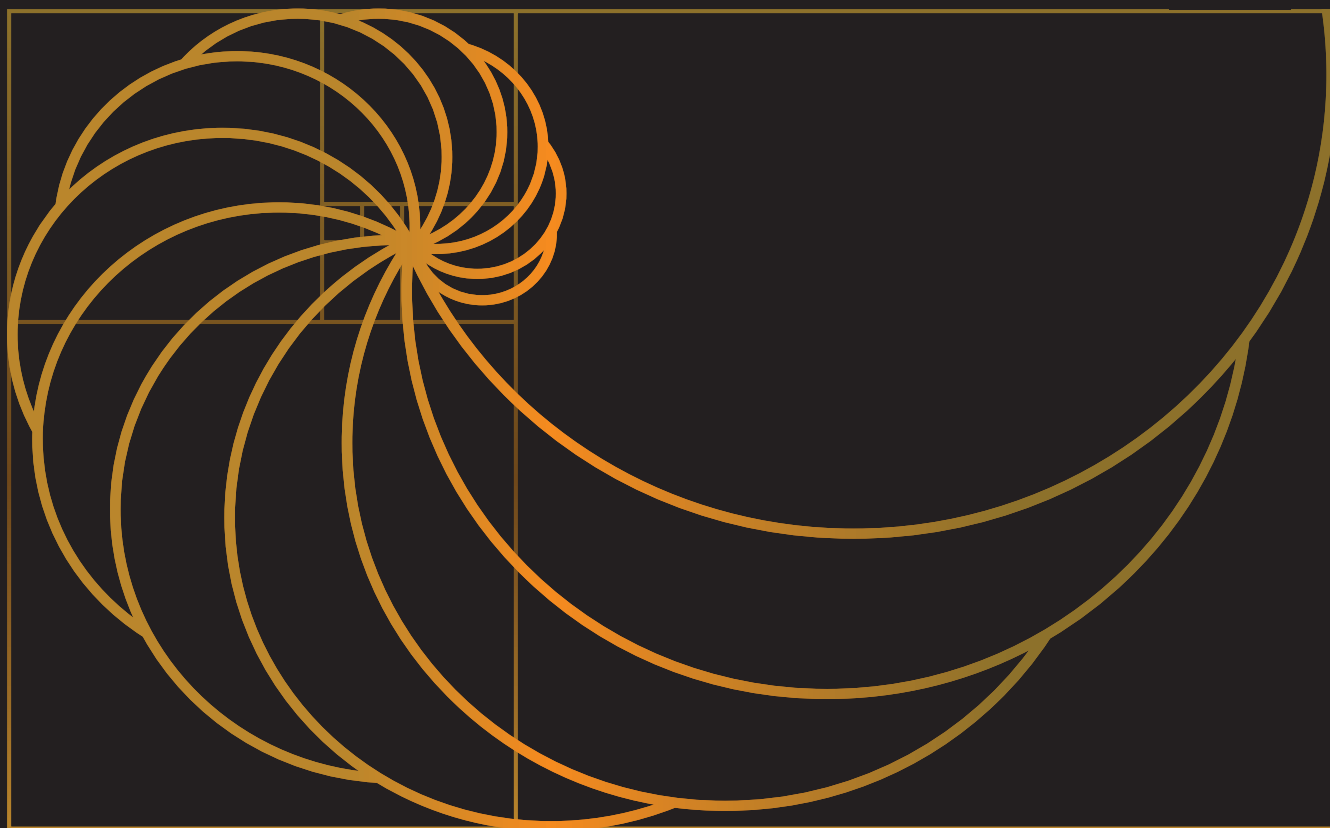


NEW ENIGMA



FOREWORD



In 2021, the *New Enigma* team thrived across both face-to-face and remote learning conditions. During remote learning, the team realised that most people organise lockdown around their reading, watching, and listening habits. We therefore decided to invite students to contribute capsule reviews of the films, novels, music, games, and other texts that had contoured their experience of lockdown. This would help students to share their personal experiences of the pandemic with narratives of resilience. At a more practical level, it would provide other students (and their families) with recommendations to pass the time.

This all resulted in a mini-publication, nested within *Censored*, in which a variety of students and staff outlined the texts that had textured their lockdown. While we released this smaller publication to provide real-time recommendations for lockdown, you'll see many of these pieces in the final publication as well, as a historical document of this extraordinary year. Alongside these lockdown pieces, there is the usual variety of writing from across the College – pieces that reflect the diversity of written expression in our many courses and programs.

New Enigma also shifted further in the direction of a co-curricular writing group in 2021. In the past, students have mainly worked on editing skills, while most pieces have been sourced from exemplary classroom work, or voluntary submission. This year we decided to include more of a space for students to workshop their writing with the *New Enigma* team. We felt it was important that

students have a space where they can pursue their own individual writing projects, above and beyond the requirements of any specific assessment or set of criteria.

Many of the pieces here are the result of workshopping sessions with the *New Enigma* team. Many of them are also parts of much larger projects – one student is writing a novel, another a collection of screenplays, and a third is focusing on building a portfolio of music writing. Part of the ambit of *New Enigma*, in this light, is to help students with writing that might serve a vocational purpose. If students are interested in pursuing a career in journalism, academia, criticism or other writing-based areas, *New Enigma* can help them build their personal voice.

As always, we have included a variety of art works from the 2021 cohort. These also reflect the breadth and diversity of artistic expression at the College. One of *New Enigma*'s goals, moving forward, is to encourage students to pursue multimodal projects that bridge written and visual artistry, and some of the students in this year's edition have started to move towards that fusion. A key goal of *New Enigma*, like that of the College itself, is diversity – and we are very proud of the range and scope of artistic and written expression at the College.

– Billy Stevenson

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Artwork

Fergus FitzSimons | Year 7



Algeria from Above: a comfy documentary

Abraham Ali | Year 11



I've always been a fiend for history and nature documentaries, however not exclusively. I stumbled upon *Algeria from Above* on a lonely mid-afternoon Sunday having a nice salmon sandwich. The sun was setting and creating a light purple hue that trickled through my lounge room windows. It was comfy. Directed by Frenchman Yann Arthus-Bertrand, this is the perfect documentary to satisfy any history and/or nature lover alike. Bertrand takes you on an aerial journey across the two-million-kilometre square desert and oases of Algeria.

I found myself marvelling at the beauty and the vastness of the desert and at the fascinating history of nomadic Arab tribes, to the stronghold it was for the French in the Middle East. Despite the ample serene views that are shown and fascinating stories that are talked about, Bertrand doesn't shy away from showing Algeria's shortfalls. As you watch in awe you'll be reminded of the once oppressive rule of the French or how the Muslim Brotherhood of the nineties terrorised the local people. However, this commentary is very subtle and doesn't detract from the overall experience.

The long pans of the desert, palm trees with dates and ancient ruins of former empires invigorated a pure sense of adventure. The idea of exploration has always appealed to me and seeing this documentary has certainly made me more passionate about seeing the world. As much as great explorers have caused suffering among the locals they meet, it was interesting to share the same interests as them.

I too want to see the ancient ruins of the Romans and Phoenicians, and now I understand the drive of the early explorers of the past 100 or so years. Overall, this is very easy to watch, and, from experience, I can certainly say it is easy to fall asleep to. Or more simply, this a comfy and nice documentary.

Breaking Bad and Better Call Saul

James van der Poorten | Year 10



These two shows were both created by Vince Gilligan and unfold in the same universe, yet each show has a very different style and pace. *Breaking Bad* came first and is much more popular and well known. Many also regard it as a better show but I think it is impossible to compare the two because of their massive differences. While *Better Call Saul* is a prequel to *Breaking Bad*, I think it is important to watch *Breaking Bad* first as one of the many great things about *Better Call Saul* is how it continues the stories of the original characters and fills in the gaps about things we may have wondered about, such as how Mike and Gus began working together and what Hector was like before his stroke.

Breaking Bad is full of incredible moments that really stick with the audience. I can think of so many classic scenes in the show that made me feel shocked and were really memorable. The series tops each of its last great moments with another and this makes it very addictive to watch. In fact, I found it hard to stop as I was so drawn into the story and the terrible actions of Walter or Heisenberg. I think nearly anyone would love *Breaking Bad* since it's easy to understand

and learn about the world the characters live in. It definitely gets better as it goes along and the final seasons are especially cathartic.

Better Call Saul is very different from *Breaking Bad* as it is a slower show with less overt spectacle. Still, it does have very good writing and storytelling. The story of how Saul Goodman came to be was nothing like I expected but I found myself really intrigued by the likable and charismatic character of Jimmy McGill. *Better Call Saul* does a great job of building up to its big moments. For example, in the Bar hearing with Chuck and Jimmy, the previous strains in their relationship come to light and it is great to see how each of their past interactions built up to this moment.

Both shows are about change in their protagonists – Walter White into Heisenberg and Jimmy McGill into Saul Goodman. I think the idea of change is the main similarity between the shows but aside from that I really don't think they are alike at all. This is why I think it is so difficult to compare the two and that people should watch both to get the very different experiences that each show provides.

Why J.J. Abrams' *Star Wars* sucks

Max Bock | Year 12



To date, JJ Abrams is thankfully responsible for only two *Star Wars* films: *Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens* (2015) and *Star Wars Episode IX: The Rise of Skywalker* (2019).

In terms of critical, financial and audience response, *The Force Awakens* proved to be a mega-hit. Many saw it as a return to form for the series after the prequel trilogy veered too heavily into politics, dodgy CG, and grating dialogue. The film made \$2.06 billion at the box office, placing it comfortably below *Avatar* (2009) and *Titanic* (1997).

On Metacritic, critics gave it 80% and on Rotten Tomatoes it received an 86% audience score (A Rotten Tomatoes audience score can be unreliable, but that's usually to do with review bombing on more controversial films like *Star Wars Episode VIII: The Last Jedi* – more on that film later). All in all, *The Force Awakens* was a success. Most people liked it and it made a lot of money. The only problem is that it sucked.

By itself, *The Force Awakens* is fine. It's not as if it's a poorly made movie – the direction is kinetic (something previously absent from *Star Wars* films), the cast is good, and the story, by itself, is solid. I say that it's solid by itself because it is. The film follows a standard story structure, adheres to the hero's journey, and doesn't have any huge leaps in logic.

The problem is that the film 'borrows' (ie., steals) the plot and premise from *Star Wars: A New Hope* (1977). The similarities between the two are too many to list, but the core ones are as follows: a droid carrying crucial information that finds itself on a desert planet after its master is captured by the primary antagonist only to coincidentally run into a force-sensitive desert dweller who dreams of more; a massive spherical weapon used to destroy planets; a surrogate father figure who is cut down by someone previously close to him and has now

turned to the dark side as the hero watches helplessly, and finally a coordinated attack on the planet using X-wings flying through a trench which is monitored from a control room by Leia.

If those similarities are not enough, the film even steals from *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), with the protagonist seeking out an old, legendary Jedi master to train under. It's not so much that *The Force Awakens* (2015) film copied the story structure of *A New Hope*, but that it copied the actual story of *A New Hope* that makes it such a mediocre film. To quote JJ Abrams himself, taking inspiration from *A New Hope*: 'Let's go back to a *Star Wars* that we know, so we can tell another story.'

Essentially, my main problem with *The Force Awakens* is that it is unambitious and too much of the same. While the film does, in moments, recapture some of that *Star Wars* magic (ie., the arrival of the Resistance on Takodana – the film's literal cliff hanger), it would have been preferable for the sequel trilogy to have a different identity to what came before. The prequel trilogy had a very different identity to the original trilogy and while those films weren't received fantastically, at least they were their own films.

Even George Lucas, the creator of *Star Wars*, was disappointed, saying that 'there's nothing new'. If Disney, Lucasfilm, and JJ Abrams were more ambitious, they could have crafted an entirely different *Star Wars* trilogy with new ideas, its own identity and something that tried to fit thematically with what George Lucas was aiming for with his overarching three trilogy plan. Before Lucas sold Lucasfilm and they threw out all his story treatments, the trilogy was intended to explore the force itself in more depth, diving into a 'microbiotic world'. Simultaneous to this, the trilogy was going to explore the power vacuum left by the fall of the Empire and the lack of a Republic.



Artwork

Oscar Newman | Year 7

Unshaken

Daniel Maxwell | Year 11



As the rain began to fall so did the air, landing thickly on my skin, as if the air itself grew heavier. The pitter-patter of raindrops rustling the rugged canopy above me soon amplified, until a constant stream of water fell from the closed-off clouds covering the sky. As my vision and thoughts returned to the moistened earth around me, I spied men and women alike gathering in a compact space to receive the gift from the heavens above, newly created water traps capturing the precious liquid until it brimmed the unset clay, and soon after overflowed. Smiles started to be shared among the people around me. As the rain grew heavier, however, a certain unease floated down with it, covering the village like a blanket.

The beauty that had filled the surrounding forest now uncovered its true, manipulative, two-faced, rageful self. The wind lifted from a song filled with different textures and tonality to a high-pitched, monotonic screech, sending a shiver through anything that listened to it. From a distance, I heard a forced, bone-trilling yell.

‘Storm!’

