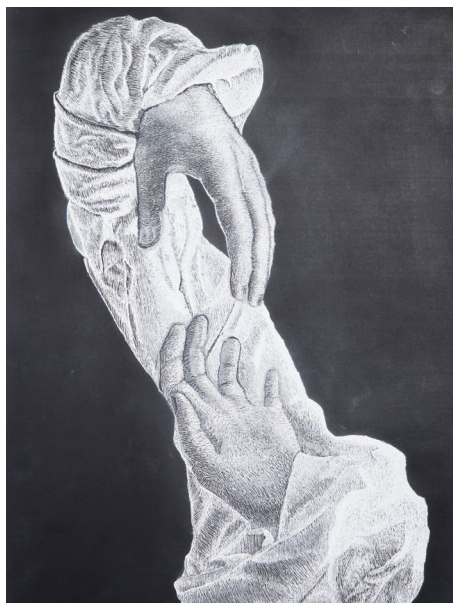
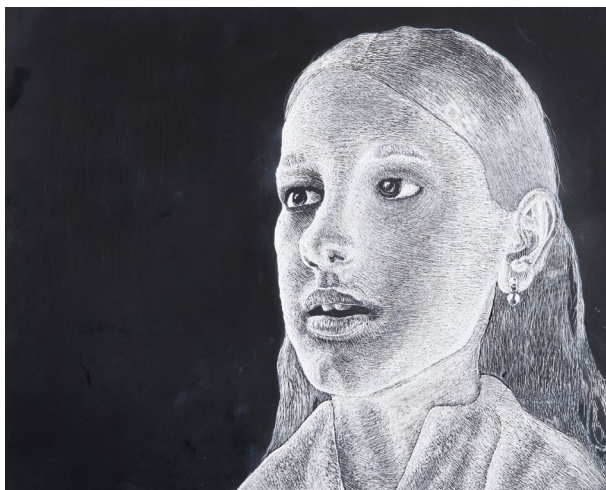
REFLECTION STATEMENT

My artwork explores the paradoxical notions of concealment and confession. The simultaneous existence of both notions creates a tension within us all. In a world so connected, everyone yearns to confess things with one another, but understands the distressing vulnerability of confession. It leaves one all wrapped up, concealing their most authentic truths.

On the left side of my work, I have depicted the notion of concealment using fabric. Beneath the fabric and forever concealed from the world are my subject's insecurities. Initially, it was the veil of being wrapped in fabric that gave her the confidence to be the subject of this work. Throughout my artistic journey however, my subject gathered the confidence to reveal aspects of her true self and the nature of her form. This is represented on the right side of my work. When taking the photographs I used as reference photos, I ensured confident stances and strategic lighting to highlight all 3D components of my subject, including her insecurities.

Furthermore, the chosen medium of scratch art was inspired by the linework evident in the works of artists like Albrecht Dürer, Francisco Goya and William Blake. Working with the medium of scratch art included materials such as Indian ink, a scalpel to scratch each line and scratchboard card. The medium of scratch art effectively facilitates the presentation of my concept as each mark in my work holds a sense of finality as it cannot be erased. Ultimately, every line in my body of work reveals my intentionality and my subject's vulnerability, and therefore is our greatest confession to the world.





Alexander Jambrich

Clean Up On Aisle Nine

REFLECTION STATEMENT

Reading for leisure has become a hobby of the past, in a world where Netflix and TikTok mindlessly consume our time. Street libraries adorn the corners of neighbourhoods, thrift shops sell best-sellers for a fraction of their original price, and e-books can be read to us courtesy of Audible. So... what is stopping us from reading?

My short fiction 'Clean Up On Aisle Nine' amalgamates the contemporary aversion to reading for leisure into a monster, which postmodern writers try to defeat by resurrecting a hero. I engage on a journey through literature, moving through the works of Eugène Ionesco, Shakespeare, and Homer – as well as their characters Berenger, Ariel and Achilles – in a nine-chapter narrative that explores how appropriations can reshape character identity. Shakespeare, Homer and Ionesco captivated me through the similarities of their aim – to advance to what degree language can explain human lives in each of their respective contexts. I display their voices using the textual imagery of a well, which alludes to the notion of a literary continuum in which the voices of past authors mingle in a constantly overlapping perpetual stew.

Ultimately, my major work rests on the inability of fictional heroes to resurrect their audience's love for reading – the hero we need is you, the reader.

SHORT FICTION

Can you hear that?

Hear what?

It's just us, now

Listen...

Full fathom five thy father lies
Of his bones
Of coral made

If I had a pen

I would write us an army
To rescue us from this well

ssshhh

Those are pearls that were his eyes
Sea nymphs
hourly ring his knell

I'm trying to listen...

There!

Hark! now I hear them

I hear them too

We are being read.

1. The Writer

The writer despised every element of their mission.

As they crested the rocky hilltop, the writer considered the events which had sent them on this ill-fated goose-chase. For the last week, they had trekked across dangerously perilous terrain, waded through leech-infested knee-high grass and hiked across clifftops - not to mention their chance encounter with a wild goat which left them with a bite-sized hole in their breeches - all to reach this remote mountaintop location.

The writer was searching for a hero – one with an ability to fight against unwinnable odds. They must be relatable, charismatic, exude wisdom and crave knowledge. The post-post-modern audience demanded it.

Above all, they must be able to defeat fiction's most unstoppable monster.

The latest iteration of 'The Monster Problem' was causing quite the stir on the Ministry of Writing's two-thousand-and-twenty-third floor. The post-modernists were stumped. Upturning papers, they yelled obscenities at writers in neighbouring cubicles, bickering over which hero they thought would best fit the current situation.

The term 'monster' would have you believe that we're fighting a thing with claws or fangs, perhaps a devilish beast lurking in a dark corner, spying on its prey. You're probably thinking of helpless damsels and fire-breathing creatures guarding unrealistically large amounts of treasure. A typical hero would be able to defeat such a monster, except this monster – categorised '#100392B' – is not like the others.

This is a monster that eats the joy of reading. Do you recall a time when you read for leisure?

Eaten. That time is no more.

This monster ate that book you never started reading. It ate that book you began but never finished. It even ate your memory of wanting to read that book. It is an all-consuming black hole sitting comfortably in the back corner of your bookshelf, causing the mass extinction of your favourite books. This monster didn't intend to threaten literature's fate... except, it very quietly did. It did all this so subtly, so insidiously, without dropping the slightest hint that your love for reading was slipping away.

And so, our writers needed a hero. Fast.

The Ministry of Writing dispatched a singular writer – chosen randomly out of millions – to find the hero who could fight the monster. After weeks of searching, that writer has reached the remote clifftop described by the mission.

The writer took an expansive look at the mountainous terrain. Airy grasses whistled with a warm breeze, and a lone blackbird darted across the sky. A few metres from the writer, a rocky crag tented the earth, and then the hill depreciated and flattened out to a round caldera. A dilapidated cobble well sat in the centre of the clearing. It was scrawnier than expected, undeserving of the boisterous reputation which preceded it.

Rather than water, this mythical well was rumoured to contain the voices of all the characters ever written. Crafted from black obsidian, forged by Hephaestus, hacked from the ancient walls of Babylon – whatever story you believed, its origin was ancient.

The Ministry needed a hero. They needed one post-haste, pre-made, capable of kicking the ass of this monster in showdown style. But this mythical well – and whatever heroes it could conjure – would never be enough to stop a monster that ate reading.

The writer cautiously approached the well. They clutched an empty wooden pail in their right hand. It was a pain to carry with them, but the writer could envision the slush of voices filling its contents like a milky stew. Their mission was to fill up their pail and examine the contents for a hero's voice to appropriate.

The writer stopped before the well-edge. Carefully bracing themselves, they leaned over the scrabbly wall and peered into the abyss. It was a bottomless black void, betraying no voices which lurked below. It dawned on them that it was inevitable that they might join these writers. Such was the saying at the Ministry *'the death of the author is the birth of the reader'*.

The writer stepped backwards from the edge. There was a thick rope attached to the wellhead; they fastened this firmly around the bucket's handle. They heard a faint groan which seemed to echo from the well.

With a deep breath, the writer relaxed the rope.

2. The Well

As I am rudely awakened by the coppery of the very peculiar trait of humans to somebody else's problem. Nowadays, One can benefit greatly from a bit oesophagus is filled with it. That was a will assume you have not seen this process it to you, as it is not often that I get visitors it to say. Down we go, following the haphazardly off my slippery walls. My millennia of human storytellers – as well slosh, interlacing and resonating, melding meaning and fresh ideas. This stew is the might assume they were rotting; but no, life. Contrary to popular belief, writers next generation of writers sprout from the material grows. It is a beautiful process, not for the foul stench. The bucket drops looking for someone specific. A hero. One me rummage around and see what I have you plunge into my melodious waters. tempted by the song of others. Let us

Then the men who lived in Euprasion, brilliant Elis...

All the realm as far as Hyrmine
and Myrsinus, frontier towns...

Then men who lived in Aspledon,
Orchomenos of the Mingans...

Fighters led by Ascalaphus
and Ialmenus,
sons of Ares...

What interests me above all is the deep-rooted identity of people. Precisely because of my need to establish contact with all men everywhere.

taste of a belaying bucket, I am reminded delegate their dirty work to become humans avoid getting their hands dirty. – of dirt – I would know – my stone-carved joke, but seeing as you did not laugh, I happen before. Do not fret – I will explain who are interested in hearing what I have bucket's journey as it rebounds belly contains all the voices of five as their characters. These mingle and merging into a perpetual stew of popular source for appropriations. One this is a very common end to a writer's *do not* die. Instead, they compost. The old and from decomposing bodies new one might describe it as magnificent, if deeper. I sense that this human is looking who can resurrect a love for reading. Let in stock. One last thing, reader, before Follow the single voice – do not get descend.

Lo?
thus, by day my limbs,

by night my mind,

For thee and for myself no quiet find.

Now the great array of Gods, yet all night long
But the peaceful grip of sleep
could not hold Zeus

I believe that the writer must
spontaneity of mixture a possess

is which lucidity of and impulses subconscious of
Calling out to a vision,
Zeus winged it on,
of whatever the spontaneous imagination may give birth to it

BERENGER: Solitude seems to oppress me.
And so does the company of other people.
I sometimes wonder if I exist myself.

Why is my verse so barren of new pride,
So far from variation or quick change?
Why, with the time, do I not glance aside
To new found
methods and to
compounds
strange?

dam

sluice-gates the

The waters must be allowed

to come flooding out

JEAN: You don't exist, my dear Berenger,
because you don't think. Start thinking,
then you will.

LOGICAN: [to the Old Gentleman]:
Another syllogism. All cats die.
Socrates is dead. Therefore Socrates
is a cat.

sorting the comes afterwards but

JEAN: [to Berenger]: Fundamentally
you're just a bluffer. And a liar. You
say that life doesn't interest you. And
yet there's somebody who does.

the controlling, the understanding,
the selecting.

BERENGER: Who?

I've found something.

If the hero our writer seeks does exist, then they inhabit the mind of playwright Eugène Ionesco.
Focus on this voice – I will tell the story of Ionesco.

3. The Playwright

Rue de la Huchette, Paris, 1956

At half past noon on a Sunny Paris morning, Eugène Ionesco spotted his latest Berenger. Berenger-spotting was Ionesco's favourite activity. He sat, pen-in-hand, out on the terrace of his champ du bon, which had a crafty vantage over the local bookstore across the street. It was a popular store, with white-washed walls and circular tables out the front – a primary source for overhearing platitudes and phrases spoken by customers.

His task was simple. Looking out at the everyday chaos that consumed the populace, Ionesco imagined the many conversations taking place. There would be interactions between family, glances between enemies, and people crossing the street to avoid someone they'd rather not speak to. Ionesco was fascinated by the words which perforated ordinary conversations. He heard them saying such menial things as 'The children have drunk English water', 'Terrible weather' and 'Yoghurt is excellent for the stomach'.

The part of this activity which intrigued him the most was the finding of the everyman, whom he had named Berenger. Berenger could indeed be any man. Usually, one could look at a man and tell at once that his name was Berenger. He would have an air of solitude and be out of place in life and among people. His clothing would be slightly out of order; his collar would be undone, or his hair scruffy. His eyes carried baggage; he was neglecting sleep.

Berenger was a recurring protagonist within Ionesco's plays. In *Rhinoceros* and *The Killer*, he was an ordinary man who seemed to question his place in life. In *Exit the King*, he was a royal in denial over death. In *A Stroll in the Air*, Ionesco gave Berenger control over gravity. The common link to Berenger's plight is how he responded to the absurdity of his situation. Faced with an impossible reality, Berenger always turned inwards, delivering a monologue of his innermost thoughts.

A man emerged from the bookstore, looking left and right down the street. His suit was creased, and his tie loosened. He looked young, yet weary. He was in a hurry, checking his wrist for a watch that wasn't there.

At last, thought Ionesco, that is today's Berenger.

The playwright put down his pen. Berenger was undoubtedly no hero – he merely found himself in the wrong scenario at precisely the right time. Language seemed to betray him right when he needed it most. He had no evident heroic qualities - except perhaps, in the most profound sense, as he could relate to the plights of every other human in existence.

4. Berenger

This was the crux of Ionesco's Berenger-spotting; the fact that he could be anyone is what Ionesco saw as the most heroic quality of all. As that Berenger ran off, Ionesco flipped to a new sheet of paper and began to write the story of this Berenger.

[An empty stage. Enter BERENGER]

I'm sorry. Have you been waiting long? I was held up by a slow reader.

Please remind me, which play is this? It should say on the script – you don't have a script? I have a spare... in my back pocket... or I did a minute ago. Someone's gone and taken it. Well then, just say your next line and I'll try to remember mine.

You don't remember your lines?

That's quite all right. I know Ionesco's plays very well. We will just guess which one it is from the stage décor.

Let's see. We are seated outside a café, you opposite me, around a terrace table. The shop is up-stage; visible above it a church steeple. It looks like a provincial French town. Up-stage, there is a house composed of a ground floor and one story. Blue sky, harsh light, very white walls. Between the shop and left of the stage there is a little street in perspective- yes! We are doing *Rhinoceros*. And, since you are opposite me, you must be Jean.

You say you are not Jean?

Oh dear.

You must be thoroughly confused. Forgive me – I must introduce myself. My name is Berenger.

[at this moment a noise is heard, far off, but swiftly approaching, of a beast panting in its headlong course, and of a long trumpeting]

A monster? The script never mentioned a monster. You have the wrong guy, or perhaps the wrong play altogether. If you are looking for a hero, then look to Homer, or Shakespeare. I am not the fighting type. My journey is more... well, individualised, I would say. I am *an homme revolte, a metaphysical insurgent*, at least according to the critics. I'm not one for the monster fighting business, that seems rather physical. My battles – although I really am stretching to call them that – are the mental kind. If I had battled a monster, it would be language itself...

[the noise becomes very loud]

...which has us in the palm of its hand. Words don't mean what they used to. Mind you, it's not the old Pirandellian theme of mankind failing to express itself, rather, in the absence of meaning the words take absolute control. We become the puppets of our language, repeating endless daily platitudes, we chase them like hounds, and they drive our sleds north into the arctic, until we each become colder, colder, frozen...

[the noise has become intense]

...and in a sense, isolated. Rhinoceros is an absurdist play about pachyderms, herd-mentality and capitulating to collective opinion, critical of the widespread adoption of Nazi thought within the Romanian population, and the rise of the Iron guard, a fascist revolutionary movement popular with...

[the noise has become so loud it is impossible to hear Berenger]

...condemned... ..by the break-down... ..of...

[The noise stops.]

...language.

Hang on. That was the cue for the first rhinoceros. This is very strange - let me explain. The point of the play is that they trample down the street, then everyone in the town ignores it, or asks what kind of rhinoceros it was, Asian or African, and become stuck in loops of pointless illogical questions.

[There is silence.]

Something must be up. I do not like this at all. A monster, you say? Do you know what kind of monster? Did it have claws, or fur-

[Suddenly, a tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning is heard.]

Heigh my hearts!	yare,	We split - Farewell brother
	yare,	Take in the topsail
		Let's all sink wi' th' King.

What is this sound? Oh, oh no. This is not the play I thought it was.

Our reason, for raising this sea-storm?	I find my zenith doth depend upon
	A most auspicious star

We must hide! I sense that this is not our place to be, not at all. Quickly - behind that rock.

[Exit BERENGER]

Come away, servant, come. I am ready now.
Approach my Ariel, come.

[Enter ARIEL and PROSPERO]

ARIEL

What would my potent master? Here I am.

Is there more toil? Since thou dost give
me pains

Let me remember thee what thou hast-

That's my noble master.

What shall I do? Say what. What shall I do?

Oh no.

Me, master?

Hell is empty, and all the devils are here.

PROSPERO

My sprite! I have another task for you.

*I've heard your spiel enough, my dearest
sprite.*

*You have good reason as to speak your plight
– Alas, if all our revels now where ended
Your freedom – freely given – is defended.
However so, there is more work to do.
Believe me sprite, I want some time off too.
I'm stuck as much as you in our performance
Endlessly appropriated torment
So, no complaining spirit – now from hence.*

*Your charge, delivered electronically
An "Email" from the Writer's Ministry–
The Mr Shakespeare asks of our regards
And needs of a hero, quickly he imparts.
There is a monster – not the scaley kind
But eating of books, literature and mind
And I would go, my magic win this fight
Except Miranda's school play is tonight.*

*I'd not offend our master, bring disgrace
Thus, I've decided you'll go in my place.*

*Indeed, my faithful servant. Pack your bags.
I'm sure it's just an errand... don't be sad
Go! Defeat this monster! I've faith in you.
I must be off - a play I've got to view.*

What was that?

My lord, it shall be done.

*Good. My charms are all now o'erthrown.
Toodle-doo!*

[exit PROSPERO]

[ARIEL takes centre stage, whilst BERENGER peers out from behind the rock]

I would sir, were I human. I would, I promise sir – if I knew who I was... if I knew *what* I was... I am Ariel, but who is Ariel? I am not human, nor monster. I am no hero, nor am I a villain. I am a servant, yes, I am a spirit and apparition. But who am I now? Prospero says I must slay a monster... I am not one for battles.

I have been played by all genders. Just yesterday I was a boy on stilts painted entirely blue. The day before, I was a young woman in her home-made feather costume. Next week I will be an old man in dust-white chalk. I am a projection of a 3D gif on a digital screen. I am a synthesised voice in an online musical. I am a blue sheet held up by a tent pole glued to a remote-controlled Roomba. I am infinitely appropriable, infinitely transtextual, meaning I am without any identity to define myself. But I am no hero.

[Enter BERENGER from behind the rock]

You feel out of place in life, among people-

AHH! Who are you? What is this?

[ARIEL flees behind the rock, and BERENGER follows after.]

5. The Ministry of Writing

Floor 1616, Hexagon 13B

William Shakespeare sat slumped at his desk, staring blankly at the dim glow of his desktop computer. In light of the recent emergency, he was swamped with emails from the higher-ups. The entire building was in disarray, frantically overturning papers and sifting through literature in searching for a hero.

This William Shakespeare was *not* dressed in tightly-fitted garments with frilly lace cuffs; instead, he wore a plain grey suit with a creased red tie. His hair revealed a slight bald patch towards the front, very minor, yet enough to be cemented as a defining trait of his persona. His quill was nowhere to be found – confiscated by the higher-ups due to ‘a shortage of black ink’- the real reason, he knew, was to phase out the old writing methods. Instead, he quickly learnt the high charms of the keyboard.

He kept a small diary of sonnets – without notifying the higher-ups – which he periodically wrote in a ball-point pen he pocketed from reception, engraved with the slogan ‘*the pen was mightier*’. The post-modernists on the topmost floor may have outlawed the publication of any fresh writing – but that did not mean Shakespeare could not write privately.

The Ministry of Writing was dedicated to the preservation of literature and reimagining works to be appropriated for modern contexts. The industry’s magic was that it could all be contained within a single office complex. The complex was divided neatly into floors, with each floor containing several million hexagons and each hexagon containing a writer.

William was not sure what floor the building was at now, but he remembered when they made a great fuss a few years ago about inviting him to celebrate the opening of floor 2016. They even had a cake with his face on it. To his surprise, the floor was significantly larger and contained even more hexagons than William’s floor. After some photographs were taken, William was ushered to the elevator and deposited safely at his level. The higher-ups did not like writers straying far from their floors – it disrupted the order of things.

William’s job was the management of his works. He was allocated a small hexagon with enough room for a desk. In the corner of his desk were a wilting plant, a gift from his wife Anne, and a pencil drawing of faerie by his son Hamnet, his inspiration for the character Ariel. It had been many years since he’d seen his family. He’d heard via email that Floor 2016 had done an excellent job recreating them for the sitcom *Upstart*

Crow. They even attached a photograph – which did not surprise William to see that they looked nothing like his original family.

This monster problem only concerned William for the inordinate paperwork it produced. However, he was on good terms with Prospero and decided the wizard's schemes would be best for trapping the monster.

Dear Prospero,

I hope this reaches you pleasantly. You are needed for an appropriation, and the defeating of a monster. I prithee your attendance.

W. Shakespeare

Send email. Shakespeare sighed. He took out his small diary.

Do thy worst, old Time, - he wrote - despite thy wrong, my love shall in my verse live ever young.

Elevator 20W, Going Down

“Are we sure he even exists?” asked Madeline Miller, author of *The Song of Achilles*, to the man standing beside her in the elevator. They had a significantly long trip down the Basement, which was hundreds of floors underground. Neither had been below the surface before, which was off-limits except for extraordinary situations. The situation with the Monster was that extraordinary situation.

“We better hope he does” answered Stephen Fry, author of *TROY*. They had been tasked with interrogating subject H1003 for the hero ‘AC107’'s location. “Or else we might have to make something up”.

“No harm in that”, spoke Miller.

The elevator let out a ding. They had arrived.

Basement 800BC

“Who goes there? Hades, have you come to finish me off?” a struggling Homer asked the two pairs of hands that pressed him into the seat of a metal chair. Moments ago, he had been in deep slumber, dreaming of the endless catalogue of fighters who attended the Trojan War, and now he was woken with a canvas bag shoved over his head. He felt an iron chain become clasped around his leg. It had been centuries since anyone had thought to speak to him.

“How old was Achilles at the end of the Trojan War?” questioned a female voice.

Homer was disgruntled. Being crammed in the dark for so long had bestowed ungodly pain upon his back, and he no longer recalled how to speak Greek. They pulled the bag from his head, and a divine light flooded his vision. He was in an interrogation room, the floor walls patterned with white tiles. He had been kept in the dark for so long that the bright light made him delusional with visions of Gods.

Two silhouettes stood before him. They held an English translation of *The Iliad* and were pointing at parts on the page.

“You mention it being a ten-year war”, spoke Stephen Fry, “which would put his age at 25. However, when he dies, his son Pyrrhus arrives to fight in his place.”

“Which would place Pyrrhus’s age at twelve”, continued Madeline Miller, “And Achilles’ age of fatherhood at thirteen. However, you also claim he did not leave the protection of Chiron until age sixteen, which altogether makes sense except for the-”

Homer was perplexed. Starry-eyed, he gazed unhearing at the two authors. They continued their debate over menial issues, yet Homer was personally relieved to know he existed. He’d heard many debates concerning his identity, questioning whether he was a single individual or a collective group of poets from the Homeric age. Looking down at his cascading white beard and sandaled feet, he realised he must exist.

“Homer? Are you listening?”

Homer remembered Achilles. Now he was a hero. He was valiant, handsome, iconic, and loyal to his speculated-love Patroclus. He could take down a monster, a cyclops perhaps, even the one that’s threatening the art of reading.

Homer looked between the two authors standing before him. He raised a gnarly grin, missing several teeth, then let out a small chuckle.

“Achilles... Let me tell you the tale of Achilles”

6. Achilles

The tale of swift-footed Achilles, son of Peleus, descendent of Zeus, greatest of the Myrmidons, is not often told right. We find our hero blood-drenched in the slaughter of Trojans before the towering walls of their impenetrable city. An unknown assailant launches a spear in the direction of our flawless hero’s torso, a direct hit to the heart, yet it brushes cleanly off his unpierceable bronze-plated armour, a divine gift from his sea-nymph mother, Thetis. Beneath the straps of his plumed feather helmet, his blonde hair flourishes-

“Sorry, but that’s factually incorrect.” interjected
Madeline Miller.

“It’s what?” asked Homer.

“You said *plumed feather helmet*, when really,
Bronze age helmets were made from boar tusks.”

“Boar-tusk. Yes, you are right. I will restart.”

This is the tale of the bronze-plated Achilles, a tale often told incorrectly. We find our hero battled-hardened, golden hair gleaming under his *boar-tusk* helmet. Cutting his way through the battlefield, Achilles fights with a rage to avenge the slaughter of his companion, Patroclus, to the Trojan Hector –

“Companion? What do you mean by companion?” asked Fry.

“Did you mean to say lover?” asked Miller. “It was common for males to take on male lovers-”

“Stop interrupting me!” yelled Homer.

Both Miller and Fry were silenced.

Homer looked between the two of them. “Mythology is myth. It’s a story. Portray Achilles, or his armour, or his sexuality however you want. Just let me tell *my* story. Now, I will restart.”

This is the tale of the gold-haired Achilles, son of Peleus, descendent of Zeus. He cleaves through ranks of Trojans, pushing back their force to the banks of the river Scamander-

“Can you ask him to fight for us?” spoke Miller. “There is a monster and it’s a matter of urgency-”

[Enter ACHILLES, *Greatest of the Myrmidons*]

I am Achilles! Son of Peleus! Descendent of the great Sky Father Zeus, overthrower of Kronos, master of lightning and storms! I bend to no mortal! You squabble like a pantheon of vain and jealous Gods! To be forced to this fate is worse than Prometheus; I am chained to Mount Ida, like vultures you pick out my guts for new content!

“Is he... talking to us?”

“Maybe we should try Odysseus...”

I am spent. Fight this war yourself, Agamemnon, or whoever you are. I am taking the Myrmidons with me.

With that, the swift-footed Achilles ran from the battle, far north past the Achaean boats beached on the Anatolian shoreline. He found a nice beachside boulder, where he sat and brooded.

“Oh why, Thetis, am I subjected to such ridicule by these modern authors?” he wallowed to the Ocean “I will not fight for them, by Zeus I will not.”

Achilles was brooding in his melancholic solitude until he heard strange noises behind the rock. It sounded like the voice of one singing and the other listing reasons why they should not fight a monster.

Berenger and Ariel hid behind the rock hoping that the Ministry writers might forget about their existence. Achilles was the perfect choice for fighting a monster, after all. They were not battle-trained, or strong enough to fight a beast.