The rain that had floated down moments ago was now being shot like arrows, ready to strike anything in its path. The bow of the heavens spread its hatred throughout the whole forest, not leaving anything untouched. All around me, I saw panic. Smaller animals were darting into crevices in the trees, fighting for shelter in the barricade of bark

and wood; larger animals burrowing under tree roots, attempting to hide themselves from the wrath of the heavens. I turned a full revolution, intaking full terror as prey and predators alike struggled to find cover. A whistle from the tribe leader snatched me out of my unconscious state and back to reality. One second after, I watched in awe as hundreds of animals and humans scrambled about the forest floor. There was nothing. The forest was a void.

‘Hey, get back to shelter, now!’

I obediently padded back to my hut. As I entered the safe haven, thunder started to beat like the drum of my heart. I saw lightning shatter the sky into a million pieces, a startling electric, saffron yellow flooding my eyes. I sat with six people huddled around a feeble dying fire coughing its last heat into the overwhelming icy air, swallowing the hut. As the rain, wind, lightning and thunder started fighting in the grey, dull battleground above us, the forest started to blunder under the pure power above it. Fear sunk into everyone’s body, drowning the pure joy of rain nourishing the wood. The loving, forgiving guardian that was the forest had turned. It gave in to the hatred and foulness thrown at it and turned on those it swore to serve and protect. An almighty crack stabbed everyone, like a knife to the ear. My attention was brought back to the woodland floor. Unfailing canopies began to collapse. Branches were thrown around like leaves in a tornado. Trees were de-rooted and crushed their tenants. Tragedy.

However, curiosity found its way into my mind. There was a constant thumping in my heart, as if a million wild pigs were charging towards us. I felt the thumping through my feet now. It grew closer. Heads turned frantically, people on edge as the unsettling noise grew louder. It came at us. The sound could not be pinpointed from any direction. As time pressed on, the thud became deafening, confusion and curiosity filling the consciousness of the tribe. The rain started to back off once again.

The lightning and thunder followed suit soon after. However, the wind only grew. The trees started parting in abnormal ways. The blaring noise was deafening. My ears throbbed as a high-pitched drone rang piercingly. A beam of light blasted down at us through the clearing in the canopy. I put my arms in front of my face to shield me from the scorching rays. Through the glare, I made out a huge, unnatural bird, with wings flailing in a frantic, yet ordered, fashion as straight as an arrow above its head. The bird had aposematic colours on each side of its body that flashed red and green, on and off, in synchronisation. The thudding became a more threatening, droning noise, with its wings punching the air like a beating stick, scaring every other bird around it. It approached the village slowly, in an unnerving fashion. Not diagonally like other birds, but straight down. Its head and body did not move. It did not fall, but gracefully clambered out of the sky, making its way towards the floor in front of me.

The wind attacked everything nearby as it finally grounded itself. The wind it blew was so forceful I had to take a stance position just to stay upright. The wings slowed their flailing until it became clear that they were not wings; the beam of light on its front dimmed until it was apparent it didn't have legs. As the shimmering planks of an excuse for wings ground to a halt, the side of its body opened up. Now it was clear that this was no bird.

From its body emerged a man, unlike any other man I or anyone else had ever seen before. He had pale skin, with eyes the colour of the sky. His hair matched his skin colour, flowing thinly like leaves on a tree. He was slender and tall, but he appeared weak. He wore fabrics containing intricate layers and colours, his hands swallowed by the taut substance on his legs.

As he approached us, our leader took an offensive position in front of the tribe. The women and young children retreated behind the men, as they rushed forward to back up our leader. I was surrounded by muscular men with strength that seemed to out-contest anything the foreigner had to throw at us. Leader screamed at the top of his lungs and we replied with tremendous aggression and force. He fell back a few paces, startled, his hands flat in front of his body, taking a defensive position. Leader screamed again, his warriors replying with added adrenaline now. This time, however, the man was unshaken.

Poetry

My father's eucalyptus

Lachlan Griffiths | Year 11



Underneath my father's tree,
in whose shade I once may sit.
By a pair of tender hands,
nurtured, growing eucalypt.

And ere I think the
mellowed time it
took to move, with
graceful rhyme to
where it stands, in scent and hue,
a time now passed, but seen anew
beneath a sky of pale blue.

With dearest glow it softened
dim the light which breaks on
yonder chin.

So think I, once more of a tree he put
below our ground, beneath my foot.
On whose ground I step with care –
my father's foot stepped too once there.



Artwork

Jasen Begetis | Year 8

60 hours of the Maikop Brigade – a harrowing new year

Abraham Ali | Year 11



We have trivialised and desensitised ourselves to war, while often passively accepting the psychological undertones in many films. However what sets *60 Hours of the Maikop Brigade* apart from any documentary or movie is just how candidly the experience of war is shown. The two-part documentary by M Polunin and O Zaytsev for the Russian television company NN presents a slice of the devastation that occurred during the Chechen wars. It sets itself on the fateful three days the Russian Maikop brigade was effectively obliterated despite having logistical advantages. As much as it might be convenient to try take sides or rationalise what happened, you eventually see it is all terrible. In films, for me, it stands that sometimes the simple and straightforward presentation of facts is better than trying to reframe it as something it's not.

To help contextualise the documentary: at 5am on New Year's Eve 1994 the Russian army decided to take Grozny, which is a known stronghold for anti-Russian Chechen rebels. The push began with an initial bombardment of strategic positions such as the oil refinery and train station. Later the infantry and armour of the 131st Maikop Brigade rolled into the main heart of the city, allowing for the rebels to easily ambush them. This is what the documentary focuses on, and the subsequent 60 hours known as the New Year's assault on Grozny. It lasted from 31 December to 2 January until the Russian forces reorganised themselves to properly take the city.

Spoiler alert, if you wish to watch the documentary stop here as I don't want to spoil the gripping details for you.

The film is made up of three components: radio chatter, interviews, and assorted footage from both the Russians and Chechens. However, it is the radio chatter that for me was the most powerful and was the driving force of the film. When you hear the radio, you don't see the men, only soldiers or Chechens; you can't pinpoint it to any man. Instead, with the footage, interviews and radio chatter imagine the world of the innumerable radio operators and you must place yourself in their shoes. This in a sense made the radio the narrator, directing me to what was important or what I needed to hear, especially the grizzly details of war. The radio came to the foreground while the footage was the background noise.

From the outset you are introduced to the commanders of both armies – Turpal-Ali Atgeriyev the Chechen and the Russian Ivan 'Alik' Savin. However, what makes this introduction so jarring is that the men were former school friends who simply drifted apart. Not even a sentimental bond such as this could avert the storming of Grozny.

Atgeriyev pleads to Alik: 'Retreat your men before it's too late, do not do this, do not do this', for he knows the hell that awaits them both. It is eerie to think that Atgeriyev knew this but also how terribly any Russian would suffer if they were to step foot into Grozny. Atgeriyev continues to try use reason to dissuade Alik from such a fatal decision. He continues pleading 'Who will win this?... we will both die and if I see you on the battlefield I will show you no mercy, just like you won't. Think of the [men's] mothers'. Atgeriyev throughout the entirety of this radio conversation is extremely articulate and respectful. What I found interesting was that you could hear a reluctant tone in Atgeriyev that added a sombre undertone to whole of the film. Like a boxer he wishes his opponent 'best of luck from the very bottom of [his] heart' and Alik, like any loyal soldier, follows his orders to advance onto Grozny.

In the scratchiness of the Soviet era radios the tone of the men is crystal clear. You can hear the acceptance of defeat in 'don't worry about reinforcements, we're [stuffed]' and 'blocked from all sides'. At the possibility of respite or alleviation from an encirclement, the men don't bother to try drawing others into their hole. It doesn't help him to radio in the '30 injured' because the gravity of such losses dawns on him when immediately after he says '*blyat*, 30 injured already'. This indicates that it wasn't that they lost men that troubled them but the speed and ease with which it all occurred.

Another aspect of what makes this documentary so engaging is the fluid transition between the individual experiences of those in various corps, platoons and groups. You learn about the experience of one soldier in all the ghastly details tells you. Then you listen to the radio communications between the Russians asking 'where is help?' and talking about the '54 injured men' stuck. This forces you to transpose the experiences of one soldier onto many, providing an incredible number of horrors to think about.

The single most gripping detail is when the Russians were evacuating from the train station with Chechen men silently watching over them. They had been given orders to not shoot the men leaving and to

instead just watch. This level of control on the Chechen side – to be able to choose at will the fates of so many is unsettling, and in great contrast to their prior slaughtering of Russians. It was particularly touching to find out that in the 15 minutes before and after New Year's, there was a cease fire, almost as if there was a dignified way to fight and a mutual understanding that both belligerents would like some reprieve before and after the New Year. Alongside this and throughout film, the use of relaxing Christmas music constantly brings you back to the reality that this battle went on right in the heart of the festive season. You once again remember they should be with their families having fun, not fighting tooth and nail for a hopeless cause. By the end of the battle, of the 700 men and 100 vehicles that moved into the city, only 200 men and three vehicles came out. Even then they barely survived.

Like any great film, *60 Hours of the Maikop Brigade* truly left me speechless considering that the reality is the men who experienced these horrors are still alive. I felt simultaneously demoralised and angry that in the end it was all "a gift to the [Russian] defence minister" Pavel Grachev. At the youthful average age of 20 (now 46), the rest of their lives will have been marred by this shadow of hell. If you let your curiosity wonder about these men and the 60-hour baptism of fire you will not forget this film. There is much written that will help conceptualise further the fateful battle of Grozny and the greater picture that was the Chechen wars. I must add that it is all very disheartening to delve into such realities, so don't forget to pat a Labrador or two afterwards.

If you do watch this incredible documentary, I will provide some disclaimers. The first is that it has been translated into English and the original is in Russian, however this didn't detract from the experience for me. Second, it also has graphic details and footage that I recommend for a mature audience. This is not a documentary you sit down and relax with, but more one that makes you think and internalise the details, stories, and experiences of the men.

Review of *The Thing*

Aidan Giordan | Year 11



John Carpenter assures his audience only one thing in this film: nothing is certain. He manages to grasp the audience's attention in *The Thing*, and never lets go of it. Mystery enshrouds the characters early on and keeps the viewer guessing constantly. This mystery remains a common theme throughout the entirety of the film and even forces the viewer to question their own assumptions by the end. The nature of *The Thing* is itself terrifying and unknown. The practical effects add to the horror, as grotesque mutations of what is familiar begin to attack. From the disfigured dog to numerous humans, *The Thing* takes over and assimilates to maintain appearances, only revealing its true nature when provoked. John Carpenter brilliantly manipulates the audience by leaving them guessing and actively involving them in the detective work of the film.

The Thing is a classic example of an extremely successful and well-used horror device: fear of the unknown. A vast majority of the magic of *The Thing* lies within its unknown element. As a 'monster', nothing is known about it, and it remains indescribable throughout the movie. The truly scariest and most tense moments lie in the absence of *The Thing*. The waiting, and the suspense that builds, plays out purely in *The Thing*'s absence. When it is absent, the film's characters become unsure of themselves and each other. Ironically, when *The Thing* is absent it is everywhere. When it is not there it is all around each character, surrounding them and filling the audience with unease. That is the true magic of *The Thing*. Its mere lack of presence makes the 'monster' more prevalent in the minds of the characters and audience and remains an effective tool for fright and suspense.

One of the highlights of the film is its amazing practical effects, created by Rob Bottin. The creatures he creates outline the true horror of *The Thing*. Grotesque forms that go against every law of

nature are portrayed masterfully on the screen as what little is seen of *The Thing* is burnt into your memory. It is this violation of all that is natural that serves to chill the viewer to their core when they see it. It is a monstrosity brought to life by practical effects. This physicality also helps to add substance to the threat of the titular being. As so much of the film is spent with its absence, its time on screen is precious and crucial in creating a powerful impression. It is through this physical presence that the gravity of *The Thing* is felt by the audience, and its threat made clearer.

Perhaps the true genius of *The Thing* rests within the drawn-out scenes without any sighting of the creature. Carpenter heightens tension in all these scenes masterfully. As mentioned, he uses the distinct lack of an evil being to accentuate the danger of this creature. However, he goes to further by making the entire film feel restricted. This is done through the setting in a small research station Antarctica. In every shot the walls are closing in on the characters, as escape slowly slips away and the situation becomes ever bleaker. It is this subliminal claustrophobia that slowly envelopes the viewers over the running of the film as the pressure mounted on every character becomes tangible with each passing minute. Even when leaving the research shelter, the crushing feeling remains pervasive, through snowstorms and nights unpierced by harsh beams of light. With this masterful manipulation of setting and dimensions, Carpenter is able to cast seeds of doubt and enhance any anxiety felt by the audience. Every shadow lengthens within the facility and every word spoken obfuscates the truth from the viewer.

In making this movie, Carpenter created one of the greatest horror films in history, manipulating the viewer the way a master craftsman shapes his clay.

Review – *Escape Room* (2019)

James Liao | Year 10



Escape Room (2019) is about six people, who are all lone survivors from some horrific event, receiving the same peculiar cube puzzle that, when completed, shows a piece of paper leading them to an escape room. Once they all get there, they realise that the room presents dire circumstances and that their life is on the line. On top of that, they realise that there is more than one room, each with its own specific theme and perilous challenges. Who will survive? How have they actually become a lone survivor? And how do the people behind this know so much about the people playing?

My favourite part of the movie was the concept that many things in our lives that we find fun can also be very dangerous. While escape rooms can be innocent, by their very nature they can also be constrictive and dangerous. I thought this idea was quite nuanced in the way that it was shot for the movie because it revealed our innate animalistic intentions. If people had to fight for their lives, they could lose their dignity and expose their true character. In this way, I thought the conceptual framework of the movie was quite interesting.

On the other hand, without spoiling too much of the plot, the ending felt very rushed. They went through a lot of the storyline in less time than was needed. The movie builds a sinister tension between the faceless creator of the escape rooms and the people who had to suffer through them just for nothing to really happen between the two forces. It was unfortunate that the movie ended that way, but it left the narrative extremely open-ended, which I do believe will lead to the thrilling sequel to be released this year.

The standard bearer

Lachlan Griffiths | Year 11



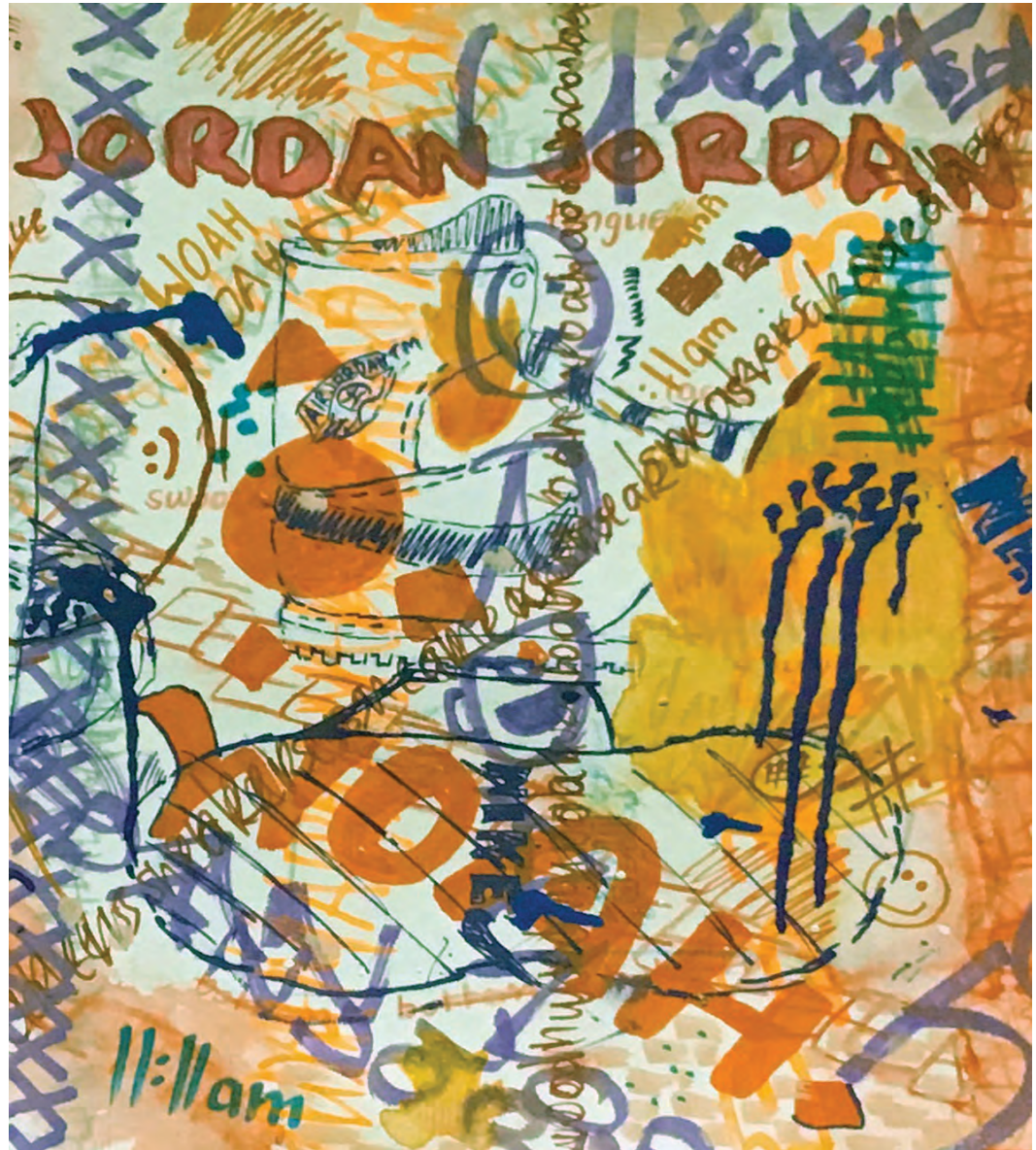
Enigmatic. Didactic. Convoluted. Opaque.

Patrick White – that statesman grand of Australian letters
looks still, upon us all. He influenced, and was influenced.
His work hangs tall, as a standard bearer.

He bore the standard to which we aspire –
a writer of note, of fame, of powerful thrall.
To be as he is to be as a writer for all time.
But to be clouded by his heady spell is to be corrupted as well.
White offers much, and takes just the same.

Where now, does fly that standard, which he once flew so high?
Does it stand forgotten, at literature's half-staff?
Or does it stand where it should – waiting with Byron and Keats in the
Pantheon or the dales of Arcady?
I for one, hope it flies still,
but that it flies not in the East, but in the hot,
humid West, flying for a writer as yet undiscovered –
with eyes and pen poised unto new horizons of thought.

That standard flies, and will fly. We take but we give also.
We must be new and daring,
bold, hopeful and caring.
For White wouldn't forgive us
if we let the moment pass,
and have the standard of Australian letters go tatty.



Artwork

Adam Younes | Year 7

Redgum – The real true Aussie band

Abraham Ali | Year 11



'I Was Only 19' is an iconic Australian song. However little attention is given to John Schumann's other songs, which I would argue are more Australian.

Redgum was formed at Flinders University in Adelaide. Its founding members John Schumann, Michael Atkinson and Verity Truman started out playing political songs. This foundational aspect of political activism through their music is integral to the identity of the band and is often a good listen even if you usually ignore lyrics. However, if you did, you would be doing the music a disservice. The songs are a social commentary but are not as confrontational as you might initially think. Redgum, from their debut album *If You Don't Fight You Lose*, developed a unique folk-rock sound alongside Schumann's distinct Australian accent.

Much, if not all, of Schumann's music is grounded in real stories or personal experiences that capture Australia. Redgum and Schumann are storytellers first, musicians second. The magic of their music comes from being genuinely invested in human stories and events that shape the world around them. Redgum doesn't pick topics or ideas because they are trendy or flavour of the month, instead it's because they care.

'Ted' tells the condensed story of a World War I veteran by the name of Ted, including the civilian life he lived in the country. Schumann covers the typical tropes of war by singing about the 'mud up to his crotch in Flanders fields and gas eating at his lungs', but in Redgum spirit they go beyond the clichés and provide a human element to the song. Ted, whilst being a war hero, would 'drink the pain away' despite 'making a fortune on overtime'. Schumann moves between Ted's World War I experience and his civilian life so seamlessly it doesn't feel clichéd. This flow between ideas and experiences allows for you to understand the story while accepting the weight of the song.

Schumann's music goes beyond the lyrics as seen in the cover art of *If You Don't Fight You Lose*. It poignantly shows an outback farmer swinging an axe down onto Pine Gap. The art itself is beautiful, but the contrast of a stereotypical outback Aussie chopping Pine Gap

is better. For many Australians the issue of Pine Gap is frustrating, a display of weakness and a stain on Australian sovereignty. For those unaware, Pine Gap is the highly classified satellite and military observation base predominately run by the US. The point of contention is that Australia has little to no control of the base despite being on our soil in Alice Springs. The base is still active to this day, however many still do not know of its existence.

Personally, one of my favourite songs is *Long Run* another song about the war in Vietnam. However, it is more than a war song. Part of Australian vernacular and I dare say identity is the 'she'll be right' attitude – the wishful thinking that we all would've expressed at one point or at our low points in life to keep us going. It also helps to listen to the song with the added advantage of knowing that it truly wasn't going to be 'all right in the long run'. Knowing that this wishful thinking would lead nowhere strengthens the lyrics. 'I Was Only 19' certainly carved out a place in Australian culture, but 'Long Run' I think is a more effective war song, in part for the use of Australian slang, but also because it works better to listen to, ignoring the lyrics. 'Long Run' isn't confrontational and sounds more like a stoic voice failing to accept the realities of Vietnam. It is now well known now that veterans of Vietnam have had to deal with PTSD with a brave face and were denied mental health assistance.

Despite the break-up of Redgum in 1990, John Schumann has continued his music and storytelling, particularly after the devastation of the Black Summer bushfires. He saw the devastation and the profound lack of an adequate response to the disaster, so he ran a songwriting workshop for the locals of Ewingar. In an interview with the ABC, Schumann said he wanted people to listen and 'receive his new song 'Long Gully Road' the same way they did when they heard 'I was Only 19''. 'Long Gully Road' retains the iconic Schumann/Redgum style and isn't as refined as his studio albums or songs. However, it still displays Schumann's incredible singer-songwriter talent, particularly his ability to make unrhyming words flow elegantly. For example, 'You can hear the country crying; you can hear the gumtrees crash' sounds better sung by Schumann than it does on paper.

How lockdown has transformed how I see *Community*

Daniel Carter | Year 8



Over the lockdown, I binged the American sitcom *Community*. It is a great show that I strongly recommend to pass your lockdown. However, recently, the way that I've seen it has changed. I started watching *Community* before the lockdown, just on Friday and Saturday nights, not really binging, just watching. But then the holidays came. The first week I was out with friends enjoying the freedom of no school, however, as the second week came to pass and the lockdown began, the way I was viewing it changed. I could no longer go out with friends, and so instead, I turned to the TV. To *Community*. My *Community*.

Suddenly, *Community* was my every waking moment. It was the best part of my day. I wondered what was happening in the darkest timeline, where I was forced to watch *Community* every day, but I quickly pushed those sad thoughts away. I didn't need them. I just needed *Community*. And suddenly, when I walked down into the kitchen each morning, I'd say to my brother in a sing-song voice, 'Dan and Aiden in the morning!' Lockdown became *Community*. *Community* became lockdown, which I found to be ironically uncanny – *Community* was about bringing people together, while I, I was isolating myself. I could not imagine one without the other. I can't see *Community* without thinking about lockdown. It's amazing how my entire experience changed, just because of the circumstance I was in.

Deconstruction, time, space and solitude: Joyce's *Ulysses* in lockdown

Aiden Carter | Year 11



As reality has deconstructed itself in the months of the COVID-19 pandemic, life has become fractured, timeless and devoid of spatial endeavour. It was, I decided, the perfect moment to read *Ulysses*: I had the time, the patience, and a wont for some sort of literary or intellectual exoticism. Read as a canonical tome, its post-modern metafictional lens permeates academic literature, popular culture and certainly poses more questions of interpretation than it ultimately answers. Nonetheless, decoding it now – in a near post-COVID context – lends itself to a much more personal and intimate reading of the text.

The novel in question follows Leopold Bloom on a single day – 16 June 1904 – around the city of Dublin. At a hefty 730 pages, the book certainly confronts the detail and the mundane of what this day looks like. It openly describes the events, peoples and environments that Bloom wanders across in his flâneur-like adventuring, sparing no instance of vulgarity or mundanity in the process.

As a radical modernist text, *Ulysses* embodies the characteristics of the modern novel. At its core, the text is an exploration of the consciousness and monotony of 'normal' life and, as such, it delves into subjects that may usually be described as 'taboo' in modern art. Nonetheless, it is this tedium and subject-centred anathema that is so reflective of humanity's present circumstance. In lockdown, the

restrictions and freedom that the text gives in both a temporal and spatial sense is our inverse. While Bloom is in a state of absolute spatial freedom, sauntering through Dublin in a professionalist fashion, it is time that restricts him, arresting his story to one single day. For us observers, it is our time that is free, with our restriction instead lying in the spatial realm.

The time of *Ulysses* is one of Bergsonian duration: the experience of time as a continuous and immeasurable flow rather than a mechanised, measured construct. It is in the impalpability of time that Joyce dances, arranging temporal and spatial constructs that dazzle and delight. This rendering of time displays a certain modernist incredulity towards the linear or sequential arrangement of events into traditional plots or narratives. This manifestation of time similarly mirrors our current experience, and in a post-literary sense, the experience of reading the text is inseparable from the environment in which the reading takes place. Interestingly, this thematic exploration was never meant to take place within our collective experience, nor was it ever intended to be reflective of the pandemic in question, yet textually it represents our circumstance holistically.

Ulysses is an example of transgressive metafiction, by which the novel is self-conscious; it disrupts and severs figurative language and fractures the materiality of the fictional world. Joyce is well known

for his literary tergiversation and use of 'proliferating signifiers' and it is through this pedagogy that meaning takes shape. The text is continually polysemantic, but layers of co-signification do exist, and through this, profound transference of meaning takes place: on both a transparent and textually opaque plane.