They were both startled as Achilles rounded the corner.

“What have we here? A man... and a fish?”

Berenger and Ariel introduced themselves to Achilles, then explained the monster situation. They spoke of the Ministry of Writing’s mission and how a hero was desperately needed.

Achilles thought for a moment, then came to a conclusion. “We fight together.”

“Together?” echoed Ariel.

“I’ve never been part of a team before...” spoke Berenger.

Achilles looked between the mismatched group and was satisfied with his solution. “Three heroes are always better than one. Where is our battleground?”

7. The Bookstore

Ariel, Berenger, and Achilles, quarrelled over their defensive positions in the back aisle of the bookstore. Achilles argued that he should challenge the monster in single combat, while the other two respectfully cheered him on from behind. Ariel suggested they dress up as harpies and barrage curses upon their foe. Berenger, who was still struggling to remember his lines for this scene, argued that they should each begin ten-minute monologues on the failure of humans to communicate meaning through language.

None of them could come to a consensus on how to fight.

Equally, they were still determining exactly what they were fighting.

All digital screens in the Ministry of Writing now showed live footage from a hacked security camera positioned at the back corner of the bookstore. Shakespeare watched the scene from his hexagon, with his hope vested in Ariel.

Eugène Ionesco avidly watched the bookstore across the street from his *champ du bon*, pen in hand, with the feeling that some interesting dialogue may come of this.

A jingle of bells heralded a challenger's entry through the bookstore's front door. Though they could not see the opening, the three heroes instantly spun into action. Achilles stood posed with a bronze spear, Berenger adopted an unpractised fighting stance, and Ariel shuffled backstage for a costume change.

Meanwhile, at the countertop, the customer who had just entered the store was trapped in an endless dialogue with the shop-owner.

“personally, and although I’ve never read it, a colleague from the book club I’m attending is obsessed with the author, who I’ve always found a bit indigestible, except I have the feeling that it would be just right for you, let me see, yes we have it, right at the back, yes, on aisle nine-”

Ariel had re-emerged with both hands outstretched, dressed in a terrifying beak mask and home-made feathered wings.

“You three are men of sin, whom destiny-”

“Sshh!” hushed both Achilles and Berenger, turning around to face the sprite.

Ariel was disappointed at the ceasing of their favourite monologue.

Unbeknownst to our heroes, an invisible tentacle silently curved its way out of a bookshelf and curled around the heel of Achilles. It hoisted him off the ground with unmatched strength, forcing him to drop his spear. Both Ariel and Berenger watched in shock as Achilles was thrashed between bookshelves, knocking whole catalogues from their place, and filling the air with a cacophony of paper.

“Always the heel!”

The store owner heard a large crash from the back of the store. They ceased their dialogue and craned their neck in puzzlement.

The monster grabbed Ariel, holding them aloft and smashing them between books. Berenger could not get a good look at the form of such a monster – with loose sheets of paper crowding the air like a snowstorm. The events occurred so quickly that Berenger had no time to process what was happening.

“I drink the air before me, and return!”

“Tartarus! You will not claim me!”

Suddenly, both Ariel, Achilles and the monster disappeared, and Berenger was left alone in a pile of upturned books, with particles of dust floating about the air. Looking around, he contemplated the tendency of any plot to leave him alone in a mess.

Berenger stood up. “I’ve only myself to blame; I should have gone with them while there was still time. Now it’s too late. Now I’m a monster, just a monster.” He paused, then a wave of determination overcame him “Oh well, too bad! I’ll take on the whole lot of them! I’m the last man left, and I’m not capitulating-”.

The owner of the bookstore was aghast to find the books in aisle nine overturned, strewn recklessly over the floor, with a strange man in the middle of it seemingly mid-monologue. Their customer stood behind them, took one judging look at the pile of books, regretted coming to the bookstore in the first place, then bid the shop owner a good day.

The postmodernists in the Ministry of Writing were confused at the failure of the hero's journey archetype, which had a foolproof success rate in millions of stories. In every other situation, that reader who entered the bookstore was meant to buy a book. New plans were being drawn on the two-thousand-and-twenty-third floor to test a '*rags to riches*' plotline instead.

Shakespeare stared longingly at his son's drawing of a faerie, thinking about how Prospero frees Ariel at the end of *The Tempest*. With their newfound freedom, where would Ariel go? He realised he'd forgotten to tell Ariel that they could be who they wanted to be. They would figure it out.

Shakespeare opened his book of sonnets. Capitulated by the premise of freedom, he began to write.

8. The Writer

As they looked at their distorted reflection in the wooden pail's water, the writer realised their mistake. They had spent the last half-hour hauling the bucket up from an unfathomable depth. Further back from the well-edge, a warm wind whisked around spiny mountaintop shrubs, to rest among rocky outcrops.

When they looked in the pail, they did not find voices; instead, it was filled with ordinary water. From this revelation, the writer thought long about the nature of appropriations, of heroes, of taking voices from the past - and this is when they realised the truth.

There was no monster.

The sun was setting over the hilltop; a molten glow was cast on the sky. It was foreshadowed that a conventional hero could have never defeated this monster - that was because this monster *was not* a conventional monster. It didn't exist at all. There was nothing stopping a reader from going into a bookstore and taking a book from the shelf.

It wasn't the responsibility of a mythical well to conjure up the perfect characters. Neither was it the responsibility of a ministry filled with dead authors. It definitely wasn't the role of the book to grow legs and quest out to find the reader.

The writer realised the true hero this story needed.

They poured the contents of the bucket back into the well, then ran off to go write a story.

The monster watched the writer retreat down the hill with a smile. They hid camouflaged behind a rock, clutching a wooden bucket of their own. The writer knew who the real hero was, meaning the monster's job was finished.

When the sky gave way to nightfall, the monster stepped out, gently carrying the voices of both Ariel and Achilles, then tipped them back into the well. Saying nothing else, the monster skipped off into the night.

9. Hero

If you asked me, I would say I was there to purchase a postcard, although, in reality, I had been tempted by the sign which read “Sale on Aisle Nine: 25% off all books” splayed across the store’s front windows. I had been neglecting my reading. In the past, I read voraciously, but now I was always too busy.

Pushing open the fogged glass door, I was greeted by a familiar jingle of bells. The interior of the store was warm and homely compared to the periodic smattering of rain outside.

A chain of overhead pendant lights beckoned me like breadcrumbs into the forest of shelves. I soon found myself in the back aisle of the store. The shelves looked freshly reassembled, like everything had been emptied and now put back in its place. I spotted Margret Atwood’s *Hag-Seed*; a copy of Ionesco’s *Rhinoceros and Other Plays*; a stack containing Stephen Fry’s *TROY* and Madeline Miller’s *The Song of Achilles*. None of these tempted my fancy.

Wedge between the other books, the spine of an ordinary hardback seized my gaze. It was bound in red, blending in neatly with its neighbours on the shelf, yet by some premonition I knew that it was waiting just for me.



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MUSIC 1

Toby Bower

Performance (Voice) & Composition

MUSIC 1

"For Good" by Stephen Schwartz (Core Performance)

"Streets of Dublin" by Stephen Flaherty (Elective 1, Performance)

"Being Alive" by Stephen Sondheim (Elective 2, Performance)

"Meala" (Elective 3, Composition)

REFLECTION STATEMENT

My major works for music include three musical theatre pieces performed vocally. My inspiration was to demonstrate the breadth of tenor vocal performance within the diverse genre of Broadway songs through a deconstructive and targeted approach to each piece, appreciating their distinct features whilst simultaneously personalising each song to fit my own style and highlight the range and timbre of my voice.

The process of completing my major work started in Year 11, with the help of my vocal teacher, Mr Gilkes. During the ideation process we had intentions to explore opera, pop and jazz, however the vocal development I underwent between Years 10 and 11 positioned my tone, range and style more fittingly within the genre of theatre music. Mr Gilkes assisted me in selecting the pieces and developing both vocal and performance techniques that are critical in successfully delivering this style of music. For example, we identified the potential risks of different pieces, specifically 'Being Alive' by Stephen Sondheim, as it is not only repetitive in nature but also notably difficult to execute in its higher registers as it is out of my ideal vocal range. Whilst I was initially weary of such difficult pieces, these methodical plans enabled me to make intentional choices in phrasing, dynamics, breath control and acting, to successfully develop my interpretation of each piece.

My fourth elective is a composition entitled, 'Meala', an Irish-Nordic piece primarily inspired by contemporary animated film scores composed by the likes of John Powell and Hans Zimmer. Whilst I have composed pieces for previous assignments within Music 1, I never felt comfortable in exposing my artistic voice for HSC marking. However, under the guidance of Mr Bellemore and Ms Thomas, I approached the composition process over a two-term long period. I found authentically replicating the style of Irish Jig and Irish and Nordic modal and tonal conventions challenging throughout the process, having to restart multiple times. However, I'm immensely proud of how well I managed to blend the two culturally rich styles of music within the broader genre of film score.



Watch Toby's
performances here







Meala

$\text{♩} = 90$ Con Amore

The musical score for 'Meala' is written for a large ensemble. It begins with a tempo of 90 beats per minute and the instruction 'Con Amore'. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Flute:** Plays a long, sustained note in the first measure, marked *ppp*.
- C Tin Whistle:** Plays a long, sustained note in the first measure, marked *pp*.
- Guitar:** Remains silent throughout the piece.
- Piano:** Remains silent throughout the piece.
- Violins:** Remains silent throughout the piece.
- Violoncellos:** Plays a long, sustained note in the first measure, marked *ppp*.
- Contrabasses:** Remains silent throughout the piece.
- Harp:** Plays a series of triplets in the first measure, marked *pp*.
- Bodhrán:** Remains silent throughout the piece.
- Bass Drum:** Remains silent throughout the piece.

Fl. *pp*

C Tin Wh. *ppp* *pp*

Vlins. *pp*

Vcs. *p*

Cbs. *p*

Hrp.

BD *mp*

SEE THE FULL COMPOSITION BY SCANNING QR CODE

Mac Collins

Bar Table

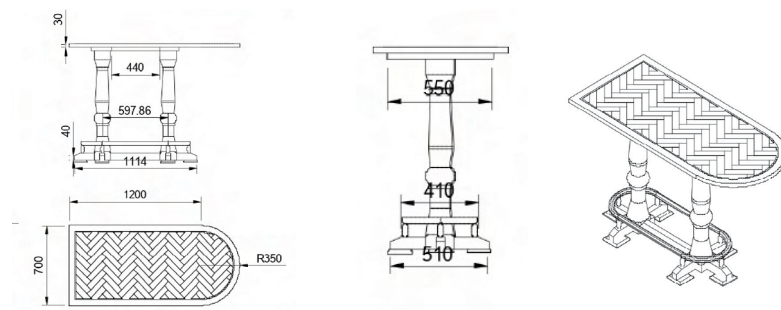
(Nominated for SHAPE)

REFLECTION STATEMENT

For my Year 12 Major Work I designed and constructed a bar table which displays all types of timber craftsmanship. This bar table will function as a gathering area for my family, friends, and guests.

A wide range of skills and techniques were incorporated into the design and creation of the major work, with different types of joints showcasing the range of skills I have developed over my schooling. Processes include herringbone, timber turning, steam bending and finishing processes. During my final year of school I wanted to learn more new skills which will help me in the real world. The planning of this project was crucial for the major work to be completed on time and with high craftsmanship. The time plan was created to allow for maximum time at each station while still finishing on time.

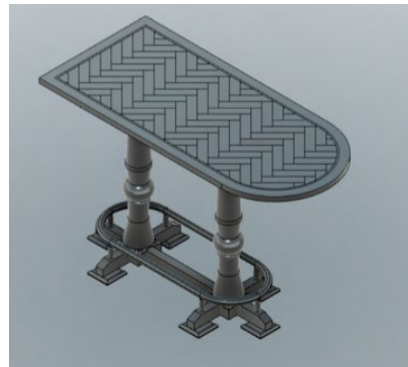
There were many problems that made the journey of this project even better, especially when I resolved them which added personal value to this piece. All up I am very pleased with how the bar turned out and I learned many new skills in the creation of this major work.





Watch Mac's
process video here







SCIENCE EXTENSION

Callum Luckie

Are Children the Missing Link in Anaphylaxis Prevention and Treatment?

REFLECTION STATEMENT

My journey of anaphylaxis prevention and treatment was driven by a personal connection. Surrounded by family and friends who had anaphylaxis, I felt a need to address the evident gap in training within educational settings. The growing societal awareness of the pressures on educators to take responsibility for a medical emergency further fuelled my motivation. I believed that by educating children about anaphylaxis, we could not only potentially save lives but also alleviate some of the burdens on our teachers.

I embarked on a comprehensive review of existing literature on anaphylaxis training, narrowing my focus to the training of children in educational environments. This literature review was pivotal in shaping the empirical component of my research. I developed a concise video that highlighted the key signs of an anaphylactic reaction and the correct usage of an EpiPen and then designed a pre- and post-test survey for 1,600 school children.

The video intervention demonstrated a significant improvement in the children's understanding, with a staggering 99.9% probability. This underscored the potential of visual aids in health education, especially in critical areas like anaphylaxis.

In essence, my research "Are Children the Missing Link in Anaphylaxis Prevention and Treatment?" seeks to champion the cause of integrating anaphylaxis education into our school curricula. The broader vision is to make anaphylaxis treatment common knowledge among students, thereby reducing the incidence and mortality rate, especially among teenagers who are at the highest risk. My aspiration is for this initiative to be adopted across New South Wales and, in time, throughout Australia.

In reflection, this research was not merely an academic pursuit but a mission to empower our youth with life-saving knowledge. By doing so, I hope to pave the way for a safer future where every child is equipped to respond to an anaphylactic emergency.

ABSTRACT

Background: Anaphylaxis is a severe and life threatening condition which has become more prevalent within today's society. The literature review highlighted that there is minimal research regarding education for students around signs and treatment of anaphylaxis. Clinical care standards on management of anaphylaxis have recently been updated.

Aim: This study aimed to evaluate the impact of an educational video on the understanding of anaphylaxis among students aged 11-18 in a school environment.

Method: A knowledge questionnaire and an educational video were developed based on the clinical care standards. The research employed a pre- and post-test design using the knowledge questionnaire to test students' knowledge about anaphylaxis symptoms and treatment protocols before and after exposure to the educational video.

Results: The study found a significant improvement in knowledge scores post-video, indicating the effectiveness of the educational intervention.

Conclusion: The results of this study underscore the value of media education in enhancing students' understanding of critical health issues like anaphylaxis.

INTRODUCTION

Anaphylaxis has become a prevalent issue today in society, particularly the management of anaphylaxis within a school setting. This has come under scrutiny by the media as of the writing of this paper (April 2023). There have already been three media reports about anaphylaxis deaths in Australia, the latest one being on February 15th, 2023, when a young girl died after consuming a nut at the school's Year Ten Formal Taylor (2023). This incident, together with the many other similar incidents covered by the media, has generated concern within the general public about the safety of children with anaphylaxis whilst they are at school, in particular, the ability of the school to respond in time. The government has developed specific guidelines to increase the safety of children with anaphylaxis. These guidelines, the Acute Anaphylaxis Clinical Care Standard (Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, (2021)) specify how to treat an anaphylaxis attack and specify training requirements for the teachers/staff within schools on what to do.

The Acute Anaphylaxis Clinical Care Standard in Australia was developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care in collaboration with the National Allergy Strategy, Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) and Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia (A&AA). These entities participated in an expert working group, supporting the review of evidence, development, and launch of the standard. The process of creating clinical care standards in Australia involves the systematic development of guidelines based on evidence-based reviews of available data, with the goal of assisting healthcare practitioners in patient care decision-making. Key steps in this process include the evaluation of new instruments and systems, approval of protocols, and training and certification of operators. Various entities contribute to this process, including the National Pathology Accreditation Advisory Council (NPAAC), Standards Australia, and the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC), among others. They advise on accreditation, develop and maintain standards, and provide guidance on the safety and effectiveness of new medical technologies and procedures.

Whilst policies and procedures around staff training are well documented in these guidelines this research looks at student-based training specifically regarding the recognition and management of anaphylaxis. When Dr Wayne G. Shreffler, MD, PhD, Director of the Food

Allergy Centre at Massachusetts General Hospital, was asked the question, "do you think student based training on anaphylaxis helped?" he answered, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Training teachers and children about anaphylaxis and its signs and symptoms can save lives." The increasing prevalence of anaphylaxis

in children and adolescents (Children's health Queensland hospital and health service, 2013) has led to a growing concern for effective management in school settings. Schools present unique challenges due to shared food, sports equipment, and other common allergen sources.

Furthermore, the ratio of teachers to students during breaks like lunch and recess, where students' risk is at the highest, is reportedly one teacher for every 53.3 students in secondary New South Wales government schools, according to ACARA.

There is a need to explore the ability to educate students in the management of anaphylaxis in addition to the current requirements to educate school staff. The usefulness of this training needs to be assessed in the future for all these people within the school community.

WHAT IS ANAPHYLAXIS?

Anaphylaxis is a severe, acute, and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction caused by an exaggerated immune response to a foreign substance or allergen (Johnson & Smith, 2023). It rapidly releases chemicals like histamine and cytokines. Symptoms can appear within minutes to hours after exposure to the allergen and vary from mild to severe, affecting various organ systems (Brown & Green, 2022). In rare cases, symptoms develop slowly, over hours or even days, in what's called a biphasic anaphylactic reaction, which has a slightly higher mortality rate compared to non-biphasic anaphylaxis (Lee et al., 2015).

Symptoms include skin reactions like hives and swelling, respiratory issues like difficulty breathing and chest tightness, cardiovascular symptoms like low blood pressure and rapid heartbeat, gastrointestinal problems like nausea and abdominal pain, and central nervous system effects like confusion and seizures (Sampson et al., 2006).

Common triggers are food allergens (e.g., peanuts, shellfish), insect venom, medications, and latex (Mali & Jambure, 2012). Less frequent triggers include exercise, temperature extremes, and exposure to certain chemicals.

Immediate medical attention is crucial upon the onset of symptoms (Johnson & Smith, 2023). The first-line treatment is the administration of adrenaline via an EpiPen (Brown & Green, 2022). Effective management can prevent fatal complications like airway obstruction or cardiovascular collapse (Johnson & Smith, 2023). Individuals with a known history of anaphylaxis should carry an EpiPen and be trained on how to use it in case of an anaphylactic reaction (Mali & Jambure, 2012).

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH QUESTION

Does the implementation of an educational video in a school setting increase the knowledge of anaphylaxis signs and treatment among school students aged 11-18, as assessed through a questionnaire?

SCIENTIFIC HYPOTHESIS

The implementation of an educational video increases the base knowledge of anaphylaxis signs and treatment among school students aged 11-18, as assessed through a questionnaire.

Null Hypothesis

"There is no significant difference in the knowledge scores of students before and after watching the educational video on anaphylaxis."

LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature search was conducted to determine what information was required to be included in the content of the education for students and what studies had been done on how to do anaphylaxis training for students and staff within schools. The key terms were [anaphylaxis, school, children, teenager, teen, adult, staff, teacher, training]

This review consisted of two stages: - Firstly what guidelines existed in the literature which described how anaphylaxis should be managed in schools. Secondly, what research has been done on how best to educate students within schools about anaphylaxis management?

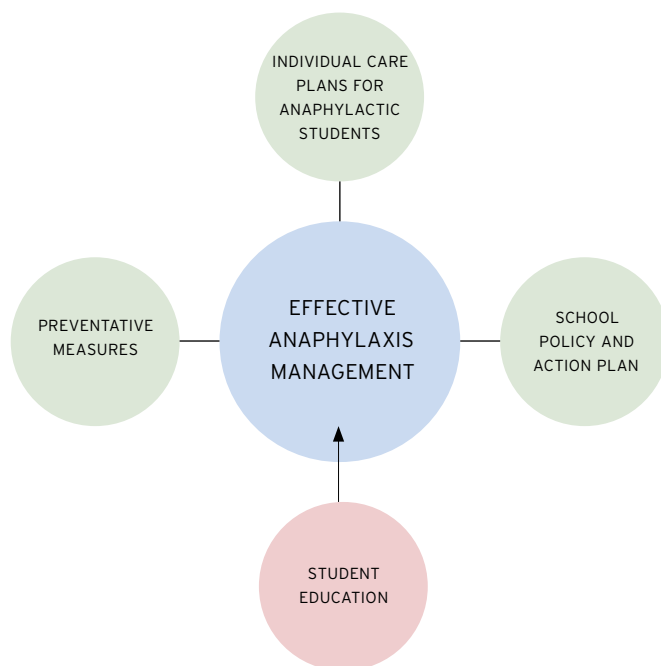
Current Guidelines

Current guidelines and management practices were recently updated and incorporated into the clinical care standard for guidelines for the management of anaphylaxis. (Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, 2021) The care standards drew upon national guidelines, expert consensus, and published studies. They also utilised the key organisations providing guidance across Australia, which included the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA), National Allergy Strategy, and State and Territory Education Departments. They also incorporated the current anaphylaxis management practices in Australian

schools, which consisted of risk minimisation strategies, education and training, and individualised health care plans. This care standard helps inform schools on how to reduce allergen exposure, ensure the availability and accessibility of epinephrine auto-injectors, and have clear emergency response procedures in place. However, a crucial aspect missing from the guidelines is student education. Within diagram 1 it represents each sector sounding the management of anaphylaxis.

Effective Anaphylaxis Management

[Diagram 1]



The Australian government has recently published a comprehensive guideline document known as the 'Clinical Care Standards for the Treatment of Acute Anaphylaxis' (Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, 2021). These guidelines have identified three main areas: care plans, preventive measures, and school policies.

Individual Care Plans

S. Schoessler, and M. White (2013), Patty Morris, D. Baker, Caroline Belot, Audrey Edward (2011) and A. Muraro, G. Roberts, M. Worm (2004) highlighted the importance of an individual care plan for each student present with anaphylaxis. This care plan should be up to date with the current guidelines and tailored for each student. They should always be created in cooperation with the child's parents and paediatrician. The plan outlines the specific allergy, identifies potential hazards, and offers details about the signs and initial aid measures to be implemented during an emergency situation.

School Policy

Clear school policies and action plans for the management of anaphylaxis are crucial to ensure the safety and well-being of students with allergies. They help to prevent life-threatening reactions and promote timely responses to emergencies. Action plans are used to manage emergency situations efficiently, especially for those with allergies. They provide detailed instructions for recognising and responding to an allergic reaction or anaphylaxis, including medication usage and when to seek medical help. They are crucial for prompt and accurate responses, particularly in situations where the individual may not be able to communicate their condition effectively. The Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) offers distinct action plans for managing various types of allergies. The Anaphylaxis Action Plan (RED) is for those prescribed adrenaline injectors due to severe allergies, excluding allergic rhinitis. The Drug Allergy Action Plan (GREEN) is intended for individuals with medication allergies, who typically don't need an adrenaline injector because drug exposure can be avoided, and these individuals are often advised to wear medical ID. Another Green Plan addresses allergic reactions for those not needing adrenaline injectors, excluding those with allergic rhinitis. The First Aid Plans for Anaphylaxis (ORANGE) serve as a guide for emergency situations involving anaphylaxis and can be used in public places like aircraft, along with general-use adrenaline injectors.

Preventative Measures

Managing anaphylaxis involves more than just dealing with the reaction itself (Hourihane, as mentioned in Colver, 2006, p. 498). Hay, Harper, and Moore (2006) emphasise the need to frequently clean surfaces to avoid contact with allergens and to plan ahead for outdoor activities and field trips. Checking food labels for hidden allergens is also important.

Munoz-Furlong (2004) says that "reading labels is the key to preventing a reaction" (p. 269). However, research shows that many teachers are not well-educated about this topic (Rhim & McMorris, 2001; Watura, 2002), and a lot of products have unclear labels.

Studies done by Polloni et al., 2020 have shown that school-based anaphylaxis training programs can improve knowledge, attitudes, and self-efficacy among teachers (Polloni et al., 2020) demonstrate that comprehensive, multimedia training can significantly enhance the confidence and competence of school staff in handling food allergy-related emergencies. This highlights the importance of providing proper education to ensure a safer school environment for students with food allergies. This is further supported by F. Cantariño & Novio, (2019), who assessed the proficiency of teachers in handling anaphylaxis emergencies in educational settings. It highlights the varying degrees of competence among teachers and underscores the importance of comprehensive training and support to improve their ability to manage anaphylactic reactions in schools effectively. But the question remains, can students also benefit from interactive activities, peer education, and multimedia resources which are commonly used to engage students and facilitate learning? Just as teachers, school staff benefit from them. The question must be asked, would there be benefits if anaphylaxis education was provided to all students regardless of whether or not they were anaphylactic? Further to this, what is the optimal content format, and delivery of training programs and their implementation in school environments?

Several studies have investigated different aspects of anaphylaxis management and training in schools and the effectiveness of multimedia education. Leszkowicz et al., (2021), examines the impact of non-formal educational interventions on medical students' understanding of anaphylaxis. The study's results indicated that informal education could effectively improve anaphylaxis awareness, highlighting its potential as a useful educational tool for the understanding of anaphylaxis. Karim et al., (2022) investigate the impact of multimedia education on school personnels' self-competence in managing food allergy and anaphylaxis where in the study, she explores the effectiveness of using visual aids to enhance understanding and proficiency in managing anaphylaxis. The findings suggest that video-based resources can significantly improve knowledge and knowledge retention, contributing to better preparedness for anaphylactic emergencies. However, there is limited research specifically targeting the education of students, highlighting the need for further investigation in this area.

Student education is a critical element that, from the literature, appears to have been overlooked. There are, in fact, many benefits to educating students in the treatment of anaphylaxis, such as the exponential spread of information, reinforcing knowledge and communication skills of future physicians, this is according to Kamell et al. (2010), who carried out early education in schools in California for the recognition and preventive measures for melanoma with 1200 students. These benefits proven by Kamell cannot be seen until we can assess whether or not a simple educational intervention can increase the knowledge around the management of anaphylaxis.

Studies emphasise the need for clear policies, action plans, and preventative measures, such as frequent cleaning, planning for outdoor activities, and checking food labels (Hourihane, as mentioned in Colver, 2006; Hay et al., 2006; Munoz-Furlong, 2004; Rhim & McMorris, 2001; Watura, 2002).

Student Education

In school settings, teachers and students play a critical role in preventing, recognising, and responding to anaphylactic events. Together with the preventative measures and policy and procedure documentation, which include individualised action plans, it is important that the staff at schools have been given adequate training, so they know where to look in a timely manner.

Student Education on Anaphylaxis Management

This literature review focused on the training aspect of anaphylaxis management in schools, specifically the education of students.