Joyce uses the aural node heavily, and possibly because of our extended time within the comfort and safety of our own abode, the new sounds that Joyce describes create sonorous meaning. In essence, he uses language to create meaning that doesn't exist outside of our pre-existing language structure. In accordance with the possible worlds theory, words and utterances have the power to generate whole worlds; though through this theory, the deconstruction itself arrives through its own means.

In a chapter known only as 'Sirens', onomatopoeia concurrently emphasises and impresses a sense of rhythmic musicality. The 'tap, tap, taps' of the walking stick of a piano player are meant to suppress an innate fantastical response and produce a sense of grounding in a fictional adherence to 'reality' – as, semantically, the connection

between the signifier and the signified is strong – however, it instead adds to the text's deconstruction. While this 'tap' may indeed suggest the pace or gait of the player, the emphasis is on the way that that this style of walking imposes structure and meaning to the narrative. Even when the pianist is not playing, he leaves a trace: a marking of both physical and spiritual presence of the omnipotent nature of music itself through an absence of an actual musical act. It is by this mechanism that the deconstruction of *Ulysses* is ouroboros in form: it arrives by means created purely of its own accord.

It is no surprise that *Ulysses* is loved by some and hated by others. It is difficult – and I confess, sometimes tiring – to read. Nonetheless, exploring this over the lockdown period provided a strange consolation to me. Joyce's descriptions of Dublin are vivid and real, and the way he plays with both space and time provide a slight remedy to the staticity of our present condition. He deconstructs language and spatial understanding, presenting a view of the world that is chaotic, striking and full of life.

Review of *BoJack Horseman* (second viewing)

Boyd Cornish | Year 11

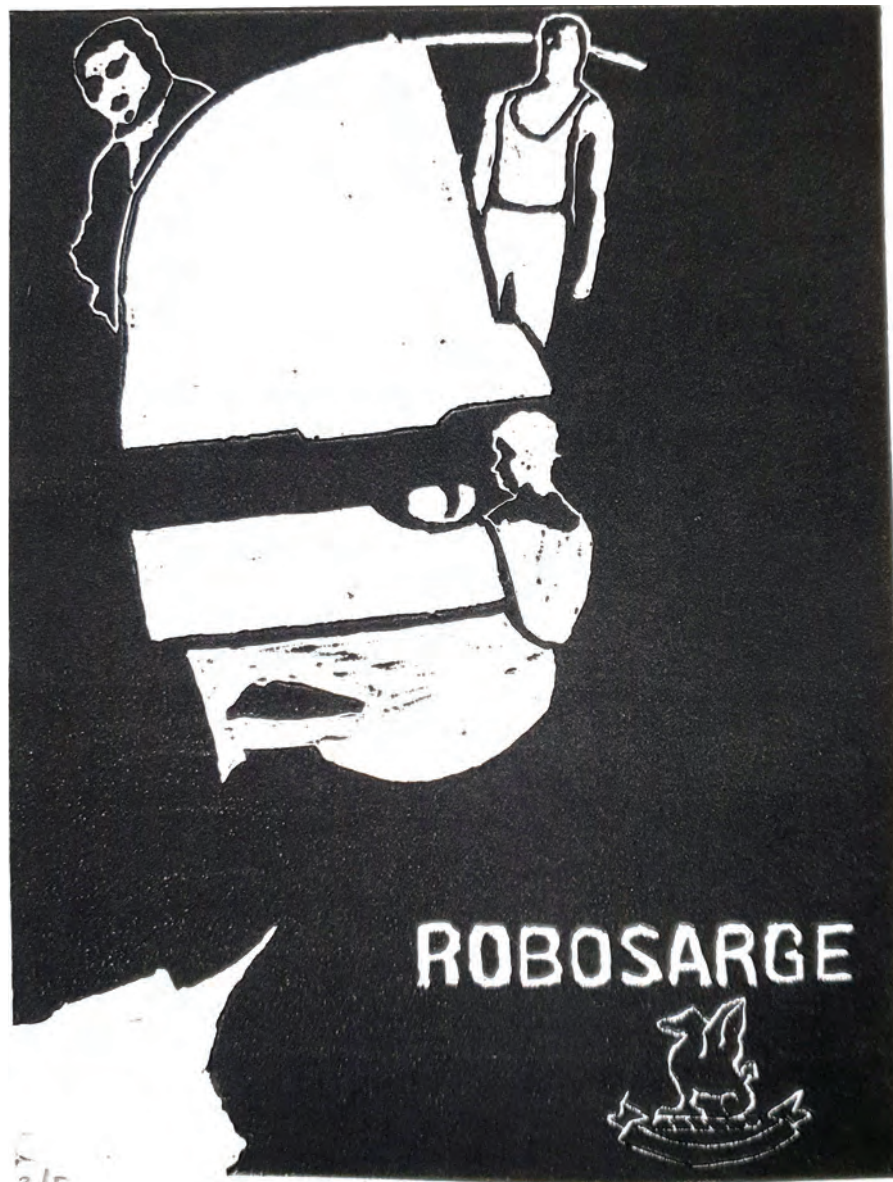


My second viewing of *BoJack Horseman* has solidified it as my favourite show of all time. The title previously held by Dan Harmon's *Community* (which I've watched three times now) has been taken by the animated, satirical, comedy-drama.

BoJack Horseman follows a washed-up, ex-sitcom actor struggling to attempt to live a happy life in Hollywood (changed to Hollywood part-way through the show). This show goes in-depth with struggles in mental health, addiction and the difficulty of simply living life felt by many, among other topics. On my first watch it had me taking week-long breaks between approximately every five episodes due to the heavy emotional burden I felt when watching BoJack's journey. It wasn't until I had read and viewed multiple reviews and deep dives on the show and gave it a second watch that I truly began to appreciate its incredibly strong writing, worldbuilding and characters.

Not only does this show impress with its almost flawless character development of its main cast; its worldbuilding is what I personally find most fascinating. The use of anthropomorphic animals as figures in this universe really aids in building strong characters through a clear representation of their front-facing personality traits. This is seen in Mr Peanutbutter as he is often shown as a shallow character that is unbearably happy – like the dog he appears as. Furthermore, imagining a world where one can take a quick trip to the bottom of the ocean where a city stands is something I personally find amazing.

In conclusion, *BoJack Horseman*, whilst not perfect, is one of the best shows I've viewed in a while and really had me thinking about my own life and how to live my best life before I pass. Whilst making me think deeper than I have ever before, this show never failed to keep me amused with the comic relief – including through the character Todd, whose many wacky adventures are amusing.



Artwork

Henry Corona | Year 8

Dual nationality

James McGregor | Year 11



A memory that still holds me to this day was one when I was seven. It was 5 June 2012 and Australia were lined up against Scotland at the Hunter Stadium, Newcastle. I looked up from the soft cushion where I sat in my Sydney living room locking my eyes to the TV trying to spot my parents in the crowd. However, the swarming clothes of blue, white, green and gold made it impossible for me to see them. My eyes were glued to the TV, staring at it as if I expected it to stare back. I remember looking outside, hearing the continuous choppy gunshot-like sounds of thunder draining my eardrums to a point where the rain faded into a distant sound.

Constant but sharp sparks being sent from the sky gave extra glimpses of light to the room. In the left corner under the TV sat a portable heater that was the only source of heating, which didn't matter too much considering the size of the room. However, I still found myself on the couch, which could barely fit my grandma and I, wrapped up in a blanket, food in one hand and a remote in the other. Both lips were zipped shut while the game was in progress, although the game itself was played with little freedom, which was fair enough considering the conditions of play. The ball was dropped many times with scrums having to be reset constantly to a point which would bore most of the people watching the game, but it would not bore me. My eyes locked until the very last whistle was blown and in the end the game finished very closely, 9-6 Scotland's way.

In the lead-up to the game people would always ask me, 'Who're you going for tonight – Mum or Dad's team?' This was something I wasn't able to give a clear and distinct answer. It was always a reply of either

but why I didn't have a clear answer was something I would figure out in the years to come.

Through the game, the wet and windy conditions reminded me of Scotland. Yes, the game was in Australia, but it was not played in Australian-like conditions. In fact, the game triggered memories of my first Christmas in Scotland. It was a cold morning, and I found myself outside running around the place with my cousins, hiding behind cars, throwing snow at one another, jumping around the place to dodge all the snow, laughing together, smiling together. Ahh, I felt as if I was there again. To tell the truth I only just found myself connecting the rest of the pieces to this memory when talking to my parents 11 years later.

It turns out we were at my grandparents' house in Braemar, a very beautiful place in Scotland – search it up. This memory and the time thinking about this made me realise a clear conclusion – that is, Scotland is a key place that holds my heart and soul together, even if it is 16,874 km away. It is with me everywhere I go; it walks into school with me, it is seeping through the walls of my house, I breathe its air. What I'm trying to say is that we all have memories that are similar to this with places to which we feel a special connection. It showed me that you can equally love two places, love formed from my dual nationality.

The thing is many people classify themselves as a dual national. But what is the true meaning of it? Smartraveller thinks dual nationality is defined by the basis of reaching a certain set of requirements. To be one you need have a parent from a different country or marry someone from a different country, or you must live in a different country for a certain amount of time. This is far from what I deem the truth to be. Being a dual national has a whole lot more meaning than holding two passports. Dual nationality should be defined as someone that has a special connection between countries in their heart. It's a strong part of someone's identity.

'I don't know', or
'I don't mind who wins',

Dual nationality forms the characteristics of a person and how they operate. I know it formed me. It forms someone's personality, their beliefs, their culture, their support, their love and everything within them. You don't have to be forced to choose to love one country more or support one more than the other, because the fact of the matter is that the different countries will hold a variety of different characteristics. Being different does not mean that one place is more special than the other, it means they are special in their own way, in different ways that they can be loved equally.

Now I know when people ask me 'Who're you going for tonight – Mum or Dad's team?' I'll give a confident response over and over:

‘Both.’

The future soldier

Joel Hieswanto | Year 9



It is the year 2199. Artificially intelligent robots have grown to scary levels of power and we humans are three years into the war against AI. Things haven't been going our way. My name is Jake and my friend Jayden and I have been sent to the hovercrafts to scout on what the AI is plotting. It is always hard to read and analyse what AI is doing because they are robots, and the AI actions are weird to us humans. We do not know why the AI robots have chosen to attack us humans, but we know that they are exponentially growing to new heights, and we have to stop them now or never. Their area is just full of screws, openings and just a lot of mechanical and robotic things. Jayden and I have a closer look at what these robots are doing. We can hear the mechanical movements and the robot sounds they make, and we can feel their presence amongst us. We can also smell the burnt metal and mechanical AI at work in what looks like another attack on us as always. It always feels claustrophobic when we come here. There is no space between any piece of AI or robot and their parts intervene like a clock.

Jayden and I get back to base early enough so that we can get as much information across as possible. Every time we arrive back, we hand the leading officer the book of notes that Jayden had written in. The officer always knows, and we don't have to say anything. He knows the book symbolises that danger and loss are on their way. The same thing always happens and it's like a routine now. There is a rush in the office as everyone quickly spreads the information gathered across to the army. However, the leading officer always stands there patiently, reading and analysing the information as he formulates a strategy in his mind. He never fails to perform as we have seen multiple times throughout the past couple of years. The intelligence and mental strength he has displayed to fend off every attack the AI has done is very impressive. We also stand there peacefully, we have done our job, and all we can do is hope for another successful defence as we head back behind the front lines.

Life nowadays is rough and worrying. Even from back behind the lines, you can hear the AI robots coming for us symbolising the eventual inevitability of our death and extinction. The screams of the dying man and our machinery being slowly battered down brings us shivers and the feeling of the end rises all the time. It has been like this for the past year, and we cannot afford such losses every time an attack comes. If it keeps up, we will not be alive in a couple of years. The atmosphere is always eerie. The air is not very pure, and the areas are not very clean. There are usually just scraps of food on the floor and tables and it always smells odd. However, our men always find a way to come out on top. We always receive good news from the front lines back behind and it helps to give us confidence and motivation to keep on going. Today was no exception, the messenger that we have comes to us with a big smile on his face. He tells us the good news that we were hoping for, and we too are also happy.

Back at our huts, we do not have the best of food. The food is always nutritious and nice but we have the same food every year. Jayden hates it. He is constantly complaining and looking for other meals to have other than the food that we have. All we have is potatoes and water. We have plenty of it, but it is getting annoying, boring, and tasteless to our mouths. The potatoes just lie on the table. They look colourless and senseless. They make the smell of our hut just a bit odder and it is unpleasant. There is just one candle lit in our hut and it is silent. There isn't much sound going on outside and the streets are usually empty. There also isn't much colour in our city. It is just dark and gloomy at night in our city. We don't do much at night. Jayden just reads an encyclopedia on nature, and I just rest my head on my pillow and drift off to sleep.



Artwork

Zac Burkitt | Year 12

Obsessive ambition: Macbeth's downfall

Eric He | Year 10



Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* presents Macbeth's downfall as the result of insanity caused by obsessive ambition, misdirected tenacity, and the denial and suppression of instinctual morality. The often-regarded influences of the witches' prophecies and Lady Macbeth's coercion caused harm due only to Macbeth's eventual response: a ruthless desire to acquire and maintain power and the murders committed to satiate it. Thus, Macbeth's undoing was the result of his own actions, which he continued despite numerous signs to repent; in the following, examples of this notion and the techniques used to convey it will be analysed.

Through Macbeth's uncertainty and indecision in Act 1, Shakespeare indicates that Macbeth contemplated the veracity and implications of the prophecies. In the opening lines of Act 1 Scene 3, the forceful alliteration in 'two truths are told' exhibits the gravity Macbeth lends to the predictions. The words are also spoken as an aside (to the audience only), demonstrating an immediate desire to scheme by hiding his thoughts from Banquo. Additionally, repetition in 'cannot be ill, cannot be good' and caesura in the antithesis of 'and nothing is, But what is not' represent the confused, disjointed nature of Macbeth's thoughts and further suggest that Macbeth is deeply considering the prophecy. Indeed, Macbeth states aside, 'The Prince of Cumberland! That is a step on which I must fall down or else o'erleap... Let not light see my black and deep desires' in

Scene 4. The contrast of 'light' and 'black' represents Macbeth's acknowledgement of the evil in wanting to 'o'erleap' Malcolm to become king. Shakespeare also utilises Banquo as a character foil. The lines 'The instruments of darkness tell us truths, Win us with honest trifles, to betray's in deepest consequence' contrast his caution to Macbeth's connivery; like Macbeth, Banquo is ambitious, but he is also more aware of the potential consequences of acting on the prophecy. Hence, Shakespeare illustrates that Macbeth made conscious decisions to trust the witches' prophecies and actively seeks to fulfil them; he is yet to start his murderous rampage but the choices he made have enabled him to.

Shakespeare presents Macbeth to have increasing conviction in Act 2; he has formed a plan to seize and keep power, suppressing his morality to follow it and ignoring all indications to stop. Early into Act 2, Macbeth experiences his first hallucination and says, 'Is this a dagger which I see before me, the handle towards my hand?' The hallucination seems to fade from Macbeth's memory rapidly as he does not reference it after the scene — this can be interpreted as a sign of denial as Macbeth refuses to acknowledge the onset of his guilt-driven insanity. Soon after, elision is used to increase the impact of Duncan's murder as leaving it off-stage opens it up to the interpretation of the audience.

After the murder, Macbeth is yet again haunted by his own conscience, imagining a voice that states 'Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep'. Having just committed murder, this is difficult for Macbeth to dismiss, but Lady Macbeth cuts him off before he can reflect more extensively. The lines 'Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand? No: this my hand will rather the multitudinous seas incarnadine' use hyperbole in 'great Neptune's ocean' and 'multitudinous seas' to crystallise Macbeth's despair – the blood of his hand may refer to his guilt, which, despite his efforts, weighs heavily on him. Macbeth's murder of Banquo in Act 3 is an attempt at decisive action to prevent Banquo's children from ascending to the throne, but it ultimately harms him further with damage to his conscience due to guilt and Fleance's escape. Therefore, Macbeth is demonstrated by Shakespeare to want to acquire and maintain power despite significant personal sacrifice, which becomes a key component of his downfall in the ensuing acts.

By Acts 4 and 5, Macbeth is scarcely human; the final traces of his morality have escaped him, replaced with insane desperation as he grasps at his rapidly disappearing power. Macbeth has degenerated into an embodiment of evil as corrupt as the witches whose prophecy he holds so dear; his downfall is complete. He no longer cares about anything he once did; Lady Macbeth's suicide is met with cold indifference in 'She should have died hereafter',

reducing her death to a poorly timed inconvenience. The passage which follows is equally riddled with apathy, but with overarching tones of despair: 'Out, out, brief candle, Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more. It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury signifying nothing.' The metaphor of life in comparison to temporary candlelight or an idiot's meaningless prating captures Macbeth's outlook at this stage; life has become meaningless to him. Though Macbeth has not yet died, it is at this point where there is no longer a difference. Thus, the compounding effects of denial, delusion and desperation bring about Macbeth's crazed state of mind and subsequent downfall in the final acts.

Shakespeare portrays Macbeth's downfall as the result of his own actions; while the witches' prophecies and Lady Macbeth's manipulation are influences that push him towards action, Macbeth's responses are extreme and vile of his own accord with no reasonable justification possible. Thus, Macbeth is responsible for his own downfall.

What were the major influences which continued to spark and advocate for the 'Black Lives Matter' protests?

Kalani Pilcher | Year 11

🌀 'When you're black it's not a movement; it's a lifestyle.'

– LeBron James 23 July 2020

I marched through the streets of Minneapolis, Minnesota. A black man protesting for equal rights after years of experiencing racism and prejudice. Now, we have the platform to work off and gain the rights we deserve as a human. With the support of the sporting world and social media, we shall not experience the suffering we have endured anymore. #blacklivesmatter.

This was the experience of a black man or woman in day to day life throughout America in 2020. As has been documented around the world, the 'Black Lives Matter' protests were reignited after the death of George Floyd. George Floyd was an African American man who was arrested and killed graphically when former police officer Derek Chauvin knelt on his neck with significant pressure. Floyd's now infamous words 'I can't breathe', said while Chauvin was kneeling on his neck, sparked hashtags around the world and ultimately led to protests. Police forces around America were hated while music and social media, sports and the government each took a different approach to handling or promoting the situation.

I for one have been intrigued at the effect George Floyd's death had on America. As a member of Generation Z, I have witnessed first-

hand the power social media, music and sport can have on a political topic and the Black Lives Matter protests have been no different. The power of each factor has caused me to further explore and research what they have done to help society overcome a major political issue that has come out of America.

Protesting was also inspired through the music industry when former Atlantic Records employee Brianna Agyemang posted an image that read: 'Due to recent events please join us as we take an urgent step of action to promote accountability and change...Join us on Tuesday, June 2nd as a day to disconnect from work and reconnect with our community. #THESHOWMUSTBEPAUSED.'

Due to music and social media having such a great connection and influence on society, hashtags proved to be powerful and created a forum for others to share their ideas surrounding the matter. As 2 June came around, many major artists around the world began posting the hashtag created by Ms. Agyemang. Rihanna accompanied it with an image of a black square which became critical in the promotion of Black Lives Matter. Beyoncé also wrote a song called 'Black Parade' which promoted the need for social equality. The movement online came with mixed emotions from the public and other people in a position of fame. Some expressed their concerns with famous singer Lil Nas X tweeting 'not tryna be announcing but what if we posted donations and petitions links on Instagram all at the same time instead of pitch-black images.' Even though differing opinions surrounding the social media movements, the same idea was conveyed that black lives matter.

Social media's presence was also evident in sport. At the time, the COVID-19 pandemic was at its peak in America, which forced the NBA season to be moved to Disneyland in Florida. It didn't stop players, particularly those of African American descent, advocating for Black Lives Matter. Commissioner Adam Silver allowed players to wear warm up shirts which read 'Black Lives Matter' and have a word or phrase highlighting equality on the back of jerseys instead of their names, giving the players and the public freedom of voice and a sense of solidarity in the face of adversity. Influential players such as LeBron James, Giannis Antetokounmpo and Damian Lillard were very active in promoting equality via their social media pages and their attire on the court. Instagram accounts such as 'BleacherReport' and 'HouseofHighlights' who closely follow the NBA quickly spread the resulting images, showing a relationship between the power of sport combined with social media.

The NBA wasn't the only professional sports league involved in Black Lives Matter. In the Formula 1 championship, Mercedes superstar Lewis Hamilton wore a black helmet with the internationally recognised Black Lives Matter logo on the top as well as driving in a black car and black suit which was a change from the usual silver and white. To promote this, he posted a video of the helmet on Twitter with the caption 'Still we rise #BlackLivesMatter' showing a significant connection between sport and social media in promoting global issues.

What intrigued me during this time was how Donald Trump would proceed to handle the influx of protestors while equally battling the growing presence of COVID-19. As per usual, he took to Twitter

to express his thoughts. On the 29 May 2020, Trump wrote 'these THUGS are dishonouring the memory of George Floyd, and I won't let that happen. Just spoke to Governor Tim Walz and told him that the Military is with him all the way. Any difficulty and we will assume control but, when the looting starts, the shooting starts. Thank you.' His continual use of social media to promote his often contentious beliefs, as well as unified hate towards him from most of the sporting community, meant he influenced all aspects I am discussing. To some, he is one of the main reasons for the political problems currently being experienced in America. In particular, Trump's handling of the protests have led citizens to further question his integrity and credentials as a leader.

Through the murder of George Floyd and the 'Black Lives Matter' protests, we have seen the different influences which continued to spark the protests and the fight against injustice. If social justice is one day achieved, I infer that it will be through the power of social media, music, sport and the government to create a unified country. America's status as a global superpower has been marred by these recent events but with new leadership and a continual fight against racism, they can once again return to the top.

Lockdown music habits

Dylan Walsh | Year 11



Lockdown has led to much more free time than usual, which I've used to consume many of my favourite albums from the past and to listen to new works coming out. Albums from the past I've listened to include:

Wildflower – The Avalanches

Some Rap Songs – Earl Sweatshirt

You're Dead! – Flying Lotus

Donuts – J Dilla

The College Dropout – Kanye West

Time 'n' Place – Kero Kero Bonito

Metaphorical Music – Nujabes

Lift Your Skinny Fists Like Antennas to Heaven – Godspeed You!
Black Emperor

2012 – 2017 – Against All Logic

Does It Look Like I'm Here? – Emeralds

New projects I've enjoyed include:

Yasuke – Flying Lotus

Civilisation 2 – Kero Kero Bonito

Sound Ancestors – Madlib

TYRON – Slowthai

Whilst in lockdown I've also greatly enjoyed the NBA playoffs (although the Mavs lost in the first round again), with one of the most interesting brackets in some time due to lots of injuries occurring to some of the best players in the league. Instead of the playoffs declining in quality due to these injuries, it allowed for new teams outside the common contenders to have deep runs such as the Atlanta Hawks, Phoenix Suns and the Milwaukee Bucks. It was great seeing a phenomenal talent such as Giannis make his mark on the NBA by winning the finals with the Bucks, but it was also sad to see one of the greatest point guards of all time in Chris Paul lose in his first-ever finals after the long career of playoff disappointments he's had.



Artwork

Leo Pontello | Year 7

Empire at the end of decadence (an excerpt)

Lachlan Griffiths | Year 11



If one was to travel far enough up the viridescent crevasses of the Gustavus Fjord, he would eventually come across the small home of Mr and Mrs Sven Nysalett. Having reached the age of retirement, the couple had sold their house in Stockholm and purchased an isolated patch of bliss in the countryside. Hewn of locally quarried stone, the house had been built as a sort of hunting lodge by the fjord's namesake, one Gustavus Adolphus du Lothringen, a weak and miserly aristocrat who, in a distant past, had controlled much of the political power in Sweden.

The house was made of a whitewashed granite, aged by the touch of 200 passing summers. The house was framed by windows that were ever so slightly wavy in the soft sunlight. Those windows gazed out over the endless vistas of their realm with a wistfully thoughtful countenance. Passing through the door, one would be greeted with a long hallway. This was a rather drafty affair and had been adorned with yellowing family portraits, so as to alleviate the sense of hebetude which greeted visitors who passed through that vestibule of sullen regret.

They had taken tea and, by the time I'd arrived, were predisposed to a sort of perverse rigor mortis, laying down in a pair of matching wingback armchairs, upholstered with a vulgarly floral motif. The only signs of life were the rise and fall of their respective chests and the occasional puff of smoke from Sven's cigar – kept firmly wedged between two voluminous, peach-coloured lips.

Mornings, in contrast, were a sacred affair in the Nysalett home. Rising early, Sven would venture out into the garden, clad in thick wellington boots and a Fair Isle jumper peppered with holes.

He would begin with chopping wood for the stove, done at a small chopping-block adjacent to a woodpile. The lacquered handle of the axe slid with a repetitive back-and-forth through his leathery hands, the polished head catching an occasional glimpse of sunlight. Nysalett found an abundance of small joys in the repetitive nature of woodchopping: the quick, clean cuts punctuated by the short breaks taken to pick up a fresh piece of wood. He found comfort in familiarity, and this provided it.

I found myself, after watching that charade of virility, sitting across from Sven and his wife at the dining table over breakfast. He was smoking a cigar again, and a thick blue haze slowly filled the room with a noxious redolence. 'I'm not a creative person,' Sven said, laughing through a mouthful of coffee. 'That stuff's better left to you Proustian types anyway,' he said. 'Proust would hate me. I'm a creature of habit. I like my cigars; I like my woodcutting. Besides, I don't live with my mother.'

I spent much of the morning attempting to introduce a semblance of creativity to Sven. He began to warm after I wheeled out the Caravaggio book I'd brought. It was printed in Rome from photographs of the original paintings, and the deep blacks of the half-tone process illustrated the chiaroscuro of the works with a clarity unmatched, saved by a visit to the oak-panelled halls of the Louvre. 'These really are lovely. My dear wife and I can't ever seem to find the money to travel, so I suppose I'll never see the images in reality.' He sighed mournfully as he went over into his bedroom. Sven spent a long while digging around, before returning with a large canvas, draped in a mould-ridden rug. Under it was a painting of a small French fishing hamlet, created in the 1880s by a long-forgotten member of an artistic scene.