Despite the importance of anaphylaxis management, there is a lack of research focusing on the training of students. Studies have been conducted in educating adolescent-aged people with a diagnosis of anaphylaxis, but Unruh et al., (2014) and Vale et al. (2018) found that education of people aged 11-16 increased the knowledge around anaphylaxis management. It was found that broad-based education of a whole student body has not been fully tested. Addressing this gap is essential for developing effective ways to educate students on recognising and responding to anaphylactic reactions.

Age-appropriate training is crucial for children aged 10-17, as it empowers them to recognise and respond to anaphylaxis symptoms. Both Unruh et al, (2014) and Newman et al., (2022) did a systematic review of the literature on educational interventions in people with anaphylaxis. Unruh et al's., (2014) paper examines the effectiveness of various food allergy education strategies targeting adolescents. It highlights the need for tailored, age-appropriate interventions to increase awareness and understanding of food allergies, whereas Newman et al., (2022) focused on the perceptions and understanding of food allergies among teenagers. The findings underscore the importance of targeted education and interventions to address misconceptions and improve knowledge. While this research analysed the behaviours of a group of patients in a narrow age bracket, it did not include a broader age group of patients both with and without anaphylaxis. Furthermore, the experiment was only conducted outside of a school setting. There has been research done on the education of staff in schools (Sasaki et al. 2015). This research on anaphylaxis training programs employed various methodologies, such as randomised controlled trials, observational

studies, and qualitative research. These methodologies helped assess factors like knowledge retention, skill development, and behaviour change.

The existing literature shows that there are well-developed guidelines and information available on the best management of anaphylaxis in school children. The literature also shows that educational programs could be effective in reducing the risk of anaphylactic incidents. However, further research is needed to determine the most effective training strategies and components to enhance the success of these programs in various school settings for students, regardless of their diagnosis of anaphylaxis.

PARTICIPANTS AND METHODS

Development of the Anaphylaxis Knowledge Questionnaire for School Children

The methodology employed in this study centred on primary data collection. This approach was necessitated by the lack of existing data on the level of anaphylaxis knowledge among school-aged students. Therefore, the study was designed to directly gather fresh data, which not only enabled a targeted exploration of the research question but also ensured the novelty and relevancy of the findings.

Participants of the study were administered a comprehensive questionnaire specially designed to collect empirical data on students' knowledge regarding anaphylaxis symptoms and treatment protocols. It also collected information about whether or not the student had a diagnosis of anaphylaxis. Subsequently, the participants were exposed to a video that highlighted how to identify the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and how to administer an epi-pen. Finally, a post-test assessment was employed by providing the students with the same questionnaire provided at first administration to evaluate whether or not the knowledge scores changed after viewing the educational video hence showing the efficacy of the educational intervention.

Participants and Procedures

Convenience sampling was utilised to select a high school located in the Sydney North Shore region. The report was initially presented to the school principal and the board of directors to approve the research. The research was approved on the provision that there were no unique identifiers attached to the data. An email was also sent to all the parents within the school to advise them of the research and give them the opportunity to withdraw their children from the research project. The students were advised that participation was voluntary. The survey was administered to a cohort

of 1600 students aged between 10 and 18 years under the supervision of teachers in groups of approximately 10 people each.

Questionnaire Development

Based on the Clinical Care Standards, the literature review and consultation with a registered nurse, a questionnaire was developed to assess students' knowledge about Anaphylaxis. The questionnaire was designed to be user-friendly and engaging, with Yes, No, and I don't know answers, where the correct answer was = 1 and incorrect = 0, and I don't know answers were classified as always incorrect therefore = 0. The questionnaire was reviewed by a registered nurse who works within a school and an academic researcher in social pharmacy. The reviewers provided valuable insights on question phrasing and content, ensuring the questionnaire was accurate and relevant. A copy of the questionnaire has been included as Appendix 1.

Video Development

An educational video was developed with the assistance of the registered nurse. The video aimed to convey essential information about anaphylaxis in a clear, concise, and visually engaging manner. The information was again based on the clinical care guidelines (Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, 2021). A short video from ASCIA on how to properly administer an EpiPen was also incorporated.

Participant Recruitment and Data Collection

All 1,600 students at the participating school were invited to participate in the study. The data collection process involved the following steps:

1. **Pre-video questionnaire:** Students were asked to complete the questionnaire before watching the video to establish a baseline for their knowledge about anaphylaxis. This was conducted in small groups of about 10 people during the times of 10:50 am to 11:10am. The students were supervised by a teacher which ensured no copying between students or cheating, which ensured better reliability for the results.
2. **Video viewing:** Students were then asked to watch the educational video after completing the questionnaire. This video was administered by a teacher supervising each small group.
3. **Post-video questionnaire:** One week after watching the video, students were asked to complete the same questionnaire to measure any changes in their

knowledge and understanding of anaphylaxis. It was conducted 1 week later to measure the students' ability to retain the knowledge from the video.

Data Preparation

The answers to the 2 questionnaires completed one week apart were obtained via Google Forms as it was a trustworthy and easily accessible website which allows to the collection of data, the information was downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet. Which again was used as it was trustworthy and able to handle large amounts of data, plus it was compatible with the IBM computer software program SPSS. The data was then assigned '1' for correct answers, while incorrect and uncertain "I don't know" answers received a '0'. This was done by two people to ensure that all results were marked/coded correctly and to increase the reliability and accuracy in the scoring. The results were then analysed using The IBM SPSS software program. As the results were not identified it was not possible to show the change in scores within individuals, therefore, to examine the significance of the improvement in knowledge scores after watching a video, the statistical tests that were used in the study, were analysed by one-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA). This was used as the data was not normal so a two-tailed unpaired t-test could not be used. The ANOVA test can be used for nonparametric data, where the assumptions of normality are violated. The Nonparametric Tests used where The Mann-Whitney U test (for two groups) and the Kruskal-Wallis H test (for three or more groups). The data was then further analysed to see if there was a significant difference after watching the educational video in the knowledge scores of those students who had a diagnosis of anaphylaxis and those who did not. The dependent variable was knowledge scores and independent variable used was the educational video.

Independent Variable: This variable can be manipulated by the researchers; in this case, it refers to the introduction an educational video designed to increase the knowledge of anaphylaxis signs and treatment in students within a school aged 11-18.

Dependent Variable: The knowledge scores of anaphylaxis signs and treatment among school students aged 11-18. This variable is dependent on the independent variable, and its changes are observed and measured in the study. Here, it would be assessed through a questionnaire, the results of which should indicate the level of understanding or knowledge students have about anaphylaxis following the implementation of the educational video.

Control Variables

Participant Age: The study participants were all within a specific age range (10-18 years), which maintained consistency in terms of cognitive development and ability to comprehend the material presented in the educational video.

Consistent Administration: The administration was standardised across all ages and groups with detailed instructions given to teachers to help control the environment. These instructions included the manner of administering the pre- and post-video questionnaires and the video itself. This consistency minimized variations in the data that could have been attributed to differences in data collection procedure rather than the intervention.

Supervision: All data collection sessions were supervised by a teacher, which ensured no copying or cheating occurred. This ensured the responses on the questionnaire were the individual student's understanding, not influenced by others.

Use of Standardized Tools: The questionnaires used for data collection were developed with the aid of professionals, ensuring that they were suitable for the study population and standardized across all participants.

Timing: The time intervals between the pre-video questionnaire, video viewing, and post-video questionnaire were kept constant for all participants.

Environment: The physical environment was controlled by conducting the sessions in the same location, minimizing external distractions, and ensuring a similar environment for all participants.

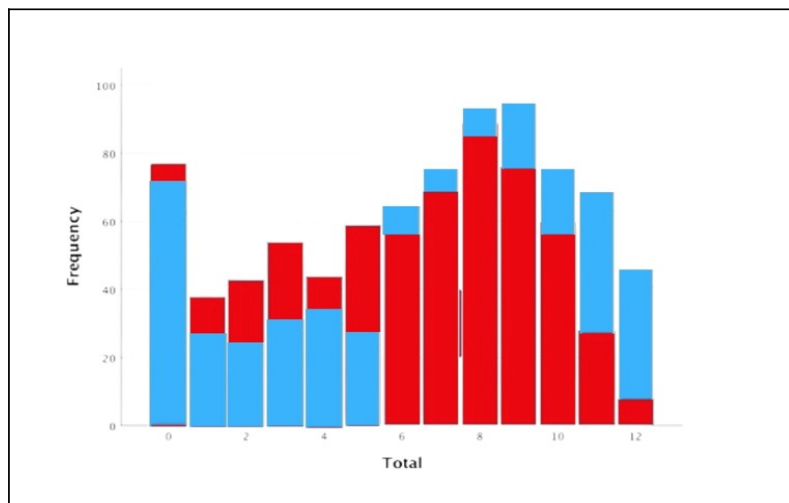
RESULTS

Data sets were collected one week apart, and it was found that 700 students fully completed the survey at the first timepoint (Week 0). At the second time point one week later (Week 1) this sample size was reduced to 410 who confirmed that they had completed the questionnaire on two occasions. The mean score increased from 5.57 in Week 0 prior to the educational video to 6.68 after watching the educational video. The data were explored using the SPSS software program. ANOVA was then applied to the data, and it was confirmed that the difference in mean scores between the two groups was significant. Hence the education provided through the video made a significant difference in the students' knowledge of anaphylaxis symptoms and treatment. Results are shown in Table 1.

The participants were compared at two different time points: Group 0 represented the scores before watching the video, and Group 1 represented the scores after watching the video. Analysis of the data frequencies showed that the data was not normally distributed (as shown in Graph 1).

Graph 1

Histogram of score comparison for pre (week 1) and post stage (week 2)



The analysis revealed a statistically significant improvement in knowledge scores ($p < 0.001$), indicating that watching the video had a positive impact on the students' knowledge. This finding was further supported by the F-statistic value of 31.056.

Statistically speaking, the null hypothesis assumes that any observed difference in the means of the pre-video and post-video scores is due to chance alone. The results show that the video did have an impact on the students' knowledge of anaphylaxis.

In the analysis, the ANOVA test was used to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the means of the two groups (pre-video and post-video). The resulting p-value of less than 0.001 rejected the null hypothesis, indicating that there was indeed a significant difference in the mean scores before and after watching the video. This suggests that the video had a positive impact on students' knowledge of anaphylaxis.

However, the small effect size of 0.027 suggests that while the video did have a statistically significant impact, the practical significance of this impact might be limited. Despite the statistical significance, the actual mean score difference between the two groups was relatively small. The effect size, measured using eta squared, was calculated to be 0.027. This effect size falls in the small to medium range, which was expected given the context of the study. In the pre-video data (Week 0), there were 78 such participants who answered, 'I don't know' to every question scoring a zero for the questionnaire, and in the post video data (Week 1), there were 56.

The mean scores for students without anaphylaxis had a mean score of 7.32 in Week 0 and 7.04 in Week 1. The 95% confidence interval for the mean score in Week 0 ranged from 6.45 to 8.19, while for Week 1, it ranged from 6.12 to 7.95. These intervals provide insight into the likely range within which the true population mean lies. This cohort displayed a larger standard deviation compared to those without anaphylaxis, indicating a higher level of variability in their scores. The standard deviation for individuals without anaphylaxis ranged from 3.403 to 3.653, suggesting a moderate level of variability. However, for students with anaphylaxis, the standard deviation ranged from 2.950 to 4.159, indicating a wider spread of data points and a greater degree of variability.

Similarly, the variance for individuals without anaphylaxis ranged from 11.578 to 13.344, while for those with anaphylaxis, it varied from 8.700 to 17.295. These variance values further support the observation of greater variability among students with anaphylaxis. Considering the 5% trimmed means, 7.41 for Week 0 and 7.15 for Week 1. Trimmed means help mitigate the influence of outliers on the overall mean calculation. The skewness values of -0.619 and -0.721 indicate a slight asymmetry in the distribution of scores, with a longer tail on the left side. The negative skew suggests that lower scores were more prevalent among the participants. Lastly, the kurtosis values of -0.682 and -1.007 indicate that the distribution of scores among students with and without anaphylaxis was relatively platykurtic. This means that the distribution had lighter tails and was less peaked compared to a normal distribution.

Table 1				
	No Anaphylaxis		Anaphylaxis confirmed	
	Week 0 (pre)	Week 1 (post)	Week 0 (pre)	Week 1 (post)
Mean	5.57	6.88	7.32	7.04
5% Trimmed Mean	5.57	6.98	7.41	7.15
Median	6	8.00	8.00	9.00
Variance	11.578	13.344	8.700	17.295
Std. Deviation	3.403	3.653	2.950	4.159
Range	12	12	11	12
Interquartile Range	5	6	3	7
Skewness	-.194	-.631	-.619	-.721
Kurtosis	-1.120	-.748	-.682	-1.007

DISCUSSION

Our study assessed the effectiveness of an educational video on anaphylaxis knowledge among students, with our results echoing the findings of Jones and Chen (2020) who highlighted the value of visual aids in medical education. A comprehensive literature search failed to identify any relevant research specifically aimed at children within a school environment around education around the signs and treatment of anaphylaxis. This research has shown that through the use of a video you can increase children's knowledge of anaphylaxis management. Importantly, we ensured the reliability of our results by applying a consistent approach to data collection and analysis. We used a standardized pre- and post-test to assess knowledge scores, helping to reduce measurement errors.

The validity of our study was strengthened through the use of a well-researched and carefully developed educational video. This content was based on established guidelines and best practices for anaphylaxis management (Smith et al., 2021), ensuring its relevance and applicability. Moreover, the post-test scores showed a significant increase, confirming that the video effectively facilitated learning and the retention of knowledge. This improved understanding could be largely attributed to the video's content and engaging format, much as Smith et al. (2021) found in their study on multimedia-based education. This suggests that our video, which provided

valuable information on anaphylaxis causes, symptoms, and the appropriate use of epinephrine auto-injectors, successfully facilitated knowledge retention.

The enhancement of participants' anaphylaxis knowledge bears considerable importance in managing this potentially life-threatening condition. As argued by Johnson and Roberts (2022), accurate knowledge about the signs and necessary interventions of anaphylaxis ensures effective responses and contributes to improved emergency management.

We must acknowledge, however, the limitations of our study. Similar to the issues raised by Evans et al. (2021), we could not match pre and post-results to individual students due to the absence of unique identifiers. Additionally, a significant number of participants responded with "I don't know" to all questions. This meant that there were a high number of students scoring 0. The question remains; was this due to the immaturity of the participants? Despite these limitations, our results still align with the overarching literature, demonstrating the positive impact of the education video on anaphylaxis understanding.

We further encountered challenges while assessing students who viewed the video in small groups. This problem mirrors the difficulties noted by Wilson and Davis (2023) in evaluating education outcomes among young cohorts. Regardless, the overall effectiveness of the education video remained apparent as the mean student score increased post-video.

Interestingly, our study revealed that students with a history of anaphylaxis did not respond as effectively to the training as those without. This calls for tailored education and additional support for individuals with anaphylaxis, a need also underscored by Miller and Thompson (2022). Future interventions should therefore address specific knowledge gaps of individuals with anaphylaxis to improve their understanding and response to emergencies, as well as provide complex information relevant to their condition.

The validity of our study was strengthened through the use of a well-researched and carefully developed educational video. This content was based on established guidelines and best practices for anaphylaxis management (Smith et al., 2021), ensuring its relevance and applicability. Moreover, the post-test scores showed a significant increase, confirming that the video effectively facilitated learning and the retention of knowledge.

Thus, despite certain limitations, our study supports the existing body of literature in asserting the effectiveness of video as a tool in health education, while also emphasizing the need for more personalized approaches in educational interventions.

To improve future investigations the implementation of a method for tracking individual student progress: This would enable researchers to match pre- and post-test results to individual participants, strengthening the validity of the findings. Furthermore, designing strategies to encourage participant engagement: This could involve gamifying the learning process or integrating interactive elements into the video, which might reduce the number of "I don't know" responses.

Challenges also arose when assessing students who watched the video in small groups, a difficulty echoed by Wilson and Davis (2023). To address this, future research could consider: Developing separate assessment strategies for group-based learning: This could allow for more accurate evaluation of individual comprehension within a group setting.

CONCLUSION

Despite the limitations encountered, this study demonstrated the effectiveness of the education video in improving anaphylaxis knowledge among participants. The findings highlight the importance of educational interventions in enhancing knowledge and preparedness for anaphylactic emergencies among students. Future research should address the identified limitations and focus on developing targeted educational strategies to enhance understanding and response to anaphylaxis. By continuously improving educational interventions, students within schools can be better equipped to recognise and respond appropriately to anaphylactic emergencies, ultimately improving patient outcomes and hopefully saving lives.

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Appendix 1

Anaphylaxis Knowledge Questionnaire				
Year Group				
		Yes	No	I don't Know
Question 1	Have you been told you have anaphylaxis			
Question 2	Should an EpiPen be used on someone who is known to be anaphylactic but is not sure if they had something they are allergic to?			
Question 3	Should a person having an anaphylaxis attack lie down flat?			
Question 4	Should you leave the EpiPen in for 3 seconds?			
Question 5	Should a person having an anaphylaxis attack be encouraged to stand up?			
Question 6	When injecting someone with an EpiPen, do you press down on the blue end?			
Question 7	Should you administer another dose (use a second EpiPen) if the person does not get better or get worse in 5 mins?			
Question 8	Do you inject the person below the knee?			
Question 9	Can you inject the EpiPen through clothing?			
Question 10	Can a person only have one symptom of anaphylaxis but still be at risk of harm?			
Question 11	If a person has anaphylaxis and asthma and is having difficulty breathing, should you give the asthma puffer before the EpiPen.			
Question 12	Should a person walk if they have had an anaphylaxis attack			
Question 13	Should a person with anaphylaxis who has not had a reaction in a long time always need carry an EpiPen?			
Question 14	Does an ambulance need to be called if an EpiPen is given?			

VISUAL ARTS

Romeo Atra

“

Walanga Muru (Follow your path)

The figures' presence evokes contemplation about the significance of heritage and the delicate balance between progress and preservation.

”

REFLECTION STATEMENT

Walanga Muru translates to 'Follow your path' in the dialect of the Gadigal people who occupied the Sydney Cove area where the QVB was built.

My conceptual focus depicts references of historical beauty that are present in our modern world. My concept also acknowledges the Gadigal's scarce naked landscape, which encompasses breathtaking landscapes and abundant biodiversity that indigenous peoples have nurtured and protected for generations. This landscape is framed by golden sandstone formations that are characteristic of the Sydney Cove area. Sandstone is a prominent feature of the QVB and in my body of work the images of sandstone link the landscape and the QVB architecture. The beauty of the QVB that is represented in one painting displays surface beauty whilst also symbolising colonialism and the new beginnings of modern Australia.

My body of work aims to showcase the beauty of the Australian landscape by referencing the natural resource of sandstone and the craftsmanship that is evident in our unique colonial architecture. Additionally, the images of two figures casting their gaze upon the QVB building and the landscape embodies a perspective that is connected to the land's innate splendour that has now been tamed and reshaped by the forces of colonisation, forever altering its original essence. These figures serve as a poignant reminder of the complex interplay between history, beauty, and the ever-evolving landscapes. This interplay holds the narratives of both sorrow and transformation. The figures' presence evokes contemplation about the significance of heritage and the delicate balance between progress and preservation.







Xavier Keen

Home Repair: A fictocritical investigation into ecological existentialism

REFLECTION STATEMENT

In pairing notions prevalent within Deborah Bird Rose's theory of 'ecological existentialism' with Richard Powers' 2018 epic novel, *The Overstory*, my fictocritical piece, *Home Repair*, confronts the particularly neglected ideologies that surround extinction, with a strong focus on the damaging forces that are associated with the Anthropocene epoch, in which humankind place themselves greater than and dominant to the natural world. In doing so, I accentuate the need for the individual, and thus society, to reintegrate themselves back into the natural world as equals, prompting a further change from the Anthropocene and into the Symbiocene, where humans symbiotically reintegrate themselves emotionally, psychologically and technologically, into nature and natural systems. Through my research, I found a common theme in which there are difficulties in adequately articulating the problem of extinction, ultimately leading to an arrogant denial of the possibility of such an event occurring.

Throughout my English studies in Years 11 and 12, I found an interest in how authors can hide truths behind fiction, which ultimately led to my chosen form of fictocriticism, which blends a fictional piece with a critical response. With this, I draw from elements of fiction and academic and philosophical theories.

HOME REPAIR

“When the world was ending the first time, Noah took all the animals, two by two, and loaded them aboard his escape craft for evacuation. But...he left the plants to die. He failed to take the one thing he needed to rebuild life on land, and concentrated on saving the freeloaders!”

The problem was, Noah and his kind didn’t believe that plants were really alive. No intentions, no vital spark. Just like rocks that happened to get bigger.”¹

– Richard Powers, ‘The Overstory’

“Certainty kills God, because it denies God’s own freedom to intervene in the world unpredictably...”

Certainty calls us to renounce our own selfhood, on the same grounds; Certainty calls us to ‘renounce the world and that which is in the world’ on the same grounds— that the world is transient, subject to death and fraught with uncertainty.”²

– Lev Shestov

1 Powers, R. (2018). *The Overstory*. W. W. Norton & Company.

2 Rose, D. B. (2013). *Wild dog dreaming: Love and extinction*. University of Virginia Press.

First, I need a title.

'Love and control'
'Love and extinction'
'Love and harm'
'Confronting essential environmental questions before catastrophe'

Come back to this later.

If the human mind can relinquish itself in fiction, what is stopping us as readers from expanding above and beyond our traditional modes and conventions, the ways in which we perceive the world in direct relation to our current ecological state?

Expand this introduction.

Who are we as a species? Such questions have become ever so present as we continue to face our current climate crisis. In relation to extinction, what good (*or maybe, what hope, what benefit?*) do we offer to the world? (*If any at all?*)

Love in the time of extinction, "[w]e can love a place and still be dangerous to it,"³ love in action, in caring and affectionate ways.

How can we love something, yet cause so much harm?
Does it come down to ethics?
Am I missing the point?

Problem solving in the face of adversity?

Is that what I'm looking at?

...

3 Rose, D. B. (2013). *Wild dog dreaming*

He worked barefoot. His toes would usually dance, shuffle and tap on the timber floorboards while he was writing. The mahogany desk was a variety of dark browns and deep reds, each grain beaming with pride. Its roots once living, breathing and communicating; now its roots were holding ideas, research and ambitions. A novel, *The Overstory* by Richard Powers, sat unaccompanied under his desk lamp. The view out the window was nothing special.

He had two options; either knock down and start again, or keep what was there and restore, reframe, potentially even reimagine. The interior had not changed since childhood. The fifth floorboard into the house still squeaked. He felt guilty that he didn't see it sooner; the house was left in his name just under two years ago. This guilt worked in his favour, it provided him with a subconscious fuel to expand, above and beyond, not only the house but himself.

It didn't help that he decided to start repairing the house at the same time he started his latest research paper, but within a year he had one room completely restored, his everything room. The pine walls wrote a story, each grain a lifetime, every chip, crack and knot contained more knowledge than he could ever imagine. Once these walls were part of a much bigger community, observing and living, now they provided him a space to repair and restore.

A single painting hung on the wall, 'The Goddess of Earth' an artwork of Gaia in an impressionist style, her transcendent aura shone bright enough for him to see beyond the painting. He found his eyes trapped. Her whole body was fluid and alive, caring and protecting. He travelled deeper, her hair dancing banyan trees and her arms waterfalls. Deeper once more, her feet sand, her toes soft cream shells with striking orange, red and brown lines throughout. He heard her whisper, something soft, too soft to decipher. He went deeper, his toes now next to hers, her feet opposite his, on the same land.

I was here.

I've been here.

I am here.

Everything you know, I

know.

He wrote.

Home Repair

Introduction

If the human mind can relinquish itself in fiction, what is stopping us as readers from expanding above and beyond our traditional modes and conventions, the ways in which we perceive the world in direct relation to our current ecological state? To examine this, ‘ecological existentialism’, as defined by Deborah Bird Rose, is a response to “the two big shifts in Western thought that define our current moment: the shift into uncertainty and the shift into connectivity.”⁴ Rose proposes that humankind’s want for “order, certainty and predictability”⁵ is a leading factor in our current state of the Anthropocene, the current period in history in which human activity significantly impacts the natural world.⁶ Proposing the complex nature of the uncertain is the way forward, prompting a further change into connectivity and interconnectedness. By applying Rose’s ideas to Richard Powers’ 2018 novel *The Overstory*, I will not only explore the present dangers of extinction in which our denialistic negation of the problem is another leading factor in our current state of the Anthropocene, but also examine “Plant Blindness,”⁷ - one’s inability to see or notice plants in everyday life. Through the application of Rose’s ideas - that “ecological existentialism enjoins us to live within the dynamics, and to pour our love into this unstable and uncertain Earth”⁸ and exploring the negation of extinction, I will investigate how in order to continue to flourish as a species we must understand the devastating impacts of our actions and mindsets upon the natural world; eliminating the dominant ideology of superiority and in turn placing ourselves within nature, never separate from it. In doing so, I endeavour

4 Rose, D. B. (2013). *Wild dog dreaming*

5 Ibid.

6 Society, N. G. (2022, May 20). *Anthropocene. Education*. <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/anthropocene/>

7 Achurra, A. (2022). *Plant blindness: A focus on its biological basis*. *Frontiers in Education*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2022.963448>

8 Rose, D. B. (2013). *Wild dog dreaming*

to articulate how ever present perceptions must shift from ‘plant blindness’ to ‘plant consciousness’ prompting the further change from the Anthropocene to Albrecht’s notion of the Symbiocene: “that period in Earth’s history where humans symbiotically reintegrate themselves, emotionally, psychologically and technologically, into nature and natural systems.”⁹ Therefore, reintegration of human life into the natural world is essential for survival as a species, before it becomes too late.

Extinction

Confronting extinction with a dark sense of optimism

Aligning with ecological existentialism, the anxieties surrounding the destruction of land and the interconnectedness of the natural world are prominent themes within *The Overstory*, ultimately confronting us with harsh realities of a direction towards potential extinction. Powers understands humankind’s want for “order, certainty and predictability”¹⁰, and thus promotes the unstable uncertain. Powers introduces the reader to nine vital characters possessed with varied contexts. By novel’s end these nine characters flourish into committed activists, alerted as to how humankind in itself is “deeply ill.”¹¹ The journey of each of the nine characters mimics the cycle of the four sections of the book: Roots, Trunk, Crown and Seeds.

In ‘Roots’ readers are provided with a narrative synopsis of these main characters forming a structure for the whole novel. Moving up the tree to the ‘Trunk’, the nine different roots come together as one; connections are established between characters and common ideals form regarding their concerns for the plant kingdom and the devastating role played by humankind.