Despite its historical insignificance, there was a tenderness in that painting which I've never been able to discover since in any work of apparent note. 'This was my father's. He bought it at a Paris flea market in 1897, and it hung on the wall of my childhood home.' The painting was blackened in parts by smoke. By all accounts, it had hung above an open fire. These markings, thought of by the art world as blemishes, served only to increase the beauty of the work. Its gilt frame had chipped, and paint was peeling here and there. Yet in that battered canvas, I witnessed the most honest display of true artistic merit I had ever seen. Sven motioned at the canvas, and then at me. 'Would you like it? I don't want it. A load of old junk, I think.'

'It isn't junk. You may think so, but I assure you it's a masterpiece of its school. If you don't want it, what can I say?' Now that I think about it, I'm glad I took the painting. It hangs across from me as I write this, lit by a single candle, in the way that the Stations of the Cross might be lit in a Provençal parish church. It too, despite its secular iconography, has become to me an object worthy of artistic devotion of the highest order.

We took lunch that afternoon at the outdoor dining table, in what the Nysalettss called their 'rose garden'. Mrs Nysalett cooked meals on an elderly woodburning stove, producing food that was imbued strongly with an oaken bouquet. We ate well, fish and toast washed down with lashings of strong stout, brewed by Sven in a trough

under the house. The meal was a sacrifice. The fish sacrificed themselves for us and the cook sacrificed her time for the meal. I was the inheritor of a sacrificial agency that bubbled and frothed both on the kitchen stove and in the darkest, most ruminating recesses of my mind.

After we ate, we walked through the uncut reeds and heather in the back fields around the property. There was an escape in these fields, a freedom I shall never forget or ever achieve again. A soft rain was falling as we walked. I did not open my umbrella, instead letting the tears of the earth pitter-patter over me, mottling my jacket and face as I went. The water came over my body as a renaissance of spirit. Sven walked ahead of the group, inhaling large lungfuls of honesty as he went. I walked slowly with Mrs Nysalett, sipping tea from a tartan flask.

The Ancient Egyptians spoke of heaven as being a field of endless celestial reeds. Perhaps in the bucolic, Bergman-esque nature of the Gustavus Fjord, I found such a place. There was a freshwater stream set off from one of the paddocks, and I took off my shoes, communing with nature through my swollen feet as the soft nectar flowed down and over them. Here was the end of my pains, of my separate earthly toil. Here was freedom. It was my personal Empire, indivisible and beholden unto no others. I am, to paraphrase Verlaine, that empire at the end of my own crooked decadence.

The rising toll of climate change

Mitchell Cope | Year 11



Climate change is becoming a rising issue in our world and is having a significant impact on our economy and natural resource supply, and on the life of millions of plant and animal species. Since the Industrial Revolution, the rate at which global average temperature, sea levels and deforestation have increased, and the decrease in wildlife populations, has been a worrying sight.

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To begin, wilderness numbers since 1937 have taken a significant and worrying drop. In 1937, 66% of wilderness remained; in 1954, only 64% of wilderness remained; in 1960 62% remained; in 1978 55% remained and in 1997 46% remained. In 2020, only 35% of life on earth is still remaining. A big reason for this is that we are cutting down wilderness and turning it into farmland, which inevitably takes away certain habitats for animals to survive in. This means some species are becoming increasingly harder to find because they have nowhere suitable to live.

Statistics show we have cut down 3 trillion trees and cleared 50% of all rainforests worldwide. As an example, orangutan populations have dropped by 66% since 1960 because their rainforest homes are continuously being cut down by us humans. We have fished 90% of the larger fish in the sea, including 30% of fish to the verge of extinction. Increasing acidity suggests the earth is warming because the ocean cannot absorb anymore excess heat. This means corals are

turning white and dying, becoming skeletons. Because of the dying coral, the sea cannot support the fish and plant populations that live there, meaning the whole ecosystem cannot flourish. Overall, since the 1950s, animal populations have more than halved.

Global average temperatures have also significantly risen as a result of climate change. Long ago they stayed relatively stable because the ocean was able to absorb the excess heat given off by greenhouse gases and the burning of fossil fuels. However, statistics show that in the last 14 years, more than 40% of the earth's ice supply has melted into our oceans and land. In the far north and south of the earth, populations of species such as polar bears, penguins etc have significantly dropped because there is no place for them to live, breed and flourish. Increasing temperatures also mean that heat waves are becoming more frequent and tend to last longer because they have more sun energy to do so.

Nowadays, with increasing temperatures, the weather is becoming more and more difficult to predict which means when natural disasters or unexpected weather events occur, we are less prepared to protect our cities and homes. The recent increase in average temperatures also means that some animals and plants on land can't survive because they are unable to adjust to the sudden change in temperatures.

Furthermore, rising ocean levels now have a significant impact on coastal settlements and increase the risk of tsunamis and flooding.

Statistics show that in the last century, water levels have risen by 20cm. Although this doesn't seem like much of a concern, in the last two decades, the rate of rise in sea levels is double of that 100 years ago and is gradually accelerating. An example of how this affects us are the islands surrounding Australia. For example, Kiribati, a small country with a population of 110,000 people covers 3.5 million square kilometres of ocean. While covering a significant area, its highest elevation above sea level is just 6 feet, which is equivalent to 1.8 metres.

Predictions of upcoming sea level rises are much more than the current average of 3.2mm per year. Rising sea levels are evidence to support the climate change crisis, as this excess water in the ocean comes from warming climate, which can cause seawater to expand onto land and ice. A second mechanism that adds to rising sea water levels is very much related to the first, that being the sea water expanding over the earth's ice supply and melting it.

Consequences for rising sea levels for inland settlements might be that if sea water finds a way into our waterways, it can affect our drinking water to the point where it cannot be used because of the concentration of salts. It could get into our farmland, dehydrate the soil and make it unusable for farmers because the soil will eventually become too saline.

Scientists predict that if someone was born today, they would witness in the 2030s the Amazon rainforest being cut and burnt down and the Arctic becoming ice-free in the summer. In the 2040s, frozen soils will produce methane which is many times more polluting than carbon dioxide and accelerates climate change. In the 2050s, the ocean will become more acidic than ever, killing coral reefs and causing fish populations to crash. In the 2080s, global food supply will reach a crisis as soil becomes over-used and the weather becomes more unpredictable. In the 2100s, the global average temperature could rise by 4 degrees Celsius and a mass extinction would be well underway.

However, it isn't too late to restore the damage we have done. It is actually relatively simple. We need to restore biodiversity, re-wild the earth, use more renewable resources such as solar power and wind energy, ban fishing so it can recover and populations can flourish again, change our diets to become heavily plant based and restore wildlife nature reserves.

To summarise, climate change has become a global issue that should be addressed across the world. The factors I have listed are decreasing wilderness numbers, global average temperatures and rising sea levels. These are just some of the issues evident in the climate change crisis. Climate change is real and it's not too late to stop, live a more sustainable life and re-wild the earth.

Beneath the skin

Toby Gray | Year 9



Broadway was bustling. People were everywhere, and pandemonium was in the air wafting infectiously through the city that never sleeps. The theatres were alive with crowds rushing to see the latest productions. Midsummer New York was a potent broth of sweat, booze and euphoria, with people living out the best moments of their lives. There was yelling, screaming and the wailing of sirens – chaotic to an outsider, but to a New Yorker it was the sweet symphony of home.

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The holidays were over, and summer had receded into the depths of winter snowstorms and drizzly days. Park Avenue felt bare, with the trees shedding their load and searching for mercy from the cold with no layer for warmth. People trudged their own paths, looking at the plaza in awe or staring into the mysterious trees. Many huddled around their warm coffees, a small piece of salvation on a cold and miserable day. The city was a little more subdued, but its beating heart was still alive and pumping.

Christmas 2019 had descended on New York, the Statue of Liberty's triumphant crown now had a white frosting. Christmas photos were in full swing, and the Midtown shopping precinct was dressed in red with store managers chuckling about exciting profits for the season. Kids were playing – for the first time of the season the cold weather brought with it a storm of enjoyment and fun. The Rockefeller Christmas Tree was up, and everyone revelled in the annual fun of overeating and oversleeping.

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Christmas had quickly melted into New Year's Eve and the city welcomed 2020 by setting a good precedent: partying through the night. Times Square was buzzing, with thousands watching the countdown and cheering a new chapter in everyone's great adventure, a new year filled with happiness and, unfortunately, presidential elections.

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With the memories of the festive season fading, focus turned to work and the new year ahead. The presidential election started to creep into conversation, the inklings of warmer times started to peep through the blanket of winter and a mysterious virus appeared in the news from a far-off province of China.

Pops of rebellious colour started to punctuate the white mass of Central Park. The virus had arrived in America, but everything would be just fine. Winter was gone and the partying of summer was quickly approaching.

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Sirens wailed, outside it was cold and forbidding – the city that never slept was dormant. The quiet, echoed, ever present – especially to the hustle and bustle acquainted ears of an average New Yorker.

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The mercury was rising, creeping up as the days lengthened, but the whole of the city was quiet waiting out the storm. More and more people disappeared while many continued to say everything was fine.

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Days were becoming shorter, mornings colder than usual and the drone of division and anger was ever present, blaring through what felt like every medium. Neighbours became opponents and talking became yelling.

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The city was changing. The seasons were rolling through and the people with them. The world seemed to be spiralling. Was COVID-19 just a catalyst for the inevitable, waiting to explode? Was the world's beacon of liberty, freedom and strength faltering?

Walking through the streets, the world had changed on the outside – maybe for the worse – but perhaps the change was just a natural evolution. One thing was for sure – beneath the skin, there was still good, still unsung heroes and still life and love.



Artwork

Ruben Merani | Year 7

A perfect day

Sam Donaldson | Year 11



The rain hummed as the storm's war drums boomed suddenly in an outburst throughout the city. The air was foggy with smoke and mist, and the late afternoon light provided little visibility for my weary eyes, boiling up as they were from the strong smell of onion the rotting metropolitan produced. I despised this pluvial city filled with rejection and despondency. I came to the realisation that no matter how high you are in the tree of society, you will never see the sun and leaves will always cover you. I wasn't proud of where I was, reflecting on my life as I kicked a pebble furiously into a bloodshot mailbox. My finely tailored suit was becoming a sponge for the atmospheric aromatics and my hat was providing little protection from the ringing storm. The orange streetlights illuminated as the city rolled into darkness past their ominous glow. I rounded a corner into an alleyway filled with dumpsters with soggy newspapers on the ground. It was dark, and the only light was from an exit sign illuminating the path a decaying green. I was reminded of my troubled childhood. The rain that was pattering stopped and became insignificant in my mind.

I observed the alleyway as kids, just like I used to, ran past me, splashing in the puddles. It was hard living in a city that was as ferocious as a jungle. The weak and free kids of the street were survivors; we all had our methods of surviving. I remember looking up at the canopy of buildings when I was younger with my friend, desiring to be up there one day. It trained me in carnivorous methods to achieve that ambition. Back then I was struggling, trembling in hunger when my old friend enlightened me. It's funny how even though I've climbed up to the canopy I still feel like I'm down in the roots. As the memories wafted through my head, my old friend appeared next to me, unchanged and still the same. 'You haven't changed one bit. You're back down in the same detritus you were in before, you silly rubbertubble' it whistled in a jolly tune.

I say 'it' because I never really knew what it was. It looked normal except it had large eyes and a long pointy nose. It also grinned a lot; its smile could be so cheerful. I could see my naive impressions within it: a ruffled black suit like the crow I once saw fly above, and a nose like the penguin I once saw on the cover of a tin. It also had a pinwheel in its suit pocket that would spin without any wind. It had helped me and comforted me, while also exposing me to the reality of the savage metropolis.

The rain trickled down my suit and into my leather shoes dissolving my knowledge of society. It greeted me with open arms, welcoming me back into the people within the roots. I took off my hat and allowed my hair to absorb the morose energy. I sat next to a dumpster and looked at the puddles, distorted image of my face reflected in the puddles. Who I looked at wasn't me. This wasn't the 'me' I wanted to be. 'Do you remember how we survived last time old friend?' It encouraged me, slouching over my shoulder looking at my blurred echo.

As I observed through the puddle It was blown away, rippled by a gust of wind. Soggy newspapers took flight and I began to question the success in living like I previously did. The faint, alluring smell of rusting pipes wafted through the air. It reminded me of my past and the distinct smell of blood. That thirsty scent that had such a large impact of my childhood. Its nose caught the scent as well, its fingers sliding into its large pocket at the hint of the aroma. I heard the clink of its fingernails on something sharp and metallic, a familiar sound.

'Some snippety snips shall cheer you up' It encouraged, the words echoing down my ear. 'Choppity chop the rotting buds off, so the next bloom of flowers will be more flamboyant. What do you call a person who lives up in the branches? A luggagey leaf about to be

snippety snipped!' The nonsensical language that I had forgotten soon sounded familiar to my ears once again as we matched our grins with each other. The smell of rust was fluctuating in the rainy air once again, urging me to grasp the handles of the scissors it withdrew from its pocket.