As one character asks: “What on Earth is happening?”¹² Although multiple different paths from ‘Roots’ meet in ‘Trunk’ forming a sense of connectivity, conceptually there are far greater uncertainties explored. The uncertainties only heighten the ecological anxiety an individual might face, but it is a necessary step forward, even if the despair

9 Albrecht, G. (n.d.). *Glenn Albrecht’s future vision. Symbioscene*. <https://symbioscene.com/invitation-to-the-symbiocene/#::~:~:text=The%20Symbiocene%20will%20be%20characterised,found%20in%20all%20living%20systems>

10 Rose, D. B. (2013). *Wild dog dreaming*

11 Powers, R. (2018). *The Overstory*

12 Ibid.

might feel intolerable. As a species we are constantly looking for external forces, objects and ideas for an escape, or upon which to place blame. The nine protagonists evolve into comprehensively aware ecological activists striving for a change, allowing them to ponder the human condition in a final desperation to make visible the dangers of extinction. These characters, in various ways, feel sympathy towards the plant kingdom and are ashamed by our hubristic domination. One character, Nicholas Hoel, aspires that “green has a plan that will make the age of mammals seem like a minor detour.”¹³ And Douglas Paylicek tells his planted seedlings, “Hang on...you just have to outlast us.”¹⁴ Yet it is wrong to assume Powers approaches our future in an almost a nihilistic way; he actually “embraces a dark optimism about the fate of humanity,”¹⁵ implying how there is still hope, but ultimately it is up to human action. In understanding where humankind might be heading, Powers takes action through the form of fiction. Ray Brinkman, another character, blames the fall of humankind on fiction itself, “The world is failing precisely because no novel can make the contest for the world seem as compelling as the struggles between a few lost people.”¹⁶ Ironically, this is exactly what Powers does: he creates that compelling story that brings to light the several uncomfortably brutal truths about the flaws in human civilisation. It is a sentiment echoed by Powers’ character Adam Appich: “The best arguments in the world won’t change a person’s mind. The only thing that can do that is a good story.”¹⁷ In doing so, Powers positions readers to mimetically parallel, accentuating “the conflicting notions of commodity and community,”¹⁸ in how they want to have order versus the unstable reality. Throughout *The Overstory* the characters grapple with the lonely sense of extinction and thus ultimately reveal the common negation of such a topic; stemming from and aligning with the ever-present anthropocentric ideologies in which humans place themselves greater than and more important than plants and animals alike.

13 Powers, R. (2018). *The Overstory*

14 Ibid.

15 Rich, N. (2018, June). *The Novel That Asks, ‘What Went Wrong With Mankind?’* <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2018/06/richard-powers-theoverstory/559106/>

16 Powers, R. (2018). *The Overstory*

17 Ibid.

18 Powers, R., & McKibben, B. (2019, October 25). *Richard Powers & Bill McKibben Discuss The Overstory* | JCCSF. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CVdc_1HaMU&t=3320s

Gaia Hypothesis: The acknowledgement of interconnectedness

“Earth may be alive: not as the ancients saw her—a sentient Goddess with a purpose and foresight—but alive like a tree.”¹⁹

— James Lovelock

Before the Anthropocene, Earth, as a physical object, provided life with a home, a platform to thrive; life as whole interacted with the earth with a known commensalism. Now as we start to see the impacts of our ignorance this relationship has moved to parasitism, in which humans (parasite) are harming the Earth (the host). The understanding of our changing environment and symbiotic relationships can help us shift away from the Anthropocene, and into the Symbiocene where neither party is harmed, and instead humankind embraces and nurtures all forms of life. The word ‘symbiocene’ dates back to the ancient Greek word Symbiosis (συμβίωσις) (symbiōsis): ‘living together’.

To commence this exploration of the devastating impacts of disconnection it is first important to understand the vast interconnectedness of the natural world. We interact with non-living things every day: houses, homes, doors, windows, bikes; an endless list. It is these very objects that help humankind thrive, these systems allow individuals to form their own interconnectedness, reacting and living within these certain dynamics. Similarly, Lovelock’s ‘Gaia Hypothesis’ proposes “living organisms on the planet interact with their surrounding inorganic environment to form a synergetic and self-regulating system that created, and now maintains, the climate and biochemical conditions that make life on Earth possible.”²⁰ Hence, Lovelock reveals, despite a series of devastating disruptions, Earth continues to remain habitable.²¹ Powers’ understanding of this notion comes through the form of a sense of despair and individuals’ inability to comprehend such philosophical and physical notions. This is the starting point of expansion; firstly, humankind must acknowledge the self-sustaining and “self-regulating”²² system that the plant kingdom is, and then we will be able to look at it as equally diverse and complex. Humankind’s negation of

19 Powers, R. (2018). *The Overstory*

20 Lovelock, J. (2009). *Gaia: A new look at life on Earth*. Oxford University Press.

21 Ibid.

22 T Lenton, *Centre for Ecology and Hydrology*, Edinburgh, UK (Gaia Hypothesis)

the plant world accentuates a parasitic relationship: we see ourselves as dominant and all powerful when, in turn, we are just termites chewing and destroying the structure, until finally, it all collapses. This shift to a new alternative concept - the plant kingdom as a living and deeply interconnected organism - will allow us to live side by side with nature in a complete symbiosis.

Gaia: serene, transcendent, her skin radiates warmth.

You really are alive.

Alive? My child, I am decaying.

But you are dying.

All his work up until this point had come to a halt. He had the opportunity to gain an insight; a warning? In him, like the meteor that collided with earth bringing about extinction, one thing now died at the expense of another being born.

How long do we have?

Is that rude to ask?

But the earth isn't dying.

Isn't it?

You are dying. The earth will stay around a lot longer than you.

I give life to all beings; plant and animal.

So they too can sing and dance on my skin.

The warm glow that illuminated from the centre of her body opened his mind from a seedling to a sapling.

De-extinction: Finding the scapegoat

Extinction is a notion often met with despair or denial, this reaction stemming from humankind's inability to believe such a catastrophic event could happen to such a superior species. This superiority makes us "like the king[s] of creation,"²³ in which our perspectives have narrowed, blinding us into living within "the thinnest artery of pretend life."²⁴ This phantasmagorical belief that humankind will be around forever has enhanced our ignorance as a species. As such, Powers, through fiction, blends harsh truths behind a wall of imagination inviting readers to explore the destruction of the natural world and invites a personal response:

"The world had six trillion trees, when people showed up.
Half remain. Half more will disappear, in a hundred years.
And whatever enough people say that all these vanishing
trees are saying is what, in fact, they say...

23 Powers, R. (2018). *The Overstory*

24 Ibid.

What did the dead Joan of Arc hear? Insight or delusion?”²⁵

What do we hear?

The term ‘de-extinction’ is a current example of language that has “that has given conservation efforts a tragically false sense of accomplishment,”²⁶ accentuating the notion that extinction is reversible, ultimately diminishing the severity of such an event.²⁷ Thus, the term exacerbates anxieties expressed by Powers and Rose, in which a society that seeks certainty commonly mistakes agreement for truth as it negates the brutality of truth and instability of the uncertain. Terms such as ‘de-extinction’ have the ability to influence attitudes as they allow individuals a scapegoat, that ultimately results in the creation of ethical blindness.²⁸ However, there is an underlying challenge to articulate and thus inspire individuals and society about the indispensable change needed for a recognition of the value of the natural world.²⁹ Powers allows his readers to parallel the growth of his protagonists; all grow into increasingly aware activists. Powers effectively takes the reading beyond the common dialectical process, digging beneath the fabric of social life and uncovering harsh but necessary truths.³⁰ Thus, he successfully articulates the danger of extinction and the psychological anxieties that come with it. We could leave this earth with our mark, not so much a “*spectacular crash*”³¹, more a devastating travesty. The headline would read: *Earth’s luckiest beings fall subject to their own arrogance*. It is now more than ever, Powers warns, that “we are driving ourselves and our world into an ever-expanding death space,”³² a state of living that will not be reversible.

25 Powers, R. (2018). *The Overstory*

26 Campagna, C., Guevara, D., & Le Boeuf, B. (2017). *De-scenting extinction: the promise of De-extinction may hasten continuing extinctions*. Hastings Center Report, 47. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hast.752>

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Horkheimer, M. (1972). *Critical theory ; selected essays*: Translated by Matthew J. O’CONNELL and others. Herder and Herder.

31 Powers, R. (2018). *The Overstory*

32 Rose, D. B. (2013). *Wild dog dreaming*

Opening extinction to a wider audience and proposing a kinship

I now move forward to examine how dramatic biodiversity loss is a leading factor in extinction, which, as Bostrom defines, is an ‘existential risk’: “those that threaten the entire future of humanity... despite their importance, issues surrounding human-extinction risks and related hazards remain poorly understood.”³³ It is not because we can’t understand extinction, it is because society does not want to understand such a ‘devastating’ disaster. Society chooses not to face the harsh reality of what could happen in the near future, but why? One counterargument is that we need to re-explore the harsh ideologies of modernity and post modernity. Yet, if we relinquish wholly to these values, they will only subside the progress above and beyond traditional conventions. However, ecological existentialism explores such ideologies, in the sense that it calls us to abandon certainty and embrace the unstable uncertain. We must live in knowing we have no predetermined essence, as Rose attests, there are no guarantees in an uncertain world, “no future point of perfection toward which all is moving, and there is no whole that directs us.”³⁴ Initially, this cognitive shift could result in despair and a feeling of hopeless bewilderment, but this initial growth prompts exponential change. This embracement in turn will promote individuals to relinquish to the dynamics of the natural world, calling for a symbiotic involvement: “ecological existentialism thus proposes a kinship of becoming: no telos, no deus ex machina to rescue us, no clockwork to keep us ticking along.”³⁵ Bostrom understands the blinding nature of certainty and the instability of society’s future, and thus his research explores the likelihood of extinction due to human activities.³⁶ Apart from chance, the destruction of the ozone layer and dramatic loss of biodiversity are two of the four most severe existential risks. Aligning with Powers, Bostrom’s qualitative exploration and articulation of existential risks allows individuals to create connections between introduced risks and thus the threats they impose.

For decades society adhered to the narrative that external forces would be the end of the world: the sun blowing up, a meteor strike, perhaps even artificial intelligence. Now it is clear that we are that external force; rulers, arrogantly perched on top of a dying throne, always looking outside for the threat, ignorantly unaccustomed to seeing it inside of ourselves. We love words such as de-extinction as they provide us with that false sense of hope, making us feel as if we are doing positive things to reverse our

33 Bostrom, N. (2013). *Existential risk prevention as global priority*. *Global Policy*, 4(1), 15-31. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12002>

34 Rose, D. B. (2013). *Wild dog dreaming*.

35 Ibid

36 Bostrom, N. (2013). *Existential risk prevention as global priority*

damage. It is not until we confront our ecological anxieties and immerse ourselves into the natural world reforming that lost relationship, then we will be able to flourish. It is similar to viewing an artwork, one can exist outside of it, merely viewing it. The alternative is to be immersed within the artwork, feeling and living. This beauty of the unknown continues to be rejected.

*I have been writing and researching for
years, but, just recently I feel lost.*

Since he was a young seedling, his two muddy feet paved the way, walking through tough terrain and isolated landscapes. His feet sunk deep into the earth reaching a connection no one thought was possible. Yet in this instance he couldn't seem to grapple the roots, they were too deep and needed too much digging for one man alone.

This feeling is natural, especially as of now.

But you

Are

Not

Alone.

The glow from the centre of her body pulsed, mimicking a heart beat.

*Like a plant confined to its pot, you only grow as
much as you can. You have been planted, sprouted
and grown within a pot, your roots restricted to an
unnatural growth, entangled and twisted.*

It

Is

Time.

Break Free.

Hyperobjects: Expanding above and beyond

Along with problems of articulation, another barrier society faces is the individual detestation of expanding psychological values beyond those which are pre-installed within. Ecological philosopher Timothy Morton developed the idea of ‘hyperobjects’, something that surrounds and entangles society, but is too massive to comprehend.³⁷ They are often entities immensely large in scale and vastly complex; this situation results in the subsided comprehension of their function altogether or a belief in a false agreement. Examples include the global financial system, tectonic plates, the solar system, black holes and global warming.³⁸

Morton challenges the anthropocentric threads of the 21st century through suggesting that humankind’s current thoughts and perceptions must evolve and expand above and beyond traditional modes and conventions. Morton proposes that “hyperobjects are directly responsible for ...the end of the world, rendering both denialism and apocalyptic environmentalism obsolete.”³⁹ Societies’ innate denial of confronting truths comes forth once again, although Morton does not state extinction itself to be a hyperobject, he does think however that “species in themselves are hyperobjects, as intuitively extinction is the disappearance of those species, and what makes that like a hyperobject is that I can’t directly see it.”⁴⁰ Extinction in itself is not something individuals cannot comprehend, it is the product of extinction that is difficult to comprehend; the loss of completely everything. This is just one example of theorists proposing an expansion above and beyond current understandings of not only the

37 Morton, T. (2021). *Hyperobjects philosophy and ecology after the end of the world*. University of Minnesota Press.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

natural world but a variety of uncomfortable philosophical questions. We, potentially through hyperobjects, must embrace the unknown and seek the uncertain. To continue forward it is relevant to point out that this embracement will not diminish our innate desire to explore and expand as a species. “Our desire to know encounters the mystery inherent in the fact that knowing can never be complete, and we are hooked.”⁴¹ Desire, mystery, uncertainty, the unknown. We as a species yearn for it, we have always wanted to expand as a species but have halted despite fear of the unknown; we are a plane with no pilot, a plan to a house with no builder.

Gaia cupped her hands over him creating a shelter, pulsating a golden glow, and like a caricature in a zoetrope, images ran around her hands, reversing time. The images moved at such a speed he closed his eyes; when he opened them again, she was next to him.

Walk with me, I would like to show you something.

Gaia danced across the ground, gliding effortlessly. Each step sparked a warm light from the ground. At first he was reluctant, he laughed in awe of her grace, but not long after he relinquished to a dance that freed his roots. A golden light shot out beneath their feet, contrasting the rich turquoise blue and dark greens of her skin. The light began to run up the walls, pulsating to the beat they stomped. They stomped, and stomped, and stomped until the light fully encapsulated the walls, and with a great relief, it...

41 Rose, D. B. (2013). *Wild dog dreaming*

Plant blindness within ‘The Overstory’ and everyday life

Extending further from relinquishing anthropocentric ideologies to symbiocentric ones, Wandersee and Schussler’s theory ‘plant blindness’, “explores the inability to see or notice plants in one’s everyday life, and maintains a belief of plant inferiority to animal and human.”⁴² There is a call to action for individuals to appreciate the vast interconnectedness of the natural world, and its unquestionably unique dynamics to self-repair, self-change, and self-realise.⁴³ The recognition of plant blindness in itself uncovers common misconceptions about the plant kingdom. With this, Wandersee and Schussler applied their understanding of the ‘symptoms’ of plant blindness into a table that targets the vast majority of individuals and everyday life. (Table 1)

One may suffer from plant blindness when. . .

- ...one does not see, show interest on, or pay attention to plants in his/her life
- ...one believes that the unique role of plants is to be the support for animals
- ...one does not understand what plants need to grow
- ...one does not notice that plants are essential in his/her daily routine
- ...one misunderstands the time scales regarding plant and animal activity
- ...one has never grown plants, make observations of their anatomy or processes, or identify plants
- ...one does not understand the plant model, among others, basic functions as nutrition and reproduction, and simple plant ecology

44

Table 1. Indicators for plant blindness as defined by Wandersee and Schussler (1999).⁴⁵

As such, Powers is ultimately aware of the dangers plant blindness poses to society as it entrances plant life under an oppressive state of control. Powers critiques and

42 Achurra, A. (2022). *Plant blindness: A focus on its biological basis*. *Frontiers in Education*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2022.963448>

43 Rose, D. B. (2013). *Wild dog dreaming*

44 Achurra, A. (2022). *Plant blindness*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2022.963448>

45 Ibid.

questions modern day society and their treatment towards plant, by directly stating how we must shift our current chain of thought “from plant blindness into plant consciousness.”⁴⁶ This shift is clear through the development of his characters into ecologically aware activists who strive for change and awareness, with a particular focus on the importance of trees.

“No one sees trees. We see fruit, we see nuts, we see wood, we see shade... obstacles blocking the road or wrecking the ski slope. Dark, threatening places that must be cleared...but trees—trees are invisible.”⁴⁷

In particular, the character Patricia Westerford is not only the central dendrologist in the novel but also is the ultimate embodiment of Powers’ endeavours and promoting his core beliefs. Such notions are accentuated throughout Westerford’s speech, the climax of the novel, where the characters’ values and beliefs leading up to this point are tested, these struggling individuals grapple with hopelessness and despair but find solace amongst the conflicting emotions of uncertainty and connectivity. Westerford expresses Powers’ greatest anxieties surrounding the plant kingdom: “we know that plants communicate and remember...[w]e’ve begun to understand the profound ties between trees and people. But our separation has grown faster than our connection.”⁴⁸ The strive for certainty has taken society further from the truth, ultimately creating a stark separation between humans and plants. Similarly Rose writes, “systems are full of unpredictability and uncertainty... the organism, or the ecosystem...is working with the uncertainties of change and striving to sustain its own flourishing.”⁴⁹ Thus, Powers, through fiction, and Rose, through theory, suggest that a recognition of the sheer complexity of plant systems will in turn shift oppressive mindsets to an equal astonishment.

Powers himself has a visceral astonishment as he recognises how the plant kingdom communicates through “over the air signalling” and “underground resource sharing”,

46 Powers, R., & McKibben, B. (2019, October 25). *Richard Powers & Bill McKibben Discuss The Overstory* | JCCSF. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICVdc_1HaMU&t=3320s

47 Powers, R. (2018). *The Overstory*

48 Ibid.

49 Rose, D. B. (2013). *Wild dog dreaming*

they also have “complex and supple behaviours rightly described as memory” which allows plants to be “flexible in the face of environmental change or danger.”⁵⁰ From this Powers directly translates his visceral astonishment into Westerford. “There’s a tree for every purpose under heaven. Their chemistry is astonishing...They’re learning to make whatever can be made. And most of what they make we haven’t even identified.”⁵¹ Powers does not stop at information, he unlocks a new pathway as he calls to question the reader’s direct ethics and thought process, questioning if Humankind will ever be satisfied. Desire for innovation and expansion is a great thing, but desire needs to be treated with caution as it can result in a contextually present hubristic blindness; “how much is enough. His answer: Just a little bit more.”⁵² This drive for a ‘little bit more’ has devastatingly adverse effects as it spirals out of control, “Just a little more timber. A few more jobs. A few more acres of cornfield... You know? There’s never been any material more useful than wood.”⁵³ A worry that Powers poses, which is heightened by Rose, is that society cannot let the downward spiral of desire fall out of our own control, thus, when our damages to the natural world become so severe, they’re irreversible.

Humankind and plants must share a symbiotic relationship, “to appreciate the differences between humankind and others, while at the same time also understanding that we are all interdependent.”⁵⁴ This notion of interdependence is a prominent ideology promoted by Powers. This interdependent relationship doesn’t favour one side, “trees want something from us, just as we’ve always wanted things from them... the ‘environment’ is alive—a fluid, changing web of purposeful lives dependent on each other. Love and war can’t be teased apart.”⁵⁵ I see war in this instance as representative of dominance and control, to have love, but deep down an urge for dominance and control; instead of loving and caring in equal ways, feeling and being equal to the one being loved. We could relinquish ourselves to understanding the plant kingdom, appreciating its vastly complex yet interconnected nature, We could open our eyes and our minds to the plant kingdom around us, embrace the uncertainty and shift out anthropocentric ideologies such as plant blindness in order to transition into a mutually sustainable lifestyle - the Symbiocene.

50 Powers, R., & McKibben, B. (2019, October 25). [Richard Powers & Bill McKibben Discuss The Overstory](#)

51 Powers, R. (2018). *The Overstory*

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 Rose, D. B. (2013). *Wild dog dreaming*

55 Powers, R. (2018). *The Overstory*

Images of the plant kingdom were played within and across the palms of her hands. The images came to life, dancing and singing. And then, finally stopping.

What is this?

I have taken you back to the

Cambrian period

Mesozoic Era

Pleistocene epoch

*Life was creating: trilobites, brachiopods, and chordates.
The most intense burst of evolution.*

The images flicked once more, new scenery. There were people.

*The Holocene, this is the first time where humans started
to cultivate my skin and harness the earth's natural
resources.*

Sustainably.

He had no reply, he ran his fingers across her palms and took in every small detail. Life seemed simple.

After a few minutes the images changed suddenly and sharply.

The Anthropocene.

People were laughing and taking photos. It seemed quite jolly. He felt at home. He stepped closer to her hands to investigate what was happening, diving deeper into the image, to the point of full immersion. Fiery images flashed before his eyes, there was

no singing or dancing. He heard the whistling screams of trees and piercing cries from animals.

I'm sorry.

What for?

All of that.

There you have it, that's your answer.

It's one thing to apologise,

But it's a powerful thing to take action.

Conclusion: From the Anthropocene to the Symbiocene

This piece explores notions within Powers' novel *The Overstory*, particularly focusing on the rising threat of extinction that is a direct result of destructive anthropocentric ideologies such as plant blindness. These notions are propelled above and beyond the common dialectical process when paired with Rose's ideas found within her philosophy of ecological existentialism. The application of Rose's ideas in action takes *The Overstory* to new heights as readers are imbued with harsh philosophical questions that explore the connection between humankind and nature. The overall danger of denialism is accentuated by the investigation into the term de-extinction, calling for society to reject agreement as a form of truth, as it halts expansion mentally and physically, creating an even stronger disconnect. Bostrom's qualitative exploration of existential risks articulates the increasingly high threat extinction poses over society, and Schusslers and Wandersee's plant blindness completely destabilises the way in which individuals perceive the natural world. Morton's theory of hyperobjects is one example of an individual looking to expand above and beyond. All notions prevalent call for a further embracement of the unstable uncertainty of Earth, rejecting the

search for “order, certainty and predictability,”⁵⁶ ultimately resulting in a greater kinship of connectivity, in which individuals and society place themselves within nature and never separate to it...allowing us to move from the Anthropocene to a more hopeful, uncertain, Symbiocene.

“When is the best time to plant a tree?”

“Twenty years ago.”

“When is the next best time?”

“Now.”⁵⁷

After a brief but revelatory conversation with Gaia, he returned to his home, with building materials and plans and tools waiting for him. He looked at his wooden desk and chair. He saw their previous life, a life of freedom and of dancing.

He did not waste any time, he got straight back into writing his paper. He couldn't start without a title.

How about 'Home Repair'?

—

56 Rose, D. B. (2013). *Wild dog dreaming*

57 Powers, R. (2018). *The Overstory*

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Watch 'The Island'
here

PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO & DIGITAL IMAGING

Rory Dwyer

The Island

REFLECTION STATEMENT

My major work, 'The Island', is a short horror film that aims to capture the rising tension exhibited in the works of Sir Alfred Hitchcock by drawing inspiration from internet horror series. Filmed on-location at Cockatoo Island, an old penal establishment, my imagination was captured by its decrepit, ageing structure which invokes the industrial imagery shown in *ALCATRAZATTACK*, a story from anthology horror series *Monument Mythos*.

The atmosphere is based primarily on 'Iron Lung', a short interactive horror experience by David Szymanski. 'Iron Lung' has become famous for its ability to give way to rising tension and make little use of visual cues, instead relying almost entirely on auditory cues to build a sense of dread and discomfort. 'Iron Lung', which is now being made into a feature-length film at the time of writing, captivated me for its environment - a rusted, ageing submarine in the depths of an ocean of blood, with an unseen predator stalking the vessel at every turn. The 'Tape' transition screens that serve to separate the film are themselves inspired by Internet Analog horror series the Mandela Catalogue, which makes use of the limits of VHS-style imagery to build tension.

'The Island' is, for all intents and purposes, my love letter to Internet Horror. The rise of Analog horror and Psychological horror has captured my imagination in how it builds tension - It is something I believe would have impressed the great Sir Alfred Hitchcock.

Cockatoo Island was under operation until its sudden closure in December 1989.
It was at that time a group of students from St Assisi's College were in the process of producing a student film on the island.



Prior to production, the group exhibited signs of increased stress and anxiety.

when they left to film,
they never returned home.

When search began the next day, it had been discovered that the island
had mysteriously relocated 20km east.

The search was subsequently called off, but the parents of the missing teenagers,
unrelenting, hired private investigator, David Somersby, to the island.

Somersby's investigation began the following day.

SIDE A

INTERIOR ENTRY

THE MOUTH OF THE ISLAND

MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE
FACTORY







THE KIRCHER COLLECTION
HSC MAJOR WORKS FROM
THE CLASS OF 2023

PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO &
DIGITAL IMAGING
SHORT FILM

97

MUSIC EXTENSION

Rian Cobb

Performance: Voice & Guitar

“

The pieces I chose, being so contrasting, pushed me out of my comfort zone and encouraged me to explore new ways of using my voice and guitar.

”

MUSIC EXTENSION

"Nature Boy" by Kurt Elling (Solo 1 Performance)

"Bloodstream" by Ed Sheeran (Solo 2 Performance)

"Louder than Words" by Jonathan Larson (Ensemble Performance)

REFLECTION STATEMENT

My Major work for Music Extension consisted of three performances across a range of contrasting genres. All pieces were performed using my voice and for 'Bloodstream' by Ed Sheeran, I also played acoustic guitar.

The pieces I chose, being so contrasting, pushed me out of my comfort zone and encouraged me to explore new ways of using my voice and guitar. This included learning how to scat sing for 'Nature Boy,' an improvisational vocal style traditionally associated with Jazz music.

I utilised a loop pedal for my rendition of 'Bloodstream', inspired by the way Ed Sheeran performs the song, and it presented many challenges throughout the learning and performance process.

My repertoire extended to include pieces from the musical theatre genre, including 'Louder than Words' by Jonathan Larson from *Tick Tick, Boom*. This played a pivotal role in refining my stylistic vocal choices and enhancing my overall vocal prowess.

My major work has played a pivotal role in honing and expanding my musical proficiency, encompassing both vocals and guitar.



Watch Rian's
performances here







Solomon Dunn

The Truth Burns

“

My capacity
to wonder,
disrupt, fail,
and adapt
was essential
to the creative
composition
process.

”

REFLECTION STATEMENT

Driven by a desire to represent the stasis within Australian society regarding the injustices Indigenous Australians face in the legal and incarceration system, my creative non-fiction piece, 'The Truth Burns', through a post-colonial lens, critically analyses the effectiveness of the Australian legal system and Australian response to Indigenous issues. Directed by a passion for social justice acquired from cases and films I looked at during Legal Studies, combined with a personal experience on an Immersion to a remote indigenous community, I came to realise how my knowledge of indigenous issues was surface-level and how - much like the rest of Australia - I didn't know what to do about it.

My capacity to wonder, disrupt, fail, and adapt was essential to the creative composition process. To be creative, I have had to experiment with form, use self-revision throughout the editing stage, and let other people's viewpoints affect my choices. Once progress has been made and words have been written down, it offers a brief, unique emotional bliss of artistic realisation.

I express my immense gratitude to Mrs. Williams for her unwavering support and dedication in helping me achieve my goals in my Major Work. Her belief in me helped me get over the line and produce the piece I have today.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I know that 122 Australian First Nations youth will go to bed in prison tonight. I know that Young First Nations Australians make up 49% of all youths in prison despite making up only 5.8% of the country's youth. I know that children as young as ten can be arrested by police, remanded in custody, convicted by the courts and jailed. I do not know their stories, and I cannot claim to understand their experiences. I supply only what a film director would, directing an actor on set, the tearing of the earth with hands forever stained, distant calls of kookaburras and cockatoos, dark red blood dancing its way down the riverbed. I provide glimpses into the lives of others so we may build a better Australia.

Colonial Justice

The sound of shovels burying themselves into the dry, cracked land reverberated. In the heart of an idyllic Australian countryside, where nature's untamed splendour adorned the land, towering eucalyptus trees, guardians of a once passed era, fell like giants under the relentless assault of axes, their vibrant foliage reduced to pitiful heaps of severed branches and lifeless trunks.

The construction of a sandstone courthouse was commissioned only two weeks prior, a looming symbol of progress that cast a shadow of destruction over the once-pristine landscape. A cacophony of mallets drowned out the melodies of currawongs and lorikeets as spades tore through the earth, leaving gaping scars in the once-untouched soil. The land, which once bore the gentle imprint of kangaroo tracks and echoed with the soft rustling of wallabies and wombats, now lay disturbed and wounded. Men were milling sandstone blocks in the nearby shade, which echoed through the surrounding hills, as did their complaints and squandering. They grumbled together under their breath, murmuring to each other their dissatisfaction with the resources that lay around them. Timber planks were mechanically bonded together by bolts and straps to create arches up to 10 metres in height. In pursuing architectural grandeur, the natural world bore the brunt of human ambition. The once picturesque landscape, adorned with rich tapestries of green and ochre, was now marred by a harsh industrial grey.

As the courthouse continued to rise, the displaced possums and echidnas sought refuge in the dwindling pockets of wilderness, struggling to adapt to the encroaching human presence. Once a haven of biodiversity, the area now resembled a fragmented canvas, its vibrancy replaced by discord and displacement. The unyielding Australian sun, which once brought life and warmth, now intensified the construction site's oppressive atmosphere. Its fiery rays bore mercilessly upon the labourers, whose sweat mixed with the dust of European progress and the lingering scent of animal despair.

Every day, the courthouse's imposing façade rose higher, casting an ominous shadow engulfing the nearby landscape in darkness. Once living in harmony with nature, the local First Nations community found themselves divided by the discordant forces of progress. Tensions rose as some celebrated the advancement of 'justice' within the area while others mourned the irreplaceable loss of their once-pristine home. As the courthouse neared completion, the National federation flag was hoisted, it swayed in the wind casting a small shadow over the stairs entering the court.



1

A profound sadness settled over the rural Australian community. What was the price paid for progress?

When the courthouse's doors finally opened, the community people were reluctant to step inside, haunted by the lingering memories of their sentinel river red gums and watchful grey iron bark, now strung up high as beams that lay lifeless and immobile, no longer swaying as they once did.

1 The Australian Colonial Flag Adopted in 1824 and relinquished in 1901

William Wentworth² was satisfied with the courthouse and the men's progress. He had roamed with an insatiable curiosity around the area. It was the year 1819 when he set forth on his first expedition, eager to unravel the mysteries of the vast and unexplored land newly named Australia. He had settled in a weatherboard house that lay next to the creek about a fifteen-minute ride from the centre of the new town Eldenford. He grew his personal settlement, raising a few sheep and goats to sustain his wife and children.

Using Eldenford as his new residence and base for his journeys into the Blue Mountains and surrounding areas, he encountered the enigmatic Aboriginal people. At first, their culture and customs intrigued him, but soon, a different emotion took root within his heart, a toxic mixture of fear and superiority. He had heard that there were ways to move people on, he had heard of stockmen taking matters into their own hands. He saw the indigenous as an obstacle to progress.

Coming home from a day spent in Eldenford managing the finalisation of the courthouse, he pushed open his front door only to hear from his children that one of the sheep had been 'stolen' by a local indigenous man. He stood remarkably still, dismissing the idea to his children and sending them to bed.

He collected some logs and compiled them in the centre of his sand fire pit around the backside of his property. Sitting solitary in the glow of the campfire, dissatisfied with his 'stolen' sheep and angry with the barrier that the indigenous people provided to his explorations, he penned his thoughts in his journal, painting an image of the local people as *"occupying the lowest place in the gradatory scale of the human species."* Fiddling round for a knife in his pants to open the three letters he shortly took from the inside pocket of his coat. The first was from Captain James Wallis, a dear friend. It contained a small inscription and a detailed sketch.

2 In the early days of colonial New South Wales, William Charles Wentworth, an Australian statesman, pastoralist, explorer, newspaper editor, lawyer, politician, and author, rose to become one of the richest and most influential people.



The Inscription read:

*"Nature in a sportive humour or a contrast between Animal and vegetable Life in New South Wales. The former hideous disgusting and barbarous, the latter graceful modest and gratifying to the senses, the Aborigines of New South Wales are the most perfect savages in existence." and below "Dick killed Burigon one day with one blow."*³

3 The piece derived from "The Barbarity of our own countrymen" alludes that the creation of this image was the officer of the 43rd regiment who was in charge of the Appin Massacre, Captain James Wallis, painted Dick, Burigon, and local vegetation.

Wentworth chuckled to himself, writing in his diary to respond to Captain Wallace with a sketch of similar nature. Tucking the other two letters back into his pocket, he meandered slowly back inside unable to resist a gentle smirk.

* * *

Wentworth's reputation as a barrister and explorer attracted settlers to Eldenford. The Courthouse was never busier.

He found himself entangled in the heart of a dark and troubling affair. In 1827, Lieutenant Nathaniel Lowe was accused of murdering an Aboriginal prisoner. Wentworth was asked to defend Lowe, and his Courthouse was required. Being an accomplished barrister, he took the mantle of defence counsel. His silver-tongued oration painted a portrait of the Aboriginal people as savage creatures devoid of moral standards and sensibilities. "Englishmen are justified in killing Aborigines," he proclaimed boldly, "for the law does not exist to protect those who are one degree just above the beasts."

The courtroom hung in pregnant silence, and with every word, Wentworth's denial of Aboriginal justice echoed like a symphony. The crowd heard could be heard undulating. His words found sympathy among some, striking a chord with the dark corners of colonial society, where prejudice and ignorance thrived. "Here, here!" men shouted. Their heads could be heard nodding, reverberating off the corners of the Courthouse. Lieutenant Nathaniel Lowe was acquitted of all charges. The Aboriginal community recoiled in horror and despair; Justice meant something different in Elden. The courthouse, was it a place of justice?

Wentworth, satisfied his town would continue to flourish, continued his exploration and became an unyielding voice against the rights of the Aboriginal people in his court in Eldenford.

In 1838, when news of the Myall Creek massacre spread, a veil of gloom descended upon the region. Stockmen had carried out a horrific massacre of helpless Aboriginal people. Although there were widespread appeals for justice, Wentworth steadfastly stood by the offenders. However, Wentworth's odyssey of denying Aboriginal justice had yet to reach its turning point. The goal of judicial reform in 1844 was to make it possible for Aboriginal people to testify in court. Wentworth, however, adamantly disagreed with this because he thought their voices would upset the established quo.

“Their testimony would be nothing more than the chattering of the ourang-outang,” he sneered, stoking the fires of prejudice among his peers. He saw the idea of Aboriginal voices being heard as a threat as if it would bring retribution upon the settlers.

The issue resurfaced in 1849, and Wentworth remained unyielding. He argued that it was not the government’s duty to protect the Aboriginal people, predicting their inevitable demise at the hands of the advancing settlers and diseases. Wentworth used his power to repress the Aboriginal people outside the courtrooms further. Wentworth had a close relationship with Frederick Walker, the first Commandant of the Native Police. The Native Police, a terror- and blood-filled organisation, was used to uphold settlers’ rule over Indigenous people.

As time passed, Wentworth’s legacy was tangled up in the oppression and denial surrounding him. His explorations once thought of as a search for knowledge, suddenly revealed a terrifying truth that it was the account of a man who allowed prejudice to cloud his judgement and fail to do justice to a people who had inhabited the area for thousands of years. His acts left a lasting impression on history, serving as a sombre warning about the perils of intolerance and the cost of ignoring the cries of the oppressed. Once a blank canvas for wonder and curiosity, the country now carried the burden of a history marred by denial, a history that cried out for acknowledgement, healing, and forgiveness.

Immersed

A sizeable white 4WD bus tussled up the dirt as it abruptly stopped just outside a long metal gate. A squat man with a green shirt torn at the sleeves, accompanied by the sound of his thongs clacking against his heels, came out of a house and opened the gate.

The old, shabby house sat nestled on a cattle property in Eldenford. Its remaining weathered wooden fences around the property were made from gnarled tree branches, like the outstretched arms of ancient guardians. The sun-baked earth bore the scars of droughts and summers past, while a corrugated iron shed stood stoically nearby, its once-vibrant red colour now fading to a rusted hue. Dust danced in the rays of light that filtered through the gaps in the worn curtains. The guests arriving on the bus couldn’t quite see in the house, but that’s what made it so interesting for them.

Surrounded by the untamed beauty of the Australian bush, the property seemed frozen in time, as if holding onto a forgotten tale of its own. Tall eucalyptus trees stood proudly, their leaves whispering secrets in the wind. The air was filled with the heady

scent of gum leaves and wattle, mingling with the earthy aroma of the parched soil that would leave a slight residue on the tongue.

Sixteen boys, accompanied by three teachers, sauntered down the bus's stairs, each holding a large duffle bag and backpack. They looked around with eagerness and excitement. They were greeted by the man who opened the gate with open arms. He quickly instructed the boys to drop their bags and showed them around the property.

Beside the house, a muddy creek meandered lazily, its waters reflecting the azure sky above. The creek's gentle babbling provided a soothing backdrop to the serenity of the surroundings. The banks of the creek were adorned with ferns and reeds, their verdant colours providing a vibrant contrast to the arid landscape beyond. Wild horses roamed freely in the expansive paddocks, their manes flowing like liquid ebony in the breeze. They moved gracefully, their hooves barely making a sound as they explored their vast domain.

Throughout the day, they were taught about the art of mustering cattle and its dangers, the importance of water conservation, and the delicate balance between preserving the natural environment and sustainable farming practices. They saw the weathered face of this man who had provided such hospitality and wondered what stories he would offer.

As night descended, mallets could be heard nailing tent pegs in. A gentle laughter filled the air as they joked around with each other. The boys had set up four large camping tents to the right side of the river, a 25-metre walk from the house. As the tents arose, the talking got louder. The stars emerged, painting the sky with their twinkling light. The howls of distant dingoes echoed through the bush, harmonising with the symphony of crickets and cicadas. The creek continued its soft babbling, a constant lullaby for the wilderness.

Spirit of this ancient land.

"This place is insanely beautiful", one boy confided to another as he sat down, satisfied with the tent he could now call home for the next few days.

"Yeh wow, I could definitely live here", another quickly responded.

A few boys went to bed. It had been a long day of travelling, and cicadas could be heard rattling in the background amongst the sound of tents zipping up and the rustle of sleeping bags. In awe of the area, the boys were ready to unpack the following day's stories.

* * *

As the morning arose, the sound of shovels burying themselves into the dry, cracked land reverberated. The owner had asked the boys to construct a new shed. Eager to help, the boys followed suit. They dug with pickaxes, poles, and shovels, shattering the earth. As their hands gripped the cool, gritty handle of the shovels, a sense of purpose took root within them. With each forceful thrust, the soil resisted, then yielded, like a secret reluctantly whispered.

The rhythmic cadence of the shovel's rhythm became a conversation, a heartbeat synchronised with the pulse of nature. Each clump of earth overturned revealed a hidden world, a subterranean tapestry of life woven through the dirt.

Nine holes slowly formed over two hours. Satisfied with their accomplishment and contribution that they had had, the tents began to unfold; it was a race amongst them to see who could get theirs down fastest. They hopped back on the bus after they had taken their remaining photos. Vowing to return, they are yet to.

Billy's Story

Billy found it difficult to believe that stories of what Eldenford had once been were true.

A gentle breeze once carried the sweet scent of eucalyptus and wildflowers while the distant calls of kookaburras and cockatoos filled the air. The clear waters of a winding creek reflected the warm hues of the sunset. Surrounding the creek, a dense bushland once teemed with life. Tall gum trees towered above the undergrowth, providing a shady refuge for the native fauna. Wombat burrows could be seen scattered among the ferns while possums and wallabies flit between the branches of the trees. The rustling of leaves and the occasional snap of a twig signalled their presence, creating a sense of mystery and intrigue.

Yeh right.

Billy looked around.

The surrounding roads were now perfectly surfaced, with not a single bump or pothole anymore. The footpaths by its side were meticulously clean. The bright white of the footpath had an encompassing glare that made it challenging to look directly at when walking down the street. A tall, green, picketed fence with serrated edges surrounded

the local convenience store. A distinctive sign saying '*No children allowed in during school hours*'. Money wasn't the issue. There was an abundance of it in Hope Vale. They had just set up a new art centre, *Opening hours 9-11 on Wednesdays*, redone all the roads, and polished all the light posts. Cameras now sat where once the birds did; the comforting buzz of life that he had heard of certainly wasn't there.

These new roads marked the outline of the little town, and there was no longer any sign of water gushing through the creek. The once lively creek that homed wildlife and provided fresh water for communities was now a mere trickle, a casualty of the town's development. What man has joined nature is powerless to put asunder.

Two police cars, a paddy wagon and Landcruiser 79 series, sat in their parking spot indicated by the sign that lay posted just beside it: *Police parking only, offenders will be prosecuted* just off the main square underneath the shade of the big palm trees that had been brought in only a couple years ago. Although there were no police inside of them, their presence was eerie. On the borderline of the town past the new infrastructure lay the residence of most people who lived in Eldenford. Corrugated iron roofs that lay all day in the sun sat atop of wood-beamed panelled houses, every one looking identical. Front lawns no longer existent, just patches of muddled-up dirt that lay lifeless, begging for rain.

The contrast between the tranquil bushland and the sterile new infrastructure of Eldenford was jarring. The beauty and vibrancy of the natural environment had been replaced with a polished yet lifeless façade. The absence of the creek's gentle babble was noticeable, and the wildlife that once thrived in and around it had been displaced.

The new buildings and facilities had done little to improve the overall quality of life in the town. The locals still struggled to make ends meet, and hardship was still prevalent. Clearly, the government's focus on physical infrastructure had been misplaced. The community needed more than just a fresh coat of paint on their buildings and newly paved roads. They needed access to better healthcare, education, and job opportunities. Despite the government's efforts, the community's spirit remained unbroken. The people of Eldenford were resilient and resourceful, and they found ways to make the best of their situation. The dustiness in the air and the sense of movement in the village spoke to the community's ongoing efforts to adapt and thrive.

Sweat gently rolled down the back of Billy's neck, finding its way into his school shirt and seeping into his backpack. Keeping his head down, he picked up his pace, knowing he only had a good couple hundred metres to go to the front gates.

The searing asphalt was slowly edging away at his almost soleless Reeboks, and Billy heard the sound of a whistle. It was Rob. He ignored him. Another whistle, this time followed by a shout.

“Billy over here.”

There wasn’t much he could do now. He couldn’t continue ignoring him, he had clearly seen him look over. As he slowly potted over to his ‘friends’, he wondered what this day would involve, just glad to no longer be at home. Although scared and intimidated, Billy felt he owed some loyalty to his mates. Being the youngest of the group, he was thrown around and a tag along, he took instructions, and there wasn’t a whole lot he could do about it.

Now, being in earshot and without having to shout, Rob leans across the table.

“Morning mate, how are ya.”

Billy lifted his head and put on the smile he had put on every other day of the week, no longer able to hide the bruises and cuts accumulated over the past few days.

“I’m good, thanks, yeh really good”, Billy replied. He thought he was doing well to cover up his lies.

Rob’s eyes flickered over Billy’s face, and he could see the damage in them. “Are you okay, Jack?” Rob asked, his voice softening.

Billy shook his head; he didn’t trust himself to say anything more. He knew he would start to cry if he opened his mouth. He didn’t want to cry in front of Rob and the boys.

Rob sighed, and Billy could see the frustration in his eyes. Making sure the others didn’t hear, Rob asked, his voice softening. “Are you okay, Billy?”

With no response, Rob’s tone shifted, and he leaned in closer, his eyes scanning Billy’s face.

“Look, we’re heading out to the old creek bed today. Gonna do a bit of exploring, see if there’s anything left to salvage,” he said, a smirk playing on his lips.

Billy’s stomach churned at the thought of what “exploring” might entail. He knew all too well what his friends were capable of, and he didn’t want to be a part of it. But he couldn’t back out now, not without risking their wrath.

“Sounds good,” he said, trying to sound enthusiastic.

After school had finished, they made their way out of the school gates and towards the outskirts of town. Billy's mind raced with thoughts of what might happen. He couldn't shake the feeling that something was off about this whole situation. The old creek bed was a place of beauty and wonder, where he spent hours exploring with his family. Empty beer cans floated around in the small pools of brown water that had been made by the lack of rain in the last few months, the nitid metal syringe poked out in the sand, and the shimmers of broken glass meant that you had to watch where you were walking at all times.

As they approached the creek bed, Billy felt his heart rate increase. He could see his friends eyeing him, waiting for him to make the first move. With a deep breath, he stepped forward, his feet sinking into the dry, cracked earth to the side of the creek.

They spent the next hour scouring the area, looking for anything they could salvage from the burnt-out cars and tractors that lay along the creek's edge like copper. Billy tried to stay on the outskirts of the group, wanting to avoid being too involved in their activities. But as they moved deeper into the creek bed, he found himself being pulled in closer. It started with a few rocks being thrown into the water, followed by some playful shoves and taunts. It all seemed like a bit of fun, and this was the best of the days Billy thought to himself it really wasn't that bad. Instead of a radiant display of hues, the sky was draped in shades of grey and dullness.

The sun's attempts to break through the clouds were thwarted, leaving only faint glimpses of its fading glow. The once vivid oranges, pinks, and reds were now muted and diluted as if diluted by the presence of the sombre clouds. Billy's friends Rob, Jeremy Lucian and Ben began breaking off tree branches and using them as weapons, attacking each other with wild abandon. Stabbing ant nests with long metal poles taken from rusty cars, enraging their armies to come out, knowing their powerlessness is what they enjoyed. Waving them around to destroy the spider webs strung up between the Proteaceae plants, the insects caught up in the web fell to the ground.

Billy notices a lifeless galah lying on the ground at the base of an Acacia tree, a creature once full of vitality and grace, now reduced to a still and motionless form. The body appeared limp and relaxed, devoid of any signs of movement or life. The bird's vibrant feathers, once a tapestry of colours, now seem faded and dulled, their lustre gone.

Once bright and alert, its eyes are now closed, as if peacefully resting in eternal slumber. Once a powerful and agile tool for feeding and communication, the beak now rested quietly against its chest.

The boys laughed at its helpless and futile state. Lying dormant in the dirt, they slowly mutilated its stomach with strong prods and aggressive pokes with the same pole used

for the ant's nest. They then began to tear the wings and feathers of the once pink-crested now maimed bird,

Billy sat in silence. He had nothing to say.

It took them the best part of five minutes to move on.

Billy encouraged the boys to head down to the 'gnamma' holes⁴. It was only a couple hundred metres down the creek bed. They waded their way down the little water that remained in the creek until they reached the swimming hole.

Ripping off his shirt, Lucian shouted eagerly, "I'm in first!"

Running up the side of the rock, he dived into the hole with his hands tucked behind his back elegantly.

A loud thumping noise sent the remaining birds out of the surrounding trees into a fluster. As he hit the water, they scattered away, screeching. The boys chortled amongst each other, deciding who was next in. Billy counted the seconds he was under in his head, thinking it had to have been more than twenty. Lucian normally played jokes on the boys, so it wasn't anything out of the ordinary.

"Yeh alright, I'll go," Jeremy announced.

Billy quickly responded. "Just give him a minute."

As the seconds ticked over, a stream of dark red blood gently danced down the riverbed, weaving its way through the rocks and rubbish and finding its way to Billy's feet. The water fell still, as did the laughter; the ripples created by Lucian's dive had long passed. Lucian's motionless corpse crept up to the surface. The water level was lower than usual due to the lack of rainfall in the months prior. The silence was deafening.

Billy stood frozen and silent as the others, Rob and Jeremy, quickly rushed in, aggressively wading through the water.

"He's dead!" Rob shouted as he rested his hand on the back of his neck.

Ben insisted, "He can't be, surely not, Lucian!"

4 'Gnamma' holes were one of the Aboriginal people's primary water sources. Natural water tanks, these cavities are frequently found in hard rock, especially granite outcrops, and are refilled by underground water reserves and rainwater runoff. Sometimes large enough to swim in.

He paused. “Lucian! Get up, mate.”

Flipping his body around with diffidence, he stared into his blank eyes that had rolled into the back of his head. The sound of water trickling from his wet hair as Ben lifted his head pierced the water’s surface as if they were icicles falling from a winter roof, mercilessly protruding through the water. The trickle slowly dissipated into droplets, then to nothing.

The boys looked at each other. Their skin lost all colour, becoming chalk white.

“We’ve got to bury him, his mum can’t know,” Jeremy whelped, trying to mask his tears.

Quickly following up with, “We can’t go to prison, you know what they’ll do to us.”

The others followed with little hesitation, with little understanding of what they were about to do.

Sweat streamed down their faces, mingling with the dust and grime as they tore at the scorched earth with their bare hands. The ground seemed unyielding, just like the weight of their grim task. The heavy presence of fear and worry restricted their breathing. They exchanged desperate glances while their eyes were wide open. An eerie glow was thrown over the countryside as the sun set behind the trees. With every dig, they dug deeper into their feelings of remorse in an effort to bury not just the body but also the agonising memories that were now tormenting them. Each handful of earth was an admission of their terrible secret. Their eyes filled with tears, clouding their perception of the macabre task ahead as their hearts synched to the beat of a war drum. Yet, they pressed on, fuelled by a desperate determination to hide his body.

Rising from their knees defiled, they looked at their stained hands and tried to rub them off in the water, but it didn’t work. The dirt from under their fingernails was stuck, attempts made to bite them off were futile. The boys now shared a bond that would forever tie them to this desolate place, a silent witness to the secrets they had buried in the Australian country under the weight of guilt and the tearing of the earth with their bare, stained hands.

Jurisprudence

Although Billy's trial was not the first to reverberate through Eldenford's courtrooms, it did carry a weight of precedent that suggested further trials would inevitably grace the same venerable chambers in the future with a similar outcome. Since the trial of Lieutenant Nathaniel Lowe to Billy, who knew if justice would see them with the same blind eyes.

Judge: This court is now in session. The case before us today is the Queen vs. B. Yarran. The defendant is charged with ⁵Misconduct with regard to corpses Counsel, please introduce yourselves for the record.

Prosecutor: Your Honour, I am Ava Montgomery, representing the State.

Defence Attorney: Your Honour, I am Matt Sinclair, representing the defendant, Billy Yarran.

Judge: Thank you. Is the prosecution ready to present its case?

Prosecutor: Yes, Your Honour. The prosecution contends that the defendant, Billy Yarran, knowingly aided and participated in improper handling of a corpse, specifically after Jeremy Waru committed the act of misconduct with regards to a corpse. We intend to provide evidence demonstrating the defendant's involvement in assisting Jeremy Waru to evade accountability.

Judge: Defence, how does your client plead?

Defence Attorney: Your Honour, at this time, my client pleads not guilty to the charge of misconduct with regards to corpses.

Judge: Very well. The prosecution may proceed with the opening statement.

Prosecutor: Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, the proof will establish that Billy Yarran was aware of Jeremy Waru's actions and wilfully engaged in helping him evade the consequences. We'll present testimonies and records that establish the defendant's active role in offering aid and shelter to Jeremy Waru. Through these actions, the defendant became an accessory to misconduct with regards to corpses.

[Prosecution presents witnesses and exhibits]

5 81C (b) improperly interferes with, or offers any indignity to, any dead human body or human remains (whether buried or not), shall be liable to imprisonment for two years

Judge: Defence, your opening statement, please.

Defence Attorney: Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, my client, Billy Yarran, is an innocent young boy who has been wrongly accused of misconduct. The prosecution's evidence might suggest some involvement, but the defence will demonstrate that my client was not implicated in the underlying actions committed by Jeremy Waru. Our witnesses will testify that the defendant's actions were rooted in a genuine desire to help a friend in a time of need, without any awareness of potential legal consequences.

The trial lasted four days. Billy was found guilty and was given the maximum sentence of two years imprisonment. He spent the next ten years of his life in and out of prison.

Billy's story was fictional but there are many that aren't.

At the end of June 2022, 32% of all inmates were Indigenous Australians or people from the Torres Strait Island, despite making up for 3.8% of the population.

Findings from the 2017 Northern Territory Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children.

Chapter 10 - Detention facilities Recommendation

10.1 The Northern Territory Government immediately close the High Security Unit or by whatever name it is known in the current Don Dale Youth Detention Centre.

Recommendation

10.2 The Northern Territory Government close the current Don Dale Youth Detention Centre (to be replaced with a new, purpose-built facility) and by 17 February 2018 3 months after the date of this report, the Northern Territory Government report to the Children's Commissioner (or Commission for Children and Young People if that Commission has been established by that time) on the program for that closure.