It helped me before, when I was stuck down at the roots of society, it helped me climb and shape my reality to the top of the floogel tree above the luggugey leaves. The floogel trees were always drab and weary things that stood alone in swamps, but I became fond of them, admiring the beauty in them. I grasped the scissors in my hand, lurching around the drizzly, muddy metropolis. I took off my jacket and all the clothes that distinguished me, freeing myself from the shackles of the city. The drizzle of water in the green, iridescent light created a ferocious enticement under my skin. Tempted by my old friend whispering 'snippity snip,' I began to giggle. The skin on my knuckles stretched thin and bone white as I lurked around with my old friend once again, searching for the flesh of a leaf to snip away, eager to watch it decay back into the soil of the city. The rain poured heavily down the gutters, commending the storm's war drums as they echoed across the city.

A perfect day.

“NEXT STOP – TIMES SQUARE”

Tyler Kang | Year 11



The subway was a chamber of loneliness. Muzzled with graffiti and contaminated by a grimy sewage fragrance, once you stepped foot into the carriage, your life was no longer God’s responsibility. They called it the ‘muggers express’ for a reason. Felons saw it as an easy way to earn a few quick bucks. Some would walk distances to avoid getting on. They sat there in a thick silent silk. Eyes, fixated on the ground, for the window’s portrait of the city was far too depressing. So many mouths – but so few words. So many people – but so little heard. That was until the man began to sing.

*/ Well we all have a face
That we hide away forever
And we take them out
And show ourselves
When everyone has gone/*

He strummed his guitar to an anguished harmony. Each note echoed through the carriage, reverberated through the rails. He had the voice of an angel but dressed no better than the average man. Covered in an oversized brown coat and some leather shoes, worn out from many voyages. It was hard to believe these words were his own. He produced a silvery melody to vanquish the savage silence. People began to look up. Heads began to bob, feet to tap; everyone, a fiend for music. Strangers from all carriages gravitated towards his all-encompassing voice. A vibrant fever ignited the atmosphere, thick-rushing like an ocean’s vast. Drunken animals, swaying to each note with a miscalculated grace. He even noticed one hanging from the handrails and singing along. It was elegant chaos.

*/ Though we share so many secrets
There are some we never tell /*

The train window flashed by the city like a rolling film, each frame grittier than the next. Buildings ignited by arson, streets massacred with abandon. The delicate patterns of drizzling rain helped soothe the destruction. He dreamed of the city that it once was. But he kept playing, the crowd was so elevated he could barely hear his own voice. A man old enough to be his grandpa hobbled towards him, before dropping a penny into his guitar case. Then, a few others began to follow. Quite soon, everyone was reaching for their pockets, scavenging for a lost dollar. The plan was set in motion. Money streamed endlessly into the bottomless pit of his guitar case. Every drop of the penny like drops of golden rain. His voice was enchanting, the sound of novocaine.

*/ Once I used to believe
I was such a great romancer
Then I came home to a woman
That I could not recognize /*

The train was running at a highspeed, but he felt immortal. A young lady worked her way through the crowd and yelled over the chaos, ‘You sound exactly like Billy Joel!’

His smile grew overzealous, like an animated spirit, yet she stood there timelessly, against the blurry chaos. She was beautiful, with black hair that eroded the midnight sky and eyes of a burning forest. But she was alone, out of this filthy mess. If he could, he would ride this train with her forever. But he felt too sheepish to do anything of the sort. So, he awkwardly nodded at her, as if she was just a fan. She smiled before walking back into the fog of people, forever lost.

*/ Did you ever let your lover see
The stranger in yourself? /*

The train dived headfirst into the sunless tunnel. In low murmurs they began, the rails soon came to screech. The destination was encroaching. That decaying city fragrance was only amplified underground. But they didn't let that spoil the rhythm, the carriage danced on. He produced a tempo so sweet it aligned everyone's heartbeat. The wheels turned in a perpetual pirouette. Strangers hand in hand, embracing life without the haze of discontent. Their timeless bodies, swaying in anonymous motion. Harsh silhouettes burning with emotion. In that moment, the crowd yearned for one last verse, tossing their heads into a sprightly dance. The old turned young again. Criminals became sinless. The man in the wheelchair rose to his feet.

*/ You may never understand
How the stranger is inspired
But he isn't always evil
And he is not always wrong /*

He looked for her in the crowd, but she could not be found.

“YOU HAVE ARRIVED AT TIMES SQUARE”

The music was disrupted by a deafening reality. Everyone hurried off the subway, while thanking him on their way out. He felt like a hero but was lost in a melting reverie. They were given a taste of heaven but ran straight back to the depths of hell. He peered into his guitar case and grinned with guilty glee. Strumming an empty note, he could feel someone's presence. Like a hopeful fool, she smiled at him with a poisonous beauty.

She asked if he could play one last song for her. In another world, he would've played her anything she desired. They would ride on that carriage for the rest of eternity. But who was he kidding? His face became laden with shame, and he swallowed nothing but air. He reached into the guitar hole and pulled out the tape recorder. It's grainy audio now exposed by the void of silence.

*/ Why were you so surprised
That you never saw the stranger? /*

A brief tribute to Giannis and overview of the 2021 NBA Final

Xavier Lising | Year 7

The buzz of the crowd shakes the cameras in Game 3 of the NBA Finals 2021...

Giannis Antetokounmpo of the Milwaukee Bucks enters the Fiserv Forum, the Bucks stadium, to the crowd's delight as they announce the starting line-up. The game starts evenly, but as the Bucks begin to show a stronger desire for victory, they take the lead. The Bucks end the game in a dominant fashion, sinking the Suns 120 points to 100. They move on from their much-needed win, leaving the head-to-head score in the Suns favour 2-1.

To even the series, the Bucks must win Game 4 in their home arena. The crowd is ecstatic and need their team to win this pivotal match. Milwaukee enters the game with swagger and the score leads in their favour, but the momentum shifts to the Suns early in the second half. Giannis and the Bucks begin to tire but - wanting this championship more than anything - they persevere and regain a lost lead. Now in the fourth quarter, Giannis has tallied some considerable stats but this is not what he is aiming for... he is looking for a championship.

The game is tight and miraculous plays are executed by both teams; it is uncertain who will take this game home. Yet with 1 minute and 15 seconds to go, Giannis blocks what would have been a 1-point dunk for DeAndre Ayton. Because of this play the Bucks win and even up the series two games apiece. The next game is tight and ends in a Giannis game-winner but this time he is the dunker and throws down

2 points in the clutch period to add to a nail biting 1-point lead. The Bucks hang onto their advantage and win 123-119 to take the lead in the series 3-2. Yet another tight game won by the Bucks.

Going back to the Fiserv Forum with a Bucks home crowd advantage, Milwaukee is hoping to win their first championship in more than 40 years. The Bucks endure an offensive storm from the Suns who come back from an off start, commanded by the Bucks. The Suns start to lead and are rarely interrupted by a tie. At half-time the Bucks decide to make some major adjustments and change certain players positions. The tactic appears to work and they ease into their playstyle and lead consistently in the third, but by the time the fourth quarter breaks, the teams are tied.

These 12 minutes are some of the biggest the Milwaukee Bucks franchise has ever faced, as Giannis steps up and scores possession after possession. The Bucks continue to deliver as the game draws to an end. Just as quickly as it started, the game ends in the Bucks favour, giving them the NBA title and the city of Milwaukee global recognition. Giannis also receives the Finals MVP award honours unanimously after a 50-point outing (close to half of the Bucks points!), a fitting ending to a gruelling 0-2 comeback in one of the great NBA Finals.



Artwork

Harvey Jones | Year 12

A convict's diary

Tyler Kang | Year 11



Australian convict archives statement:

'Here lies the diary of Alexander Pearce, Australia's most infamous convict. Born in Ireland 1790 and transported to Van Diemen's land for the theft of several shoes. He was executed by hanging in the yard of the Hobart Town jail on 19 July, 1824. He was believed to have escaped Sarah Island Penal station through the cannibalism of seven companions. However, Pearce claims to have only murdered one. Do not let his words fool you, for he is a murderer with the talent of a poet.'

19 July, 1824

The world is always easier understood held at a distance from tales of horror and monsters. It never occurred to me that I myself might be remembered as a monster. Tomorrow, I will be hanged for the murder of my seven companions, as well as the attempted escape from Sarah Island. But before you judge me, let me tell you this. A full belly is prerequisite to all manner of good, without that, no man knows what hunger will make him do. Believe not the stories that may surface about me, for here lies the truth.

18 May, 1822

As the days turn dark, sleepless nights await, I lay safe from the soldiers, but vulnerable to the forces of nature – the forest consumes me entirely. Menacing trees collapse in slow motion, monstrous clouds arise from the underworld; demonic voices corrupt my mind. All notions of a circadian rhythm have been lost. I lay with one eye open, vigilantly waiting for him to appear, take me away and devour me with no remorse. There in the night, gone in the morning. Tomorrow, I will be forgotten, just another convict getting what he deserves – an eye for an eye if you will. There used to be eight of us, now, only two remain. Its either me or Thomas now. A coin toss between life and death. Is it bad that I hope Thomas doesn't wake up in the morning? It's a godless land, corrupted in its creation. Greenhill once warned me,

'It's cursed, I tell you, we'll never make it out. I fear not death, for hell lies here already.'

Back at the prison I saw old Bobby take 200 lashes once, after the first hundred you could see his spine piercing through his skin. Blood was gushing. He never did try to escape after that. They treat you like scum, stuff you into barracks like wild animals. We didn't have enough space to sleep on our backs. The food was scarce, sometimes we'd go days without it. We were endlessly tortured; it was no honest way for a man to live. I had no choice, but to escape.

The pursuit of freedom, oh what a rush. The guard fell asleep, we snuck right past him. It was exhilarating, clawing away from the mire of mankind, becoming one with the Van Diemen wilderness. It felt as if the world had forgiven me, I was no longer a convict. I remember gazing over the coastline, becoming victim to the vastness of the ocean. Its forbidding waves violently clashed against the towering cliffs before pulsating throughout the land. My naked skin collided with the rawness of the Earth's crust. I finally viewed life without the haze of discontent, with the naked eye open to the true serenity of nature before human interruption. Unfortunately, that precious feeling of liberty was short-lived. Fear began to strike. It wasn't the guard we feared. It was the fear of the unknown which drove us into insanity. That sixth sense you get for someone watching over you. It killed me.

I remember the night of Greenhill's disappearance. We set up camp by the river's shore. A small fire ignited the lonely sky, outshining the stars as everyone dozed off to sleep. I glared into the yellow soul of the fire. For a split second, I could've sworn Hades' venomous eyes emerged in the burning pit of fury, beaming back at me with a

red malevolent menace. His sinister smile tormented me, almost pitifully, as if he knew what was to happen next. Suddenly he faded into the ashes of the dying fire. A ravening fog swept through the forest hunting for prey. A foreboding sickness clogged my throat. I tried to look up, but my vision was obscured by the thick grey mist. The sound of thunder penetrated my hearing and reverberated through my insides. Its ominous aura overwhelmed me, reached into my soul, and suffocated me. I could hardly breathe. When the fog had finally dissipated into the ghastly atmosphere, my vision was restored at last. Glancing up with caution, I saw the fire had vanished, but so had Greenhill.

From then on, things were never the same. The air became contaminated with evil. The sun hid behind the clouds in fear. We tried not to speak of the incident, for we all feared it would come back, those poisonous black eyes staring back at me with their all-knowing gaze. The next few days poured down with rain. Eroding the soils and destroying any chance of food. I could feel it, the burning sensation in my stomach and the slow draining of my spirit. The hunger corrupted us, ruined any remaining sense of rationality. People became greedy, and to no good end. Strangely, this didn't apply to Thomas – he seemed extrinsic to the feeling of hunger itself.

The one who convinced us all to escape in the first place – he was the only thing keeping us together. The type of man to give you the last slice of bread and a hug to go with it. The others couldn't comprehend his selflessness, his sanity. They envied him as some immortal being, as if a convict without crime. If anyone was going to make it out alive, Thomas would be your best bet. He makes you feel assured you're going to escape, even against all odds. It's no coincidence he's one of the last ones left. Tonight, he sleeps

a distance away, head propped up against a tree. Though in deep slumber, I can sense his anxiousness. For he too knows one of us will be dead by the morning. Writing this is making me tired, my eyes feel weary, and I best get some sleep. If I don't write again tomorrow... well, you know where I'll be.

19 May, 1822

**'I make no mistake, for whoever sheds
the blood of man by man, shall that
person's blood be shed.'**

His screams ignited the land as I tore through his flesh. Each swing of the axe, empowered with a distorted justice. His stream of red guilt gushed out of his skin and into the river's midriff, where his half-eaten victims remained. Now he lay there the same, deader than dead. Beyond lifeless. I touched his skin, so cold. He deserves it, he does. The filthy animal. Every second night he stayed awake, waiting until the most vulnerable hours of the night to kill us before feeding on our sweet flesh. It was the work of no guard, or no devil... but Thomas indeed. I should have known weeks ago. I can't believe I had mistaken him for a friend, his innocence fooled me, fooled us all. In a world full of savages, I thought God made an exception. I'm surrounded by evil, entrapped by sin. Yet, here I am, feeding on man myself, is this how he did it? An act so impure. My hands may be bloody, but my hunger is cured. Am I a monster or a hero? For my conscience is clear. I stare back into the river, and his eyes reappear.