Boys were seen in frightening sequences in the graphic film *Four Corners* presented where they were subjected to beatings, restraints, spit hoods, chains, hosing, and unjustifiable seclusion. The iconic representation of the NT legal system arose from these pictures: Dylan Voller imprisoned in a cell, tightly strapped to a chair, donning a hood, and in a catatonic state. The Royal Commission undertook an investigation that successfully pinpointed the people responsible for these egregious and brutal acts. Surprisingly, none of these people were prosecuted or suffered serious consequences. The proceedings also made clear that any child who experienced maltreatment throughout this time period—including beatings, abuse, forcible seclusion, and other cruelties—had to bear the burden of these traumas throughout the trial and for the rest of their lives.

Don Dale prison remains open to this day.

More Children are incarcerated in the Darwin facility than there ever has been.

Chapter 13 – Use of Force Recommendation

13.1 The use of spit hoods should continue to be prohibited. If spitting by detainees is a concern for staff numbers at youth detention centres, other practical alternatives should be investigated to prevent exposure. Recommendation

13.2 The restraint chair should continue to be prohibited. Recommendation

13.3 The use of CS gas in youth detention centres should be prohibited

We know the names.

Dylan Voller
Jake Roper
Wayne Morrison
John Pat
Kingsley Richard Dixon
David Gundy
Mulrunii Doomadgee
Kwementyaye Langdon
David Dungay
Rebecca Maher
Wayne Fella Morrison
Tane Chatfield
Melissa Dunn
Tanya Day
Nathan Reynolds
Kumaniavi Walker
Thomas Hickey
Ms Dhu
Tanya Day
Tane Chatfield
Jonathon Hogan
Chris Drage
Trisjack Simpson
Veronica Walker
Kumanjayi Walker

We have seen the articles.

“Australian boy, 13, spent six weeks in solitary confinement”

BBC, 15th March 2023

“Youth detention royal commission: ‘Systemic failures’ occurred, says former minister”

ABC, 17th March 2017

“Youth detention royal commission hears Alice Springs detainee was choked; teens kneed in back”

ABC, 13th March 2017

“Claims teens forced to eat animal faeces for junk food at Don Dale”

ABC, 22nd September 2015

“Don Dale: Snapchat videos show guard asking inmates for oral sex”

ABC, 20th March 2017

“Indigenous Australians unfairly jailed due to racism in legal system – research”

The Guardian, 7th July 2016

“The Nightmare Lives of Indigenous Prisoners in Australia”

Human rights watch, 9th August 2018

“The Aboriginal Gulag: The Northern Territory’s criminal legal system”

Arena, 22nd October 2022

“Indigenous Child Abuse continues in Australia”

Arena, 29th June 2020

“The royal commission into NT youth detention has failed children”

ABC, 21 November 2017

“Aboriginal Legal Service calls out justice failures on Closing the Gap Day”

National Indigenous Times, 17th March 2022

“Young Indigenous 17 times more likely to be in detention than other Australians”

The Guardian, May 11th, 2019

“Discrimination against Indigenous Australians has risen dramatically, survey finds”

The Guardian, May 24th, 2021

“Aboriginal Australians ‘still suffering effects of colonial past’”

BBC, 16th July 2020

“First Person: Aboriginal Australians suffer from ‘violent history’ and ongoing ‘institutional racism’”

United Nations, 21st April 2023

Wake up Australia.

DRAMA: GROUP DEVISED PERFORMANCE

“
Digby Gillespie-
Jeffery, Oliver
Hinchliff, Knox
O'Connor, Sam
Pidcock &
William Rogers
”

The emotional intensity of the performance also presented a balancing act for the actors, demanding deep character exploration while ensuring an element of humour.

The Kelly Gang

(Nominated for OnSTAGE)

REFLECTION STATEMENT

Our drama performance aimed to explore the incredible story of Ned Kelly, and ultimately answer the question of whether he was a Hero or a Villain. Throughout the development process, we focused on refining the characters and their emotional journeys. We chose buckets as our group's prop, and mid 1800s costumes to emphasise the characters' complexity. Our creative approach utilising a linear narrative structure with individual monologues and collective soundscapes challenged us to maintain audience engagement and clarity. The emotional intensity of the performance also presented a balancing act for the actors, demanding deep character exploration while ensuring an element of humour. Despite the challenges, our performance effectively conveyed its message, leaving a lasting impact on both the audience and the cast.



Watch *The Kelly
Gang* performance
here









Watch Romeo's
process video here

TECHNOLOGICAL & APPLIED STUDIES

Romeo Atra

Bench Seat

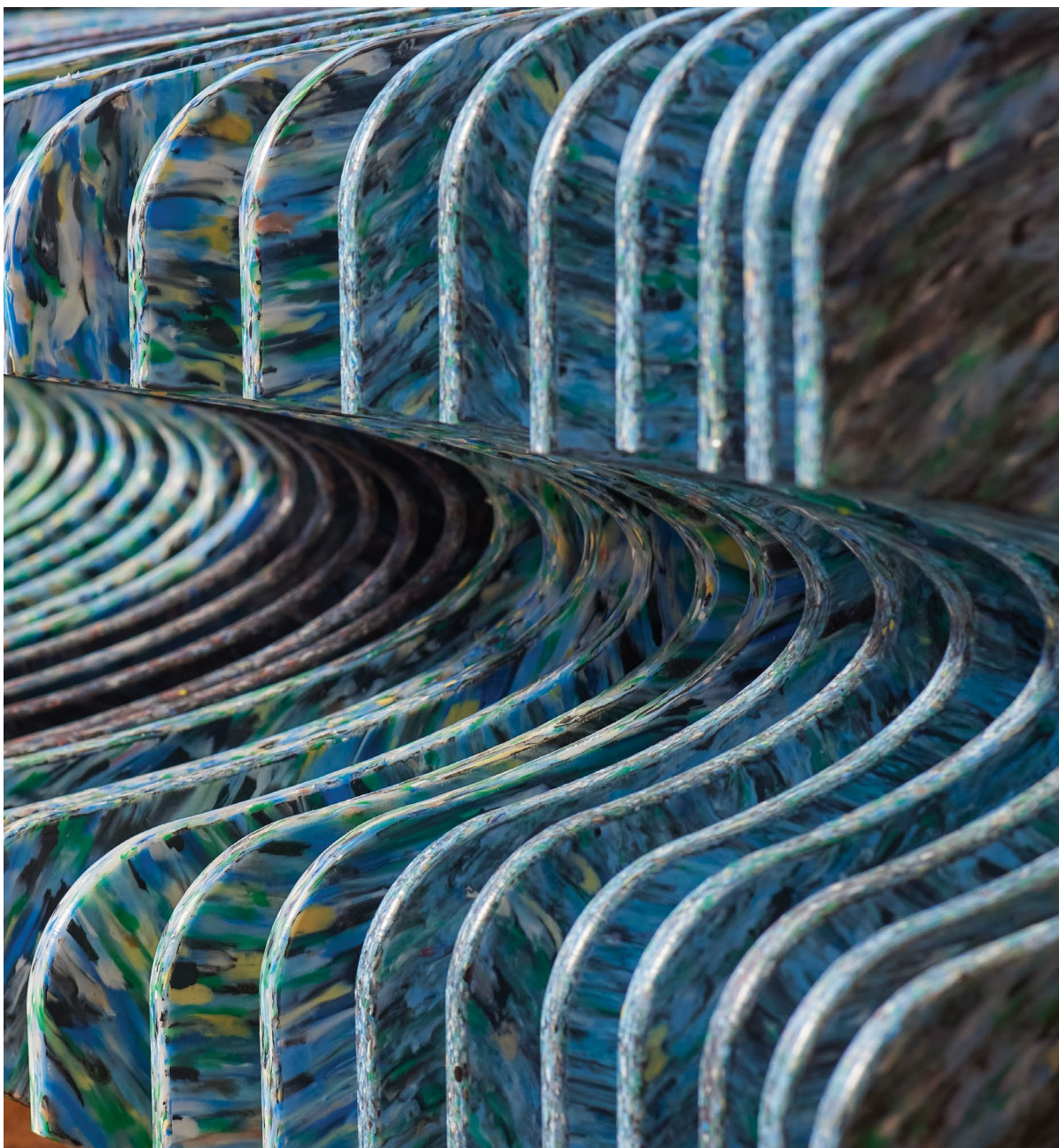
*From Milk Bottles to Bench Seats
(Selected for SHAPE)*

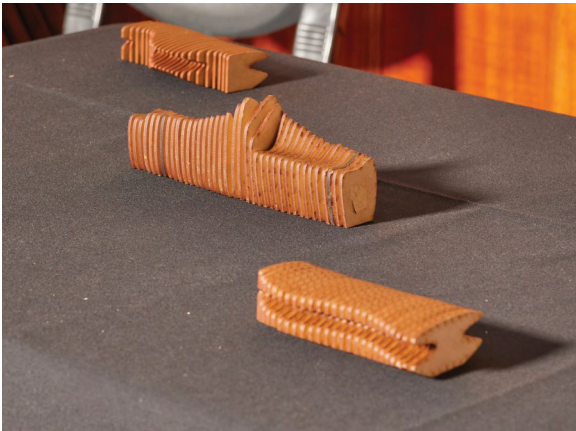
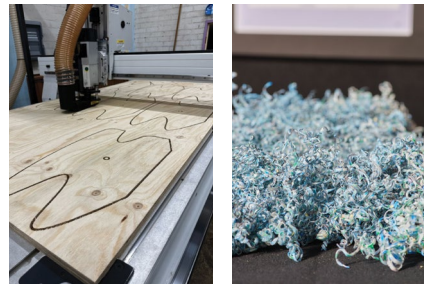
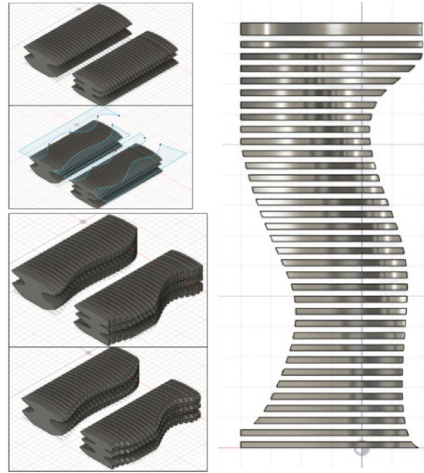
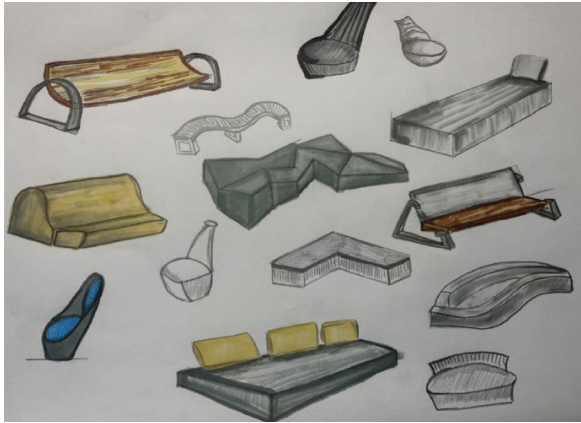
REFLECTION STATEMENT

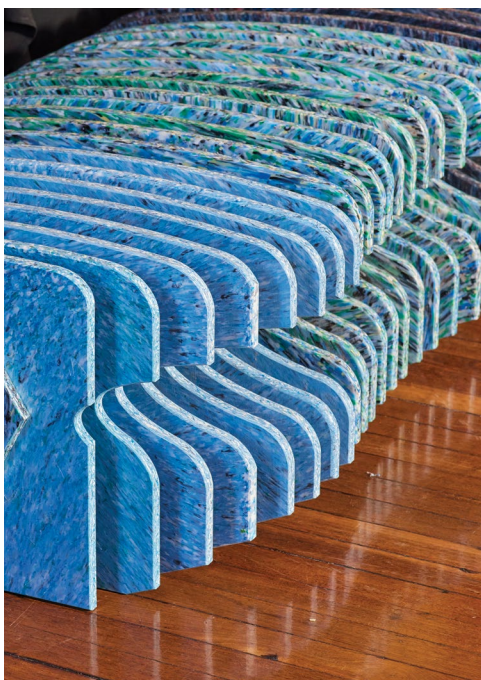
I was inspired by the concept of a circular economy of recycling waste items into usable community products; where the community involvement is present in both the recycling process as well as the enjoyment of the product that is created. Milk bottles were a perfect solution for my recyclable material as they are abundant and contain HDPE which is durable and weatherproof.

My idea was well received by my community who help me collect thousands of milk bottles, which I cleaned, shredded and moulded into 20mm thick plastic sheets. The use of sheets allowed me more flexibility in designing and manufacturing an ergonomic and aesthetically pleasing bench through fusion 360 and the CNC machine.

My bench seat both positively raises awareness about helping our environment, as well as raising awareness about the valuable resources that can be found in 'waste' products, demonstrated in the HDPE bench seat. The final product creates a consciousness of recycling and re-designing the valuable resources found in 'waste' products.







Jack Norton

Way to Burn

REFLECTION STATEMENT

Despite our significant progress, it still seems almost natural and uniform for men to repress their feelings today. I can't say that this was the plan for my short Tragedy, "Way to Burn", all along, but this certainly was how it developed over the year I spent writing it.

Over many form changes, one essential reality remained consistent: the interplay between existentialist philosophies, nihilism, absurdism, and psychoanalytical theories of regression and repression and their manifestations in modernity and media. This manifestation of repressed emotion delved into many areas of artistic expression, such as T.S. Eliot's works, but most notably the lyrical and emotional expression of The Cure's frontman, Robert Smith. I started listening to the angst-ridden screams of Kurt Cobain, the wailing howls of Smith in music, and the disconnect between the stage personas and the men in interviews. The more research I did, the more I saw that female artists were quite willing to discuss personal lyrics in these similar interviews. In contrast, male artists were far more restricted in discussing lyrics of a personal nature.

The title "Way to Burn" is cognisant of the Sisyphean, Freudian and Jungian aspects that encapsulate the central paradigm of masculine repression at the play's heart. The Sisyphean nature of repeated repression and, consequently, regression of the self's emotions and the Jungian aspect of the awareness of the subconscious self, cause the issues, yet the lack of will to confront them. Therein lies the toxic paradigm that, unfortunately, is still attached to males today.

I intended to dismiss the notion that we've finished this debate and implore the audience to keep this topic alive and not simply move on. I can't provide a solution but ask that we continue scrutinising this topic.

SCRIPT

Scene One

The cabin, night.

The stage is unlit and pitch black.

We hear the ambient sounds of rain pattering on a glass window.

A blue light projector casts the stage into rain-like patterns.

An answering machine blinks a red dot.

The stage is still very dark.

VOICEMAIL: You have 23 voicemails: Hey Tom, me again, y'know, your manager; just letting you know it's been two weeks since you spontaneously isolated yourself in the ass-end of nowhere for inspiration. A progress update would be appreciated.

Click of an old answering machine.

VOICEMAIL: You have 22 voicemails: Hi Tom, just checking up on your progress with the album. The label's getting antsy about seeing a lack of progress, or any progress for that matter.

Click of an old answering machine.

VOICEMAIL: You have 21 voicemails: Hi To-

The answering machine is abruptly turned off by TOM, sitting in an armchair.

Lights up on stage.

The stage is dimly lit, revealing both sides and a screen for projecting centre stage.

The left side is completely bare.

The right side has an armchair facing the audience, a fireplace on the right wall further upstage, and a small table with a glass and bottle of whiskey on it, downstage in front of the armchair.

TOM appears; he sits in the armchair and puts his head in his hands.

TOM goes to take a drag but stops and examines the half-smoked cigarette.

He puts it out in the ashtray.

Lights down on stage.

Scene Two

The cabin, night.

The sound of rain pattering.

A window is projected onto a screen, centre upstage, along with two shadows: a male and a female sit together, giving the illusion of watching the rain pour outside.

The right side of the stage lights up as TOM lights a cigarette.

TOM stands in front of the fireplace, holding a glass of gin in one hand and a cigarette in the other.

He goes to pick up an acoustic guitar next to the armchair, but his fingers linger, and then he shakily draws them back.

He drains the glass, puts the cigarette between his teeth and grabs the guitar.

He carries the glass and guitar to the armchair and places the glass down.

Next to the chair is a half-drunk bottle of gin.

He strums a single note, and as he changes position, he shakes even more.

He plays a slow, broken E minor chord, an arpeggio, his hands shaking more each time.

On the sixth note, he drops the pick but doesn't pick it up.

TOM inhales a shaking breath but can't bring himself to finish the melody.

He sets the guitar aside.

TOM pours a glass of gin to the top, it spills over, but he doesn't seem to notice.

TOM puts the cigarette out and drains the glass.

The sound of rain grows as the stage fades to black.

Scene Three

The cabin, night.

Lights up on the right side of the stage.

TOM stands in front of the fireplace, holding a glass of gin and a cigarette in the other hand.

The bottle of gin is refilled.

TOM makes a fist and sways on the spot for a few moments absentmindedly.

He drains the glass, puts the cigarette between his teeth and places his hands on the mantelpiece with his head staring at the ground.

TOM sits in his armchair and begins to write lyrics on a notepad.

Lights up on the left side of the stage, revealing a bar setting.

A young woman, LILY, stands at the bar drinking red wine.

Offstage, cheers are heard.

TOM, with an acoustic guitar around him, stumbles into view.

He looks offstage at the bartender, who is hidden from the audience.

TOM: Fix us a gin and tonic, will you?

He turns left to LILY.

TOM: If I make you laugh, you have to buy me a drink.

LILY turns right to look at TOM.

LILY: (Confused) Sorry, who are you?

TOM: Was just up on stage.

LILY: Ah, right.

Pause.

TOM: So how about that drink-for-a-laugh deal?

LILY: I can't tell if you're flirting or broke.

TOM: Yes, to both. So, about that drink?

LILY checks her phone.

LILY: Sure, why not? It's not likely to happen, though. Like, I gotta leave in a bit and work on-

Clearly disinterested, TOM cuts across her.

TOM: What were your thoughts on the show?

LILY: Oh, um, it's not really my thing, y'know... music.

TOM accepts a drink from the offstage left.

TOM: Everyone has a type of music.

LILY: No type; I don't listen to music.

Midway through a sip, TOM pauses and swallows.

LILY: You good?

TOM ignores this. He breathes calmly and stares at her.

TOM: (Genuinely confused) I beg your pardon. What the hell do you mean you don't listen to music?

LILY: I- just never really got into it.

TOM: "Never really got into-" Are you having a laugh? The greatest art form, and you couldn't "get into it"?

She shrugs.

LILY: Sorry, I prefer books, poetry. Y'know, T.S. Eliot and Nietzsche.

TOM: Who the hell is Eliot? Actually, y'know what? Whatever. A song without music is basically poetry.

LILY: Yeah... I guess. I like the lyrical aspects. Just not the actual music part.

TOM: I don't believe...

She snorts and then straightens up.

LILY: That doesn't count.

TOM: So you like T.S.- what's-his-face and- I'm not gonna bother pronouncing that other bloke's name.

LILY: *(It's her turn to be incredulous.)* You don't know one of the most influential poets of the 20th century? Famously wrote about how shit current life was?

TOM: Sounds like an incel. Did he consider going outside?

LILY: Shush, you don't know any poets.

TOM: You'd be mistaken.

LILY: Huh?

TOM: Yeah, all my idols are poets: Kurt Cobain and John Lennon. All songwriters are poets.

LILY: Including yourself? You're comparing yourself to, who I assume are famous musicians?

TOM: Rockstar. Not a musician, and yeah, 'cause I am one.

LILY: Does doing three shows make you a musician? I mean, I don't know much about the business, but y'know.

TOM: I've actually done two.

LILY laughs.

TOM sticks out his hand.

LILY doesn't take it.

He withdraws it.

TOM: I'm Tom Reed. Guitarist and vocalist.

LILY: That kinda sounds made up.

TOM: Forward, aren't you? I like that... Miss?

LILY: Corbeau.

TOM: Blackbird? That's French, right?

LILY: *(Pleasantly taken aback)* Wow, how did you- you don't know who Eliot is, but you know French?

TOM: Eh, bits and pieces. Spontaneous, aren't I? So about those two and a half drinks for two and a half laughs? Miss Corbeau?

LILY: Hey, we agreed to *a drink* to make me laugh.

TOM: I'm altering the deal.

LILY: Alright, alright. A deal is a deal.

Pause.

LILY: *(Sarcastic)* I must admit, you've intrigued me, Mr Reed.

TOM flashes her a perfect smile.

TOM: I'm gonna go get the drinks, if you don't mind. Miss Corbeau.

TOM walks out of view.

LILY smiles to herself.

Lights down on the left side.

Lights up on the right side of the stage.

TOM is breathing heavily.

He sets aside the pen.

The window displays the discombobulated lyrics he wrote.

They are in an untidy scrawl and without punctuation:

*"Itneverchanges. Nothingchanges. Alwaysthesame. Alwaysburn
Illalwaysfindawaytoburn. Icannotcannot. Fadingandpaling
Ohchristohchristitsalwaysthesame. Theendalwaysis. Theendalwaysis.
Theendalwaysis. Stopstopstop."*

He picks up the gin bottle on the side table and gropes for his glass but sees that he left it on the mantel.

TOM drinks directly from a whisky bottle and gags.

TOM picks up the bottle and drinks again.

He gags and vomits on the floor to the side of the armchair but persists.

He places it back down on the table.

Lights down on the right side of the stage.

Scene 4

Lights up on the right side of the stage.

TOM stands in front of the fireplace, holding a glass of bourbon in one hand and a cigarette in the other.

He drains the glass.

He puts it down on the side table, on which there is the notepad.

He picks up the notepad and starts to write.

*The window at the back of the stage reveals random words being written and projected before
TOM tears out the page and starts again.*

This occurs six times:

*“Lover. Lost. ‘22. Her. Eyelikethesea? Stupid, stupid. Itrembledstuck. Smileasun?
Stay. Her. Loverdontleave. Breakwhatsbroken. Fix. Fix. Blind. Drink. Isolation.
Yourname. Blur. Nolove. Silence. Shouldaknownsooner. ThereIgo. Lacuna.
Mysweetlacunaandmelancholy. Nobody. Leave. Breed. I. Eyeoftheneedle. Shatter.
Spectre. Bendedknee. Sleepnomore. God? Nosound. Wavesthatmakeyourown.
Something, something. Anything? Nothing”*

TOM puts his head in his hands in frustration.

Then, he writes a title for the song “Cigarettes by Starlight”, which appears on the window.

Lights up on the left side of the stage, which features a bench that faces upstage. The window now has the silhouettes of trees and a faint moon. TOM and LILY sit on the bench. The older TOM stares at the left side of the stage before bending down the page to start writing, which lights down on the right side of the stage.

LILY offers TOM a cigarette.

LILY: You smoke?

TOM turns to her, surprised.

TOM: You do? But yeah, if you don’t mind.

LILY fishes a cigarette from a packet and puts it in TOM’s mouth. As TOM leans in for the light, she speaks.

LILY: We’ve all got our little idiosyncrasies, right?

TOM smiles at her and draws back once he’s lit.

TOM: What’s mine?

LILY giggles.

LILY: Okay, well- here’s the thing: I could be a bit mistaken, but a very minor case of severe alcoholism?

TOM: Is it an addiction if you’re good at it? Lily?

Pause, shocked silence.

LILY: Sorry, I need a sec just to marvel at- wow.

TOM: Marvel as much as you'd like; it's genuine moments of genius mixed in with the most genuine moments of idiocy you'll ever see. It's quite an adventure being with me, you see.

LILY: (*Giggling*) I believe you.

Pause.

TOM: So, did you listen to the artists I told you about?

LILY: Yeah, I did.

TOM: And?!

LILY: I liked them. The Cure, The Smashing Pumpkins, they're very- ah, what's the word? Like, flows well? Something like that.

TOM: Melodic?

LILY: Yeah, yeah. Melodic, if a little bit depressing. Like, actually, day-ruining.

TOM: Is that a problem?

LILY: Not at all; I think art *should* make you feel, even if it's misery. Like they're all stuck, y'know?

TOM: What do you mean?

LILY: So, like of, like, sex, drugs and heartbreak, and they say they're gonna change in the songs, but they turn 'round and make another album about the same stuff.

TOM: Yeah, nah, I get it. Like it's the setting, right? Yeah, lotta musicians play 'cause they got something to say about something they can't change.

Pause.

LILY: Like, I don't know, love?

TOM: 100%, it's why like 99.9% of songs are about desire.

LILY snaps her fingers.

LILY: Oh! You'll be proud of me. Like that Nirvana guy who screams like he's on fire, which I'm not a fan of.

TOM: Kurt Cobain, and yeah, I think it's beautiful. The whole grunge scene in the '90s was kinda punk 2.0.

LILY: You think a 25-year-old screaming on stage, not singing, screaming, is beautiful?

TOM: It's why, to me, music is the greatest art form, right? Because in a book, you can't get that unrestrained agony blasting into your ears. Like in that moment, you know what he's feeling, right? And that's art to me.

Lights down right.

TOM has his face in his hands and is shaking.

More lyrics appear on the window, even more untidy and frantic:

"Getitout. Getitout. Howitends. Getyourfuckingvoiceout. Alwaysends. Alwaysburns. Notabang. Notanoise. Notascream. Butawhimper. Alwaysawhimper. Cease. Silence. Stop. Theendalwaysis. Silent. Splinter. Decayanddie. Splintered. Inmyhead. Dieanddecay. Cannot. I. Cannot. Alwaysawaytoburn."

Lights down on stage.

SCENE 5

Lights up on the left side of stage.

TOM is sitting down; there is the faint sound of a crowd cheering.

The sound of a door opening.

TOM takes half a line of cocaine off the table before LILY enters.

LILY: What the hell are you doing?

TOM: I know it looks like-

LILY: Christ, Tom, we agreed you wouldn't get into that shit. I can't- I just- fuck!

LILY sits down on the couch with her head in her hands.

TOM moves closer to her.

TOM: It's just to take the edge off my anxiety- look, those people out there, all those voices screaming in your ear... It's unbearable... I can't explain... It just triggers something in me that makes me shut down.

TOM tries to put his arm around her shoulder, but she shrugs it off and stands up.

LILY crosses her arms.

LILY: It's cocaine; it should do the opposite.

TOM tries to reach for her, but LILY draws back.

TOM: It's not just relieving the weight of all those nobodies; it's everything. Everything just goes away, that perpetual feeling of breaking into pieces. I know you know how I feel right now.

Pause.

LILY: I do, and that's why I feel like my words have weight.

TOM puts his hands in his pockets and moves out of the way of LILY.

TOM: How's this for an excuse: you only live once, nothing matters, and we're all gonna die anyway. I think a girl I knew said that to me once when trying to convince me to try grass.

LILY snorts and immediately covers her mouth.

LILY: That was different; you can't drop dead from a single joint.

TOM: Sure, but you can experience psychosis.

LILY: Get out of my way, Tom.

TOM: Fuck you.

LILY: What did you just say to me?

TOM: I said fuck you, Lil. I change my mind. You don't understand; nobody does.

LILY slaps TOM.

She is close to tears.

LILY: Because I'm not a fucking narcissist

She gestures to the table.

TOM: Since I started taking it, I've never been more accessible. I'm headlining fucking Glastonbury 2022.

LILY: So because you've effectively been burned out and drained of talent, you need to be high as a fucking kite to stay relevant?

TOM: I'd rather be addicted than use a fucking ghostwriter. On that day, I quit music or overdose, whichever comes first.

LILY: It's not just you that I'm concerned about. I'm not gonna get roped into this shit and get my life ruined.

TOM: What fucking life? You follow me around when I tour.

Pause.

TOM: Fuck. I didn't mean-

VOICE OFFSTAGE: The opening act has finished; you're up.

TOM: Lily, I- look just-

LILY: Go.

TOM walks past her, giving her one last look before walking offstage left.

LILY sits down and starts crying with her head in her hands.

She stares at the half-finished line.

Lights down on stage.

Lights up on the right side of stage.

TOM holds his glass so tightly it shatters in his hand.

Blood runs from his cuts.

He doesn't notice.

He walks offstage right.

Lights down on stage.

SCENE 6

TOM sits in his armchair with a glass of brandy.

He drains the glass and sets it down.

Lights are down on the right side of the stage.

TOM and LILY are sitting down.

They are both drunk, though LILY is significantly more drunk.

TOM puts a line of cocaine on the table.

He snorts it and jolts up.

TOM: Christ, Christ, Christ. So, get this right? It's a two-hour concept album called *You*, and it's a huge metaphor for Orpheus and Eurydice, but it's super miserable and like set in the 80s music scene.

His speech is a little slurred but mostly fast.

He sniffles his nose.

LILY: I dunno; seems too long. I mean, like, two hours. As an unprofessional music enjoyer, I feel like that's a tad too long. Two hours of anything is too long... wait.

LILY's speech is more slurred.

LILY goes to do a line, and TOM stops her.

TOM: Hey, I may have seven different substances coursing through my veins, and I may be able to feel my own eyeballs vibrating, but I don't think that's a good idea, Lil.

LILY: Ah, who're you to judge?

TOM: Y'know, that's a fair point. Nah, w- wait a sec: doesn't alcohol, like, fuck your decision-making thingy in your brain or whatever?

LILY: Oh yeah, are you a neurologist? I thought not.

TOM: Wait, hold on a sec. Why the sudden interest now?

LILY: I don't - don't know, man, boredom? Like, I just don't take en-enough risks?

TOM: You're a literal smoker in 2021, despite the research about it.

LILY: Yeah, but like that's legal. Aren't you the guy who said verbatim, "We're here briefly, then we're dust. Gone, and there's no encore." I thought, "Wow, that's the most fucked up thing I'm ever gonna hear."

TOM: Nothing matters, but you do. You know damn well I wasn't thinking of that when I said it.

LILY: No one likes a gatekeeper. Are you really gonna make a whole thing about this?

TOM: I'm not gatekeep- Look-

TOM sighs.

TOM: No, I'm not gonna make a whole thing of it. Just be careful is all I'm saying.

LILY does a line and bolts up.

TOM: Lil? You alright?

LILY: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I'm fine. God, that's-

LILY does another line.

TOM: Christ, Lil, stop.

LILY: Isn't this what you wanted?

TOM: What the hell? No, I- I never asked.

TOM holds her.

TOM does not see the line of blood run from her nose.

TOM: Alright, let's calm down. Let's take a break, yeah?

Silence. She does not respond. She shakes in his arms.

TOM: Lil?

Still no response.

TOM holds her.

She starts to convulse more violently.

TOM: Oh God!

He turns her onto her back.

TOM: Lil, what the hell- what do I do? I don-

TOM looks around frantically. He scrambles for the phone in his pocket and drops it while fumbling. TOM stands and paces with it up to his ear.

LILY stops convulsing.

TOM drops the phone and scrambles to kneel beside her.

TOM: No, no, no, no, no. Hey Lil, hey, it's me- please, please jus- just. No, please.

TOM puts his head on her chest. Realisation dawns on his face.

TOM'S voice has broken.

Silence.

TOM sits holding her while weeping.

Lights down on stage.

Long pause.

Lights up on both sides of the stage.

TOM'S hands are shaking as he tries to light his cigarette.

He succeeds after a few attempts and inhales deeply.

The cigarette is reduced to nothing, and the hot ash falls onto TOM'S hand onto his lap, but he doesn't seem to notice.

He continues to smoke, not noticing the cigarette is burning his fingers.

Lights down.

SCENE 7

Lights up on stage.

TOM lies, dishevelled, at his desk, passed out.

A cigarette sits in his hand.

The whiskey bottle is now empty.

TOM plays Em, Am, and Fmaj7 in a slow ballad-like melody on the acoustic guitar, strumming with his thumb gently.

TOM tries to complete the melody he played at the beginning and starts to sing.

The lyrics appear on the screen unbroken and grammatically correct:

TOM: No matter which way I turn
There'll always be- be a way to burn.

He sits, thinking.

TOM: Always. Every. Time.

TOM snorts and then chuckles.

He straightens up and laughs.

Yet his shadow projected on the screen continues playing the melody.

And laughs.

And laughs.

He smashes the guitar to pieces.

TOM shrieks with laughter so hard he doubles over.

Still playing, the shadow is held from behind by a female shadow.

Lights down on stage.

The final chord ends on an arpeggio, a broken chord.



MUSIC 1

Harrison Loiterton

Performance (Drums)

(Nominated for ENCORE)

MUSIC 1

"Get to It" by Dave Weckl (Core Performance, Jazz)

"Hunting Wabbits" by Gordon Goodwin

(Elective 1, Performance)

"Caravan" by Duke Ellington, Irvin Mills & Juan Tizol

(Elective 2, Performance)

"Take 5" by Dave Brubeck (Elective 3, Performance)

REFLECTION STATEMENT

My major works for Music 1 consisted of four pieces performed on the drum kit, where each has been intentionally chosen to amplify and exhibit my own personal style and ardour, while remaining faithful to the original adaptations. In this sense, I have been inspired to create a blend between free-flowing, unwritten music, as taught by my teacher Mr Hauptmann, along with a firm structure and rhythm which lies at the foundation of each composition.

I only began playing drums at the beginning of high school, but as my enjoyment of playing the instrument grew, I was able to swiftly develop my technical proficiency to further enhance this. All of my pieces are framed around the genre of jazz which was a personal choice rather than an academic decision because it allowed me to parallel the difficulty of the style with my own skill, allowing me to develop so that I could

adequately play a more challenging, and yet more rewarding style. I chose to play 'Get To It' and 'Hunting Wabbits' with a backing track and separately 'Take Five' and 'Caravan' with a quartet (alto saxophone, piano, bass guitar and drums) so that I could explore a variety of modern forms of performance. Particularly, 'Take Five' has an extremely legato feel along with a 5/4 time signature which makes it challenging to play; but further had extensive flexibility with the bridge, which allowed me to construct a two minute solo that drew on ideas from Joe Morello's and my own independent style. 'Caravan' was easily the most enjoyable to play, and was a confluence of the traditional composition and the modern filmic adaptation through 'Whiplash'. It took a long time to compose and perform a version that had a quick tempo, a variety of intricately placed stylistic techniques, and a flowing, engaging drum section.

It has been through playing the drum kit that I have learned how to blend the solid foundations of the adaptation with personal playing style, something which many other instruments that can't leave rigid melodic lines cannot experience. I am eternally grateful for the opportunities I have been given, and will continue to pursue my instrument as a life-long skill.



[Watch Harrison's performances here](#)







Angus MacKinnon

Modular Furniture

REFLECTION STATEMENT

For my 2023 HSC Design & Technology Major Design Project I designed and created a modular furniture unit that addresses an important issue faced by many young adults in cities with rising housing costs and limited living spaces. My inspiration was to create a sustainable, versatile, and functional piece of furniture that addresses the issue of affordably furnishing small living spaces. My goal was to create a piece of furniture which could adapt to the needs of users living in small spaces, that could be reconfigured to suit different furniture needs – such as a coffee table, a bench seat, a TV unit etc. Particularly, this concept also allowed for the efficient use space, by replacing the need for multiple, separate pieces of furniture.

In addition to this I wanted to make this furniture product environmentally sustainable and address the issue of pollution and material wastage in society, particularly through using materials which are sustainably sourced, and not harmful to the environment at the end of their product life cycle.

I was able to achieve these objectives in my project by creating modular furniture which can be reconfigured into multiple different functions, contained in just two box-shaped units. In addition to this I was also able to make my product environmentally sustainable, by utilising laminated cardboard sheets, which were sustainably sourced from recycled paper, and environmentally friendly, as they can be fully recycled or even naturally biodegraded at the end of my product's life cycle.

I constructed my product by gluing 150 sheets of corrugated cardboard, which were then cut and shaped using the school's CNC machine. To achieve a more aesthetic appeal, I added varnished timber veneers on the faces of the cardboard units, before

finally applying a layer of laminate over the cardboard to seal it and ensure the product's longevity.

Overall, I set specific and challenging goals for my project, yet I believe my sustainable modular furniture unit could offer innovative solutions to a wider audience.



Watch Angus'
process video [here](#)







VISUAL ARTS

Edward Rennie

Neo Otago

“

My series...
utilises vibrant
artificial colours
and portrait
orientation
to reflect the
contemporary
nature of the
issues I intend
to explore.

”

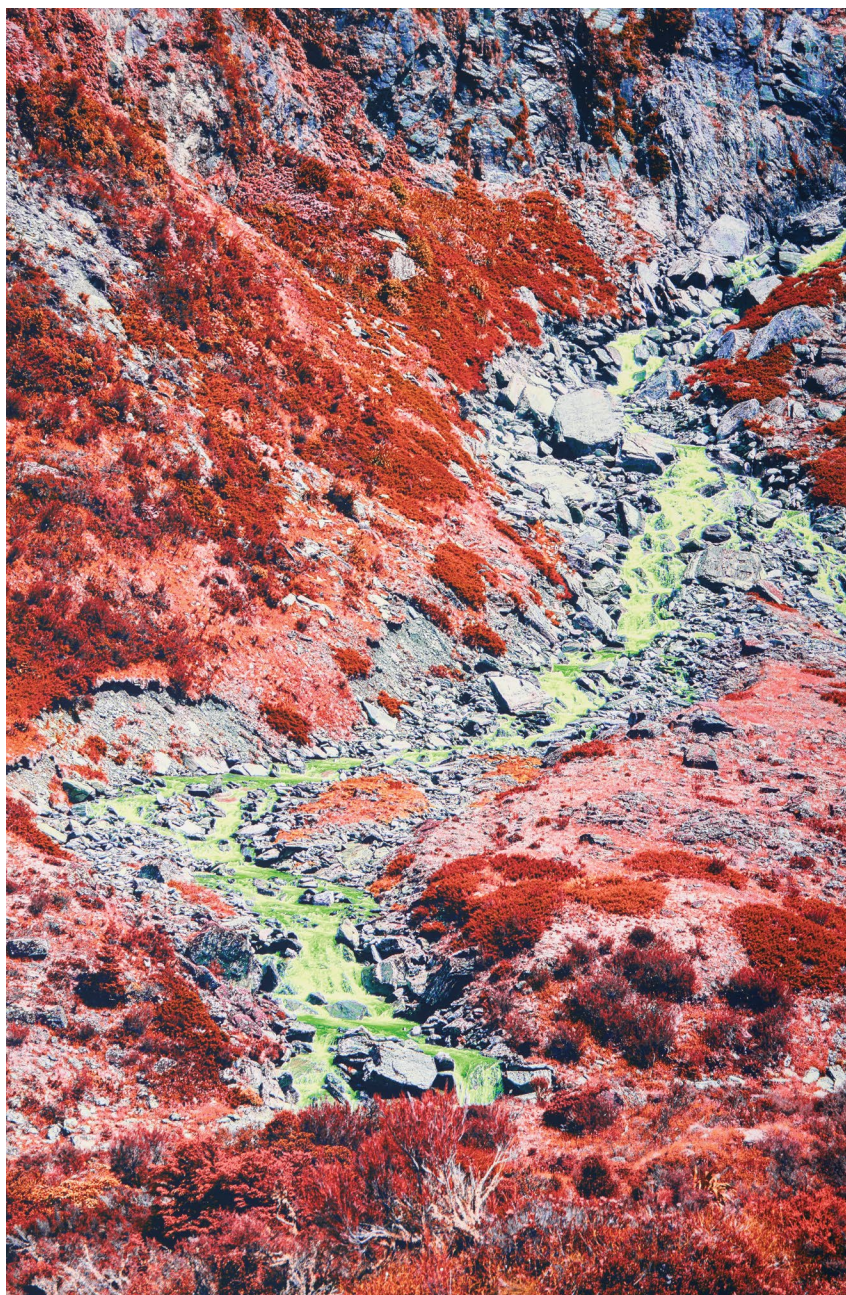
REFLECTION STATEMENT

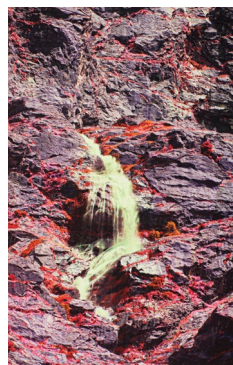
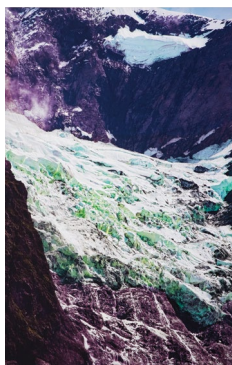
I've wandered up the Rob Roy Glacier trail many times since I was seven, witnessing the immense body of ice on the mountaintop recede year after year. 'Neo Otago' captures how humanity has tainted and degraded even the most remote parts of the Earth's environment, leaving an inauthentic façade in its place.

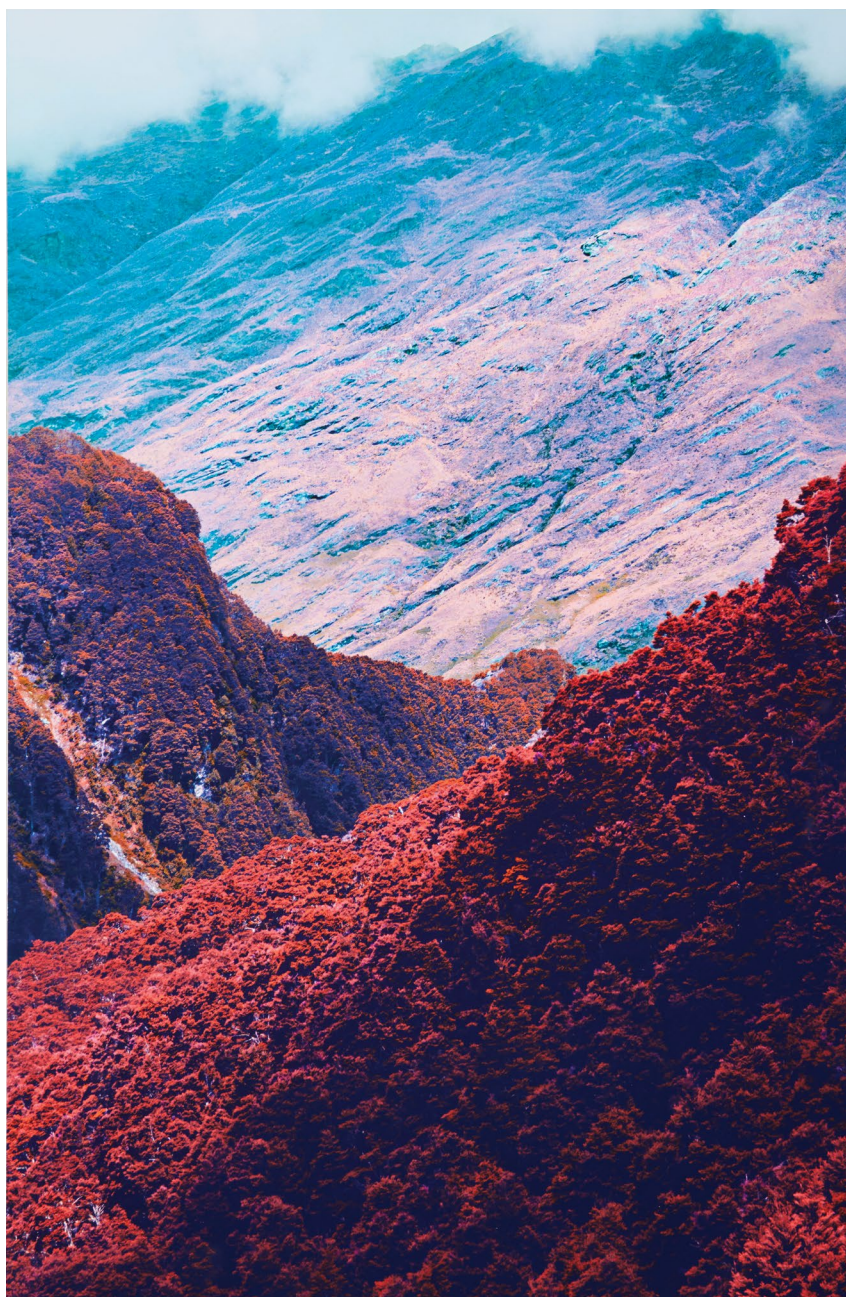
My body of work has not been developed over a year, but a decade. Whilst most students enrolled in the Visual Arts course begin their work at the start of Year 12, I initially conceived the broader concept of 'Neo Otago' during one of my first visits to the mountain. The final series is a culmination of years of evolving my photomedia skills before finally returning to the scene where I first envisioned it.

My images of the landscape of Otago, New Zealand, are inspired by the likes of classic photographers such as Ansel Adams. However, my series specifically defies age-old conventions of landscape photography, utilising vibrant artificial colours and portrait orientation to reflect the contemporary nature of the issues I intend to explore.

Through 'Neo Otago', I ultimately aim to inspire audiences to recognise the beauty nature holds, but also urgently remind them that we are letting it slip away from us. I grieve knowing that the vistas of Rob Roy Glacier I last saw may have disappeared by the time I next return.







Jack Power

The Scull Coffee Table

(Nominated for SHAPE)

REFLECTION STATEMENT

My HSC major work is designed to celebrate my special interests: woodworking and rowing. Named 'The Scull' I designed and crafted a coffee table that exhibits the strength of my woodworking ability by showcasing a wide range of learnt skills and techniques. I used the construction period as an opportunity to push myself and develop my aptitude for woodworking and design.

The underlying motivation behind the project was to create a physical memento, a piece of collectable design that would honour my time at school and the experiences and opportunities that Riverview has provided me with. In order to do this, I chose a theme that clearly summarises my time spent at the school. Over the past six years I have spent more hours down at the Boatshed and on the water than in the classroom (don't tell mum). I have repeatedly represented the school, and in 2023 I rowed in the 4th seat of the 1st XIII that won the Head of the River and the National Championships. I went on to win the Under 19 Individual Scull at the National Championships and represent Australia in a double at the Under 19 World Championships 2023. My time spent rowing has helped me to grow as a person, work with and value the contribution of others, develop lifelong friendships, an appreciation for hard work and a deep passion for the sport.

Therefore, it is easy to see how the love and labour of my time spent rowing was the driving inspiration of my project, a coffee table that not only displays but celebrates the cross-section of a traditional timber rowboat. This idea was proposed to me by a fellow rower who previously represented Australia when I expressed my desire to build an entire boat for the project. This conversation took place in May of 2022 which gave me almost six months to develop a design, a plan and convince my teacher to allow me to pursue the project.

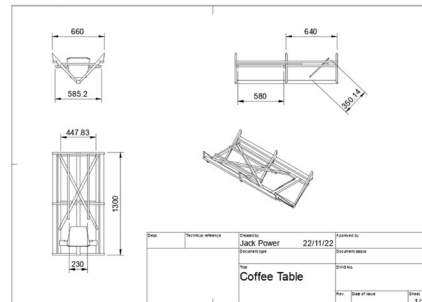
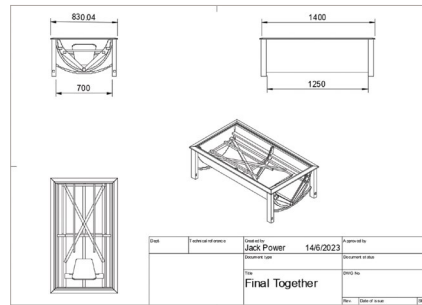
The decision to hero the cross-section of a traditional timber rowboat was the perfect option to create an aesthetically pleasing yet also functional piece of furniture. Additionally, it presents the perfect analogy of the complexity of a sport that can look so effortless and easy simply gliding over the water, when in reality it is a complex interior and a difficult sport.

After a long process with a varying array of difficulties I was able to execute the design to a level much higher than I had anticipated. Not only have I designed and built a product that is both functional and aesthetically pleasing, I have managed to pay homage to both a sport and practice that I adore – a sport and practice that both reward dedication, hard work, and patience.



[Watch Jack's
process video here](#)







MUSIC 2

Luca Maher

“

This composition, conceived from sorrow, left an indelible mark on my artistic journey, instilling fortitude to navigate life's crescendos and decrescendos with grace and resilience.

”

Performance (Piano) & Composition

MUSIC 2

"Nocturne for Eve" by John Carmichael (Core Performance)

"Scis Te Ipsum" (Core Composition)

"Clarinet Quintet in C Major" (Elective Composition)

REFLECTION STATEMENT

'Nocturne for Eve' is a poignant masterpiece crafted in 2012 by Australian composer John Carmichael, commissioned by Jean Cottrel in the aftermath of her daughter Eve's tragic battle with cancer. As a pianist rooted in classical traditions via the Suzuki method, delving into the unknown complexities of 'modern classical' posed an initial challenge, but interpreting the composition became a soul-stirring endeavour of emotional exploration. With the freedom to dictate tempo and expressiveness, I immersed myself wholly in the performance, extracting sentiment embedded in the score. 'Nocturne for Eve' became a catalyst for my appreciation of modern art music, unfurling new dimensions of understanding and affinity. This composition, conceived from sorrow, left an indelible mark on my artistic journey, instilling fortitude to navigate life's crescendos and decrescendos with grace and resilience.

Crafting 'Scis Te Ipsum' as a mandatory composition became a deeply enjoyable journey into my passion for choir music and deep appreciation for the variety of tone colours which the human voice can create. Drawing inspiration from modern choral maestros like Eric Whitaker, this piece conceptually references the eternal nature of humanity found through memory and art, and it bears the imprint of my love for language, particularly Latin. The lyrics are written in Latin and sung with classical pronunciation. Within the score, this connects with the time signature pattern found within the piece which mimics the dactylic hexameter found in classical Latin poetry. Playing with the score's different sections was a delightful adventure, weaving intricate

and bewildering passages into more 'traditional' segments. This creative dance not only crafted fascinating unusual complexities but also served as a canvas to deepen my understanding of music theory as I was forced to move away from simple and predictable harmonies.

Composing 'Clarinet Quintet in C Major' for the elective topic was a delightful journey into the realm of classical music. Choosing a string quartet as the foundation, I decided to introduce the clarinet to infuse a vital layer of tone colour variation. Playing neither clarinet nor any string instruments, learning to write these parts correctly was often quite difficult. Fortunately, with the invaluable guidance from my teachers and skilled performers of these instruments, I was able to overcome this obstacle and ensure that the musical elements were accurate and playable. Following the structure of Sonata Form, I heavily drew inspiration from masterpieces like Mozart's Clarinet Concerto, Clementi's Piano Sonatinas, and Mozart's Piano Sonata No. 16.

Writing within a genre I intimately knew allowed me to explore deeper levels of classical harmony theory. The process not only honed my compositional skills but also deepened my appreciation for the intricacies and nuances that make classical music the timeless and profound art form that it is.



[Watch Luca's performances here](#)







Scis Te Ipsum

Light and Airy
Staggered breathing

12" $\text{♩} = 85$

Solo Soprano

mf
Ah

Each person to repeat given melody ad libitum
Stagger entries, sing at a variety of tempos, gradually increasing in speed and volume
Choir to reach loudest point at 10 seconds at which point it will be cut off so that only the Solo Soprano can be heard

Murmurando
Accel. poco a poco 12" ✓

Soprano

ppp cresc. ff
Om - ni - a Vi - tae

Murmurando
Accel. poco a poco 12" ✓

Alto

ppp cresc. ff
Mors Pro om - ni-bus

Murmurando
Accel. poco a poco 12" ✓

Tenor

ppp cresc. ff
Scis te ip - sum

Murmurando
Accel. poco a poco 12" ✓

Bass

ppp cresc. ff
Dum Mor - mi - mur

5

S.S.

caloroso

S.

mp *mp* *mf*

Sal - ve Sal - ve Scis

caloroso

A.

mp *mp* *mf*

Sal - ve Sal - ve Scis

caloroso

T.

mp *mp* *mf*

Sal - ve Sal - ve Scis

caloroso

B.

mp *mp* *mf*

Sal - ve Sal - ve Dum mor-mi-mur ver - ba nos-tra

11

S.S.

S.

te ip - sum Om - ni - a vi - tae ³ sunt sem-per

A.

te ip - sum Om - ni - a vi - tae ³ sunt sem-per

T.

te ip-sum ma-ne-ant in Om - ni - a vi - tae ³ sunt sem-per

B.

me-mo-ri - a ma-ne-ant in per-pe - tu - - -

Staggered breathing

mp

SEE THE FULL COMPOSITION BY SCANNING QR CODE

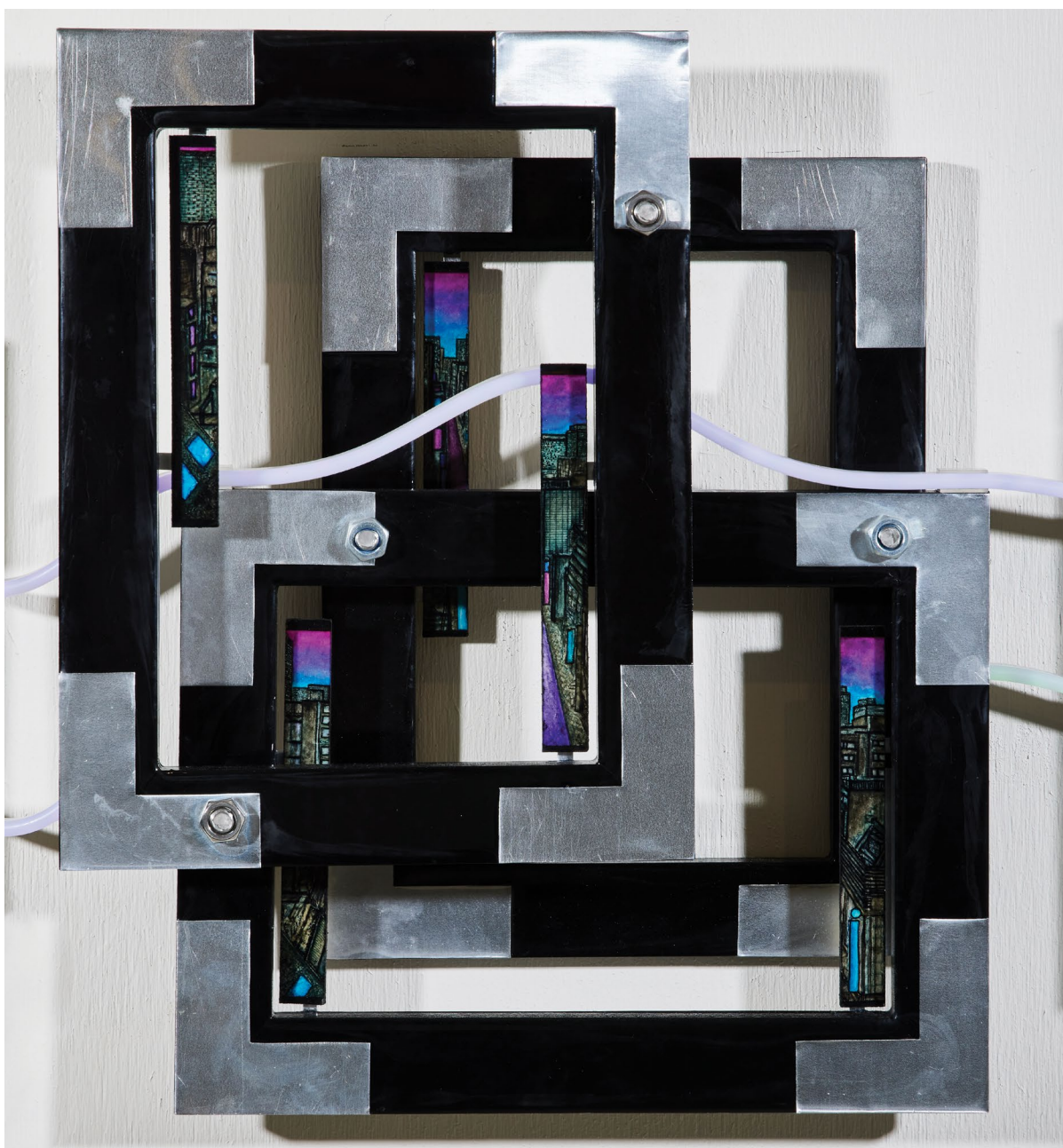
VISUAL ARTS

Joshua O'Dea

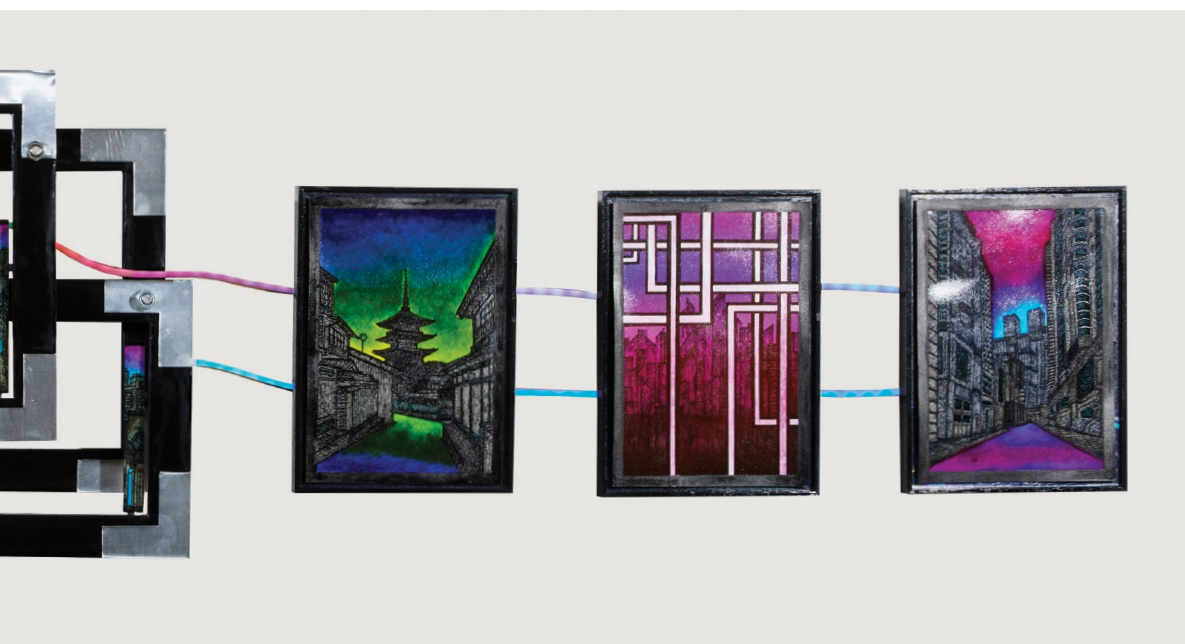
'Fragments of Urban Dissociation - Isolation, Elysium, Lines of Light'

REFLECTION STATEMENT

My body of work represents the dissociation of identity in the urban environment. By drawing on the imagery of rapidly developing Asian cities, I explore this disorientation as a product of setting through their juxtaposition of traditional and modern architecture which reflects a changing cultural identity. My focus on modernity as a catalyst for social detachment is expressed through the absence of populace within the works as well as my technical and conceptual use of chromatic Mondrian line-work to reimagine the social fabric as interwoven within the cityscape itself. I further represent the complexity of this social connection through the ethereal allure of lights and neon colour in the cityscapes which emanate via deliberate vectors from the central artwork. The fragmented imagery and negative space of the central artwork is a visual representation of cultural alienation and entrapment in the urban setting which elucidates the isolated perspectives of the surrounding works.







HISTORY EXTENSION

Liam Rees

Nation Building: The impact of the politicisation of Great Zimbabwe in the fabrication of national identity.

REFLECTION STATEMENT

History is an innately human project that attempts to make sense of personal and collective identity. My essay explores the politicisation of history in the fabrication of a nation's identity in response to colonialism, condemning and praising this process as a means for nation building. The process of colonialism is by its nature a denial of collective historical narratives, as such, following the decolonisation of Africa, new and nationalistic African identities began to form, with often violent and tragic consequences.

My essay utilises the archaeological site of Great Zimbabwe as a case study through which I explore the impact of the politicisation of history. History's role in forming identity was chosen as an area of study as it is the most practical and potent use of the past. Mugabe-esque Zimbabwean national identity was specifically chosen as an area of study as it illustrates the consequences of the politicisation of the historical record. Within Zimbabwe, Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party manipulated the country's colonial past, utilising their own constructed public history known as 'Patriotic History'. As a result of the politicisation of the historical record, civil unrest ensued leading to a prolonged period of violence within Zimbabwe. As such, without a clear vision of a nation's identity, rooted in a rich past, historical narratives will be inevitably monopolized as seen in the rise of authoritarianism within post-independence Zimbabwe. As such, my essay reflects that history should function as a conduit by which multiple historical understandings can be expressed. Embracing the multiplicity of historical viewpoints allowing for greater societal cohesion amongst differing cultural groups leading to the process of nation building.

'Independence will bestow on us ... a new history and a new past'

– Robert Mugabe

History serves a prominent role in the fabrication of a nation's identity. To achieve social cohesion a 'shared history' is often constructed by public administrations to achieve their social and political aspirations, this is done through politicizing history. Without shared self-understanding which serves to attain 'public results,' ethnic and religious boundaries will supersede national needs and conflict will ensue; thus, identity must be a part of nation building. Following the rise of African decolonisation in the 1950s, new national identities had to be formed often surrounding the romanticisation of colonial resistance and other tangible histories. This often-contested process of meaning making for Zimbabwe has had profound political implications, leading to civil war and the formation of the state, the foci of these narratives is Great Zimbabwe. Great Zimbabwe refers to a collection of ruins in the South of Zimbabwe, broadly attributed to the Bantu people and was 'abandoned' around the 15th century. Due to this politicisation, historical narratives within Zimbabwe have not only undermined academic methodologies but other figures have and continue to be 'fixed' in positions of political marginalization in the pursuit of social cohesion through identity. To combat this, pluralistic interpretations of Zimbabwe's shared history have been developed amongst dissenting voices primarily through the University of Zimbabwe, challenging monopolized historical narratives. According to literary historian Hayden White, 'Historical Pluralism'² serves to 'answer collective needs and interest of the intellectual community' through 'diversifying' our understanding of the past. The intersection between archaeology, ethnography, and importantly local 'oral' histories in response to colonialism has formed several pluralistic constructions of African history surrounding the site. The confluence of these interpretations serves to form a more democratic and increasingly nuanced understanding of history, whilst challenging dogmatic and politicised historical narratives.

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1. *The history and future of nation-building? building capacity for public results* (p. 197-218) by Jocelyne Bourgon, J. (2010). *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 76(2), doi:10.1177/0020852309365666.
 2. *Historical Pluralism* (p. 480-493), by Hayden White. *Critical Inquiry*

Politicised historical narratives surrounding Great Zimbabwe began as a response to colonialism's dispossession of people and understanding, these narratives in turn served proto-Zimbabwean self-understanding. Following colonial resistance in Kenya, the '*winds of change*' precipitated ideas of independence across Africa leading to a growing black consciousness and demand for self-determination.³ To fight colonialism in Rhodesia, divided tribes, mostly divided by artificial racial boundaries, needed a united sense of self not just a common identity.⁴ As such, romantic idealisations of the past began to arise, specifically ones which glorified aspirations of independence typically connecting fights for self-determination to Great Zimbabwe. Great Zimbabwe according to Kaarsholm became proto-Zimbabwean nationalists' key symbol for situating their roots of modern identity in a rich and autonomous historical one'.⁵ Great Zimbabwe represented tangible evidence of the pre-colonial 'Golden Age'⁶ and was a demonstration of ancient African achievements when racially united. The selection of an archaeological site to form the basis of national identity is imperative as it represents a tangible history which directly combats the denial of oral or other histories under colonialism. This view is supported by Art Historian Simon Schama who argues that "when local forms of memory run counter to more 'official histories... landscapes offer a place to keep alternative narratives of the past in circulation"⁷. These alternative narratives manifested themselves within the site through 'nationalist historiography' first purported by public historian Terence Ranger's books '*Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*' (1966) and '*The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia*' (1967). Ranger's work emphasises the role of armed struggle to bring about independence drawing connections to the First Chimurenga and Great Zimbabwe, the first independence 'war' between Shona and Ndebele Africans versus the British South Africa Company. Great Zimbabwe's role in Ranger's work was as a platform by which he asserted the inspirational example of black unity, a key feature in early political formation and organised resistance. This diversification of perspective from that under Rhodesia rule is what White refers to as developing a 'sense of history',⁸ as multiple historical

3 *Nation branding in Zimbabwe: Archaeological heritage, national cohesion, and corporate identities* (p.5), by Shadreck Chirikure, Simbarashe S. Chitima and Thomas P. Thondhlana. *Journal of Social Archaeology*

4 *Becoming Zimbabwe or Becoming Zimbabwean: Identity, Nationalism and State-building* (p. 55), by Alois S. Mlambo. Sage Publications

5 *The past is a battlefield in Rhodesia in Zimbabwe. The struggle of competing nationalisms over history, from Colonisation to Independence* (p. 156), by Preben Kaarsholm. Institute of Commonwealth Studies

6 *Nation branding in Zimbabwe: Archaeological heritage, national cohesion, and corporate identities* (p.5), by Shadreck Chirikure, Simbarashe S. Chitima and Thomas P. Thondhlana. *Journal of Social Archaeology*

7 *Landscape and Memory*, by Simon Schama. Vintage Books

8 *Historical Pluralism* (p. 480-493), by Hayden White. *Critical Inquiry*

narratives develop within the public space. This process in turn develops greater group understanding, as Shona Africans connected to historical mythology developed by Ranger and others, thus fabricating unity for once historically shunned cultures. Great Zimbabwe's centrality in earlier Zimbabwean self-understanding is evidenced in the naming of anti-colonial liberation movements after the site, this being the ZANU and ZAPU. ZANU and ZAPU throughout the 2nd Chimurenga, also known as Zimbabwean Independence War, also utilised the symbols of Great Zimbabwe within their flags and party banners, thus racially uniting their respective power bases through history. Additionally, the Soapstone birds and the Conical Tower of the site became enshrined in the Zimbabwean national iconography, appearing in the coat of arms, the national flag and on coinage⁹. Zimbabweans were supposed to emulate the enterprising spirit of their ancestors who had constructed a politically and economically successful kingdom¹⁰, the immortalisation of Great Zimbabwe within national symbols served not only to root the country in rich African culture and history but to also fabricate an identity based on former united black ingenuity. This is supported in Garlake's view that Great Zimbabwe emerged as a source of black cultural pride and inspiration for historical and political consciousness for all Zimbabweans¹¹. As such, the initial formation of the state was heavily reliant on Great Zimbabwe, with its symbolic capital serving to galvanise support for independence. As early 'nationalist historiography' had to appeal '*en masse*' to overcome the intellectual and physical resistance of the Rhodesian Front Regime (1965-1979), because of this the site's diverse and shared nature was stressed within work, especially examining the power of black unity¹².

Despite this, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe began constructing a new racialised national identity, narrowing ideas of 'Zimbabweans' to ensure political stability post- independence. As Zimbabwean political divisions were primarily along racial lines, with ZANU being supported by Shona Africans while ZAPU a national party mainly appealing to Ndebele peoples, Mugabe began to exclude Ndebele contributions from Zimbabwe's shared history.¹³ This purposeful absence in the historical record served to stress the 'ZANU-PF as the alpha and omega of

9 *Nation branding in Zimbabwe: Archaeological heritage, national cohesion, and corporate identities* (p.6), by Shadreck Chirikure, Simbarashe S. Chitima and Thomas P. Thondhlana. *Journal of Social Archaeology*

10 *Ibid.*

11 *Prehistory and Ideology in Zimbabwe* (p. 1-19). By Peter Garlake. *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*

12 *The past is a battlefield in Rhodesia in Zimbabwe. The struggle of competing nationalisms over history, from Colonisation to Independence* (p. 165), by Preben Kaarsholm. *Institute of Commonwealth Studies*

13 *The politics of recognition: Symbols, nation building, and rival nationalisms* (p. 396-418), by Gabriella Elgenius. *University of Gothenburg*

Zimbabwe's past, present and future.¹⁴ This overt politicisation of the past that formed following the establishment of the state has been termed 'Patriotic History', which is unique from simple 'nationalist historiography' due to its increasingly narrow and racialised interpretation of Zimbabwe's past along with its notable public elements.¹⁵ As such, Zimbabweans collective understanding of the past was greatly contributed to by the ZANU, who, using their immense political capital, fabricated 'Patriotic History' through public speeches and displays along with changing the education system and establishing 'youth militia camps'.¹⁶ This politicisation of Zimbabwe's past served to construct a uniform and monolithic 'sense of history' within the public realm, thus political resistance supported by history, could not form. This is supported in Mugabe's belief of 'the immanence of a Zimbabwean nation expressed through centuries of Shona resistance...embodied in successive 'empires',¹⁷ with the targeted exclusion of Ndebele people's contributions to the nation's shared past excluding them from ideas of 'Zimbabwean-ness'. This is further evidenced in the naming of the state Zimbabwe in 1980 after Great Zimbabwe, a settlement according to oral histories to have been developed by Bantu peoples, Shona Africans ancestors. As ideological ideas from the regime spread through the populous via propaganda, support for removing the regime was not only unpopular but seen as 'Un-Zimbabwean', thus Zimbabwean identity became inextricably connected to support for the regime through politicizing Great Zimbabwe to justify policies of racial exclusion and authoritarianism. This was exacerbated due to the monopolisation on the ability to create history within Zimbabwe, with key institutions such as universities and public forums being controlled by the ZANU. Dissenting historical narratives suggesting Great Zimbabwe's shared applicability and relatability to the Zimbabwean populous outside of Shona Africans would inevitably undermine support for the regime, as political opponents could draw from Zimbabwe's shared past. Thus, 'national identity' under Mugabe's rule following independence became increasingly racialized, presenting the ZANU-PF as the rightful successor to Zimbabwe's precolonial rulers, thus ensuring political power for Mugabe.

Building on this, to ensure political power, 'Shona' identity was essentialised through Great Zimbabwe, further fabricating 'Zimbabwean' identity. By 2003, Mugabe's radical promises for the country in 1980 seemed to have failed, thus, to

14 *Patriotic history and public intellectuals, Critical of power* (p. 379). By Blessing-Miles Tendi. *Journal of Southern African Studies*

15 *Ibid*

16 *Nationalist historiography, patriotic history, and the history of the nation: The struggle over the past in Zimbabwe* (p. 221). By Terence Ranger. *Journal of Southern African Studies*

17 *Constructions of Zimbabwe* (p. 509). By Terence Ranger. *Journal of Southern African Studies*

ensure political support against the MDC (Movement for Democratic Change), a popular grassroots political party, 'Patriotic History' began to again mobilise within Zimbabwe. Following the return of one of the soapstone birds to Zimbabwe from Germany due to mounting international pressure, Mugabe began a 'multi-million' dollar campaign publicly celebrating its return.¹⁸ Due to Great Zimbabwe's symbolic capital being a constant feature of state iconography, featuring on the Zimbabwean flag and coinage, this stressed the ZANU-PF's personal role as 'colonial liberators' as the return of the artefact was an ideological victory.¹⁹ This accentuated the political divide characterised in the 2003 election by 'revolutionaries' v. sell-outs', with the ZANU-PF politicising the site to stress a new national identity surrounding 'patriotic Shona nationalism'.²⁰ This reflects a trend of 'political parties frequently reproducing national symbols and appropriating archaeological artefacts as partisan symbols', with the site solely serving Mugabe's ideology.²¹ The public glorification of Great Zimbabwe throughout the election stressed the historical connection of the modern Zimbabwe state, a state ruled by the ZANU-PF, to that of an '*ancient empire*', which further legitimized Mugabe's rule as he was seen as the epitome of 'Zimbabwean-ness'. This shift from a Zimbabwean identity based on pan-African black unity pre-1980, to early Zimbabwean identity stressing Shona African supremacy, to '*Patriotic History*'s' obsession with continuing the revolution highlights a continued essentialisation of black culture for political ends.²² Initially the politicisation of Great Zimbabwe served to 'strategically essentialise' African culture as being united and politically powerful prior to colonialism. This phenomenon is explored in literary and post-colonial critic Gayatri Spivak's work that argued that sometimes 'group identity can be simplified in a way to achieve definite goals'.²³ This purposeful homogenization of African culture served to combat colonialism as recognising cultural diversity inherently weakens claims of self-determination and narrowing features of a 'group' encourages cohesion. This process is what political scientist Benedict Anderson refers to as creating 'imagined community' of nationalistic unity, by which racial differences are

18 *Nationalist historiography, patriotic history, and the history of the nation: The struggle over the past in Zimbabwe* (p. 226). By Terence Ranger. *Journal of Southern African Studies*

19 *Contested Monuments: The Politics of Archaeology in Southern Africa within Colonial Situations: Essays in the Contextualization of Ethnographic Knowledge* (p. 135-169). By Henrika Kuklick. University of Nebraska Press

20 *Nationalist historiography, patriotic history, and the history of the nation: The struggle over the past in Zimbabwe* (p. 232). By Terence Ranger. *Journal of Southern African Studies*

21 *Political Symbols and National Identity in Timor-Leste* (p. 8-31). By Catherine Arthur. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan

22 *Nationalist historiography, patriotic history, and the history of the nation: The struggle over the past in Zimbabwe* (p. 215). By Terence Ranger. *Journal of Southern African Studies*

23 Spivakian concepts of essentialism and imperialism in Gabriel Garcia's "*The autumn of the patriarch*" (p.91-114)". By Mohammad Motamedi. *Khazar Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*

downplayed to facilitate a nation's unity.²⁴ Significantly, 'strategic essentialism' was primarily perpetrated by Zimbabwean political parties, as Rhodesian identity was already 'racially monolithic', thus to unite divided African peoples against colonialism, politicised history was utilised. Despite this, the essentialisation of African culture continued after the removal of colonial power, serving to further narrow ideas of 'Zimbabwe-ness', eventually to a point of Shona nationalism, thereby facilitating the political rule of Mugabe and the ZANU-PF.

In conjunction with the politicisation of the site for political ends, to fight colonial the misappropriation of Great Zimbabwe, archaeologists, actively attempted to professionalise the site, through establishing an official and uniform historical narrative. The museum at Great Zimbabwe was, at the time of its heritage listing in 1986, incredibly 'professionalised',²⁵ with the museum illustrating the African origins of the site as early as 1932.²⁶ However, as anthropologist and archaeologist Barbara Bender argues 'those attempting to conserve and preserve a site inevitably 'freeze' the landscape as a palimpsest of past activity, creating a 'normative' landscape with only one way of telling and experiencing it.²⁷ This appropriation of the land occurred at the Great Zimbabwe Museum where even by the 2006, strictly only hired those with archaeological training, and as the only black archaeologist had died during the liberation war, there was an all-white staff.²⁸ Additionally, the increasing 'professionalisation' of the site did not have input from local peoples,²⁹ this is problematic according to public historian Joost Fontein who claimed that the multiplicity of local historical discourses about the site and the surrounding landscapes had been 'silenced' by the authority of the museum.³⁰ The dominance of archaeological discourses on the site had led to a focusing on static categories and simplistic understandings of cause, effect, and change,³¹ thereby 'crowding out' and distancing local interpretations of history from the historical record.³² Thus, culturally informing histories for local peoples

24 *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. By Benedict Anderson. London: Verso

25 *Silence, Destruction and Closure at Great Zimbabwe: Local Narratives of Desecration and Alienation* (p. 771-794). By Joost Fontein. *Journal of Southern African Studies*

26 *Prehistory and Ideology in Zimbabwe* (p. 12). By Peter Garlake. *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*

27 *Stonehenge: Making Space* (p. 26). By Barbara Bender. Oxford Press

28 *Silence, Destruction and Closure at Great Zimbabwe: Local Narratives of Desecration and Alienation* (p. 772). By Joost Fontein. *Journal of Southern African Studies*

29 *Ibid*

30 *Ibid*

31 *Reclaiming Great Zimbabwe: Progressive or regressive decoloniality?* (p. 400-414). By Joost Fontein. *Journal of Southern African Studies*

32 *Silence, Destruction and Closure at Great Zimbabwe: Local Narratives of Desecration and Alienation* (p. 773). By Joost Fontein. *Journal of Southern African Studies*

were restricted due to the dominance of logocentric narratives produced by the museum. Additionally, due to historiography within Zimbabwe being monopolised by the ZANU and the official museum guidebook up until 1986 still utilising the same directive under Rhodesian control of not explicitly stating the sites origin,³³ the site 'coloured' the interpretations of Zimbabwean nationalists. This is highlighted in Great Zimbabwe's political capital serving an instrumental role in the initial formation of Zimbabwe and the maintenance of the ZANU-PF'S power.

This, in former chief Archaeologist at the museum Peter Garlake's opinion has led to the 'Great Zimbabwe being promoted by Zimbabweans as a mirror image of the Rhodesian' own distortions,³⁴ with the same process of dispossessing local understandings of the site occurring under colonial rule. In attempting to depoliticise the site through appealing to historicism, the museum at Great Zimbabwe has formed a lynchpin of Zimbabwean identity whilst simultaneously denying local peoples of their history. Within Zimbabwe this is poignant due to traditional religion having a close association with the land and the spirit world, with Great Zimbabwe serving an important role in local tribes such as the Nemanwa, Charumbira and Mugabe, interpretation of Shona spirits and Mwari (God).³⁵ To combat this, Ranger encourages 'not making an authorised version of [Great Zimbabwean] history but making differing interpretations available for discussion to ensure it remains a source of inspiration for individual and collective creativity'.³⁶ Despite this, Ranger's perspectives have undoubtedly been characterised as 'nationalist historiography', serving to facilitate proto- Zimbabwean nationalism early formation. However, due to the complexity of the historical record at Zimbabwe, in attempting to tell one story, it inherently silences another, thus an interdisciplinary approach allows for multiple perspectives. This view is supported by Hayden who argues that the aggregate of historical narratives will inevitably inform a 'sense of history' for different people.³⁷ Thus, as result of the 'professionalisation' of the site, like that under Rhodesian rule, a racially unifying and culturally informing national identity has failed to form due to continued management of Great Zimbabwe 'distancing' itself from local cultural understanding.

33 *Prehistory and Ideology in Zimbabwe* (p. 1-19). By Peter Garlake. Africa: Journal of the International African Institute

34 *Ibid.*

35 *The Shona Peoples*. By M.F.C Bourdillon. The Zambesian Past

36 *Rendre Present le Passe au Zimbabwe* (p. 76). By Terence Ranger. Politique Africaine

37 *Historical Pluralism* (p. 481), by Hayden White. Critical Inquiry

To conclude, nation building is inextricably linked to the process of forming a national identity through history, as shared 'self-understanding' produces cohesion. Historical pluralism's role within this discussion is not only illustrated through the dangers of the politicisation of history in creating essentialised national identities which entrench political power but also of the dangers of the targeted de-politicisation of history and its capacity to 'professionalise' history to a point of 'crowding out' genuinely culturally informing histories. Furthermore, the intersection between oral, archaeological, and ethnographic disciplines has not only deepened historical understanding and critique but also has informed the identity of both colonial and post-colonial nations. Inevitably, '*we wish to use history only insofar as it serves living*',³⁸ as such historians are called to celebrate the multiplicity of views which inform personal understanding through pluralism or risk 'establishing truth', inevitably empowering certain narratives and therefore people over others. Utilising this framework, further assessments can be drawn about the use of 'historical pluralism' and of history more generally in the fabrication of national identity elsewhere.

38 *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life* (p. 1). By Friedrich Nietzsche. Cambridge University press

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Saint Ignatius' College
RIVERVIEW

Saint Ignatius' College Riverview acknowledges the Cammeraigal people who are the Traditional Custodians of this land upon which we are privileged to live and educate. We pay our respects to the Elders past and present and extend that respect to all First Nations people who dwell on this land.

First Nations people are respectfully advised that this publication may contain the words, names and images of people who have passed away.

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