Lockdown and the importance of ambience

Will Naufahu | Year 11



Mastering the state of lockdown means mastering the art of repetition. Our lives are already filled with repetition, however, this is only amplified during lockdown as restriction is placed on ordinary life. And while an immediate response to counteracting this would be consuming sporadic media, attempting to spark some sort of adventure, there is a certain sense of tranquillity in distinct repetition and ambience. By nature, ambient music is repetitive – drawn-out, sustained instruments and equipment are played, achieving a still and recurring wall of sound. Most often the sound is precise and peaceful, and while ambient music is extremely predictable, that is where the joy lies. The immediate future remains unforeseeable, however, even if it is just for the duration of a song, there is strong solace in knowing exactly what is to come.

Recommendations (albums/songs)

新しい日の生 (*Birth of a New Day*) – 2 8 1 4

‘City of Light’ – Fennesz

Selected Ambient Works Volume II – Aphex Twin

‘For the Entirety’ – Celer

‘Ravedeath, 1972’ – Tim Hecker

‘92982’ – William Basinski

‘Stain Licker’ – Imagine Drowning

‘Raw Silk Uncut Wood’ – Laurel Halo



Artwork

Hugo Hobbs | Year 12

Noise music for the contemporary

Will Naufahu | Year 11

Written for an audience that is (at least) familiar with the genre of noise/listen to more avant-garde and experimental music acts. Yet that does not mean nobody can enjoy this piece.



Noise music is devoid of trend, however this broad brand of music can still be sectioned into genres and scenes. In the late eighties to early nineties, the Japanoise scene fused technological advancement with raw enthusiasm. Names like Merzbow and Les Rallizes Dénudés twisted a myriad of genres with pure and distorted noise sounds. Over in Europe and the UK, the rise of power electronics and death industrial gave sentiment to an assaulting atmosphere. Themes of death, victimisation, sex and more were all conveyed through the clash of hateful lyrics and dense atmosphere in acts like Ramleh and Propergol. American harsh noise ever so slightly crept into the mix as did other derivatives, but all were unified by the screeching feedback loops and brutal sound walls. However, the essence of noise had seemed to be lost in the late 2000s and early 2010s. Of course, artists like Prurient and Merzbow never stopped working, adding to their mountainous discographies, but it is a general consensus that the golden age of noise has already been witnessed.

However, noise could not be in a better place than it is now. The previously male-dominated genre is now fading into the past. The globalised introduction of the internet led people all over the world to discover this harsh brand of music – just as other obscure and mainstream genres were being popularised. This has created a resurgence of noise. The lines between subgenres have been blurred and gates have been opened, allowing new age artists to draw inspiration in abundance from media all around the world. Artists Pharmakon, Duma, Pan Daijing, Uboa and more lead the crowd. Noise music is now more vulnerable, intimate, diverse and sonically advanced than it has ever been whilst still displaying its original jarring and sensual rawness.

Pharmakon

Pharmakon is the moniker of New York-based experimental artist Margaret Chardiet – an artist largely involved with the bubbling local noise scene that would later greatly expand. Although she has immense commitments to the scene, Pharmakon is focused on the

individual and the human. Her sound mirrors the genres of power electronics and death industrial – repetitive screeching waves of static loop underneath screamed and distorted vocals. Her involvement with the New York noise scene and performance art cannot be ignored. Since the age of 17, her ties with the scene grew her admiration and understanding of the genre. Pharmakon was able to see the lines between performance art and music blur as local artists focused more on specific moments of experience rather than actual songs. These performances were sporadic and irregular and most of it was left to chance; the outcome would change day-to-day, based on what instruments and equipment were available at the time. However, the most critically acclaimed and important work of Pharmakon lies in her discography. These albums would garner a small but intense cult following – fans were intrigued by the intimacy of her music, even though it maintained a clinically disgusting tone. ‘Nakedness of Need’ displays a harsh and harrowing recurring static, and whilst this pattern is predictable, her bleeding vocals prove an uncomfortable and severe atmosphere. Obscure words and phrases are drawn out, screamed, cried and almost moaned. Of course, Pharmakon’s expertise in manipulating instruments and equipment is incredible, to say the least, however the control of her voice provides an otherwise unheard aspect to this genre. Her ability to utilise her vocals to the fullest and most extreme extent prove her to be truly unique and an original of the genre.

Duma

Duma lay as outsiders to the contemporary noise movement, not only sonically but also geographically. Born out of Nairobi’s evergrowing underground metal scene, Martin Khanja and Sam Karugu come together to create Duma – a chaotic and hell-fuelled band whose sound is impossible to categorise. The band’s influences are obvious – grindcore drums, black-metal screams and ambient melodies are all drowned out in thick noise walls. However, Duma does not sound like anything else. Emphasis is put on their influences, whilst they are still able to craft their own unique aesthetic. 2020 saw the release of

their debut self-titled album, spearheaded by Ugandan experimental music label Nyege-Nyege Tapes. The album is blatantly assaulting, fusing their influences together to create a tumultuous but meditative sound. 'Corners in Nihil' immediately begins as distorted glitchy synths blend with a skipping and relentless drum pattern. The original synth is quickly buried as black metal screaming enters the stage – drawn-out, harrowing vocals prove to be just as uncomfortable as the instruments. Track seven cements the meditative tone with 'Pembe 666' in which piercing ambience bonds with another skipping drum beat, equally as rickety as the previous ones. A spoken-word piece plays in Swahili, reciting a disturbing monotone passage, enforcing the ritual of the song. Duma proves that the genre of noise is not simple. Their technical sonic palette and extensive use of influences – from which they draw liberally – create an outfit that is just as technical as it is primitive.

Pan Daijing

Whilst Pan Daijing is one of the newcomers to this movement, her delicate and beautiful brand of noise displays a unique perspective of beauty and allure. Growing up in China and now based in Berlin, Pan Daijing is a voice that has proved to be thriving in her own niche. Her sound marries the intricate and pretty genres of ambient and electronica with the difficult sound of noise – showcasing a relationship that is as gorgeous as it is uncomfortable. What reinforces this is her versatility. Not only is Pan Daijing able to move effectively in and out of genres, but she is also able to do this for her instruments and equipment. She utilises the beauty of voice as a prominent tool in her work, and although vocals are not unique in the genre of noise, her ability to create moods of beauty through it is. Pan Daijing is also an artist that bonds with performance art. Her live performances remain contorted and sporadic whilst she experiments with field recordings, deconstructed instruments, authentic vocals and more. She often wears intense costumes, dressing in majestic masks and face coverings, occasionally even wearing full dominatrix and fetish-inspired outfits. Her brief but promising discography boasts intricate and compelling songs. 2021's 'Clean' begins with vigorous booming industrial sounds, assaulting the listener in a state of repetition. As these sounds progress, manipulated vocals enter the stage. The voice is intentionally fractured, revealing an immediate intimacy with the song. Pan Daijing is able to contrast two completely different worlds. The juxtaposition of industrial noise with the intimate and beautiful vocals and ambience provide a unique and compelling approach to the genre.

Uboa

The music of Uboa is not for the faint of heart. A solo project started in 2010 by Xandra Metcalfe, Uboa is a personal release of emotions, exploring depression, gender identity, abandonment and more. Her experiences as a transgender woman largely dictate her music and her most intense emotions and experiences are communicated through it. Although Uboa's share of critical acclaim only began recently, her connections with the local Australian noise community have been immensely important to her career. Through this scene she has met a myriad of underground artists, allowing her to be influenced by genres including doom metal, drone, experimental, ambient and more – all genres that bleed through her work. The eminent *The Origin of My Depression*, released in 2019, was a pivotal point of success for Uboa. The album shares Uboa's harrowing experiences as a transgender woman, and her personal conflicts with depression. Whilst these themes are certainly not new to music, her communication of them is. Track 5, 'Please Don't Leave Me', quickly begins with the sound of a gasp of air, and whilst only lasting for under a second, it acts as a lull before the storm. Instantly after, overwhelming distortion glitches into the song, layers of screams and more distortion create a screeching and sporadic spillage of emotion. Industrial clattering sounds enter the mix only adding to the overflow. In the last quarter of the song, Uboa exercises her doom metal influences as the unpredictable structure stops and a sludgy guitar layers with the distortion. The distressing nature of Uboa's music showcases not only some of the genre's most intimate projects but also music as a whole. And whilst her tormented sound may turn most listeners the wrong way, the catharsis of Uboa cannot be denied. Uboa's music only displays a glimpse into her overall experiences. For the average listener, this trauma only exists through the comfortable 40 minute listen. Even still, Uboa proves herself to be one of the most formidable and vulnerable artists in the genre, communicating intense emotion through daunting sound.

It is safe to say that the current trajectory of noise is incredible. Whilst these four artists remain at the forefront of the present genre, artists like Aaron Dilloway, Puce Mary, Body Sculptures, Lucrecia Dalt and more all make major contributions. Even more mainstream artists like Death Grips create hybrid music that incorporates noise elements into a more structured setting. Contemporary noise is being integrated into other genres, resulting in innovative and stimulating sounds that redefine the traditional boundaries of music genres.

Consequences of social media on consumerism

Will Quinn | Year 11



Shopping in the 21st century has enveloped the daily life of not only myself, but the teenagers around me. The oppressive nature of advertisement prevalent on social media initiates an uncontrollable impulse to purchase products. As of recently, I was scrolling through my feed and noticed a special on the Nike boot that Kalyn Ponga wears. Before I knew it, I was in the shop handing my money over so that I could try to be and act like him.

Over the last 30 years we have become hyper consumers. Have a look at yourself. What do you see? Are you decked out in and surrounded by symbols of consumer society? It's not just your clothes, but your jewellery, mobile, watch, and that Burberry Brit that Cate Blanchett supposedly wears. Our society is so susceptible to fads and phases that we are sacrificing our happiness. The rise of social media has had a massive impact on consumerism, especially for teenagers. It allows for celebrities, actors, singers, and beauty bloggers, to push businesses and products and create a vacuum of want that cannot be satisfied. Our wants become our needs. We need to be like, look like, live like these people to be happy and without all of these 'things', we cannot find happiness. But we are wrong.

Consumerism leads us away from happiness. And it is taking a heavy toll on our youth.

Social media has given companies unprecedented access to consumers. It is an inexpensive platform that allows for brands to instantly reach over 1 billion people. In the 1970's the average person was exposed to between 500 and 1500 advertisements per day. With the onset of social media it has skyrocketed to between 6000 and 10,000 per day. For decades researchers have recognised children as a vulnerable consumer group because of their developing abilities, and yet teenagers account for more than \$1 billion in e-commerce dollars. Moreover, 71% of consumers are more likely to purchase products and services based on social media referrals, and the access is not random, it's targeted. The media accounts of our youth are bombarded with advertisements targeted to their personal tastes, driving them to make purchases so that they can try to be and live like their idols. How many times have you discussed an item or product and the very next time you open Facebook it's being advertised?

Kylie Jenner, the youngest billionaire in the world and arguably the most influential social media user, has achieved extreme wealth from pedalling an image to our youth. Her business is a profound example as she markets her product line Kylie Cosmetics using edited images of herself, effectively saying, 'buy these products so you can look like/be like me'. However, in reality this is not the case, and the consequences can have a severe impact on an adolescent's self-esteem and body image. She also does sponsored posts on her Instagram account. One sponsored post from Kylie Jenner on Instagram reaches 218,000,000 people and she is paid US\$1,000,000 as a result. So how many children are pushed into buying a product because they want to look like or be like their idol? And how many are disappointed when they don't?

Another example is Cristiano Ronaldo, one of the best soccer players the world has ever seen. The Portuguese soccer sensation ranks third on the highest paid Instagram influence, making \$750,000 per sponsored post. He reaches more than 145.3 million people just on Instagram. His brand promotes the Cr7 footy boot made by Nike and sunglasses that are advertised by him. Like Kylie Jenner, he promotes his products explicitly, making it seem like purchasing it will allow you to look/be like him. It's becoming a never-ending wheel of consumerism and it needs to stop!

Social media has become an instrumental tool for influencing others and placing value on the perfect body and appearance. If impressionable youth are shown a product that appears to make them more attractive, fitter, or more confident they will buy it believing it will bring them happiness. When reality doesn't meet expectation, wellbeing is impacted. The effects can range from mild anxiety to serious disorders like anorexia and bulimia or the most serious of all, suicide. Obviously, these are complicated issues and consumerism driven by social media is not the only contributing factor. But it is a factor.

The prevalence of eating disorders among young women has increased over the last 50 years. According to the National Eating Disorder Association, a recent study of women between the ages of 18 and 25 showed a link between Instagram and increased self-objectification and body image concerns, especially among those who frequently viewed 'fitspiration' images. Our youth spend around two hours a day on social media being exposed to unrealistic ideals of

beauty, body shaming, thinspiration, weight loss posts, and more.

Dr Jamie Zelazny of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine conducted a study of suicidal teens recruited from the outpatient program at Western Psychiatric Hospital Pennsylvania. 67% of the study participants reported feeling worse about their own lives because of social media. 73% felt pressured to boost their appearance to others.

Social media has allowed consumerism to explode exponentially. This is having a detrimental effect on our youth. They are driven to believe that they need this handbag or that shirt or those shoes to look like their favourite celebrities. Consumerism makes our youth believe that they will always need something more to be happy. They will never be satisfied with what they have. This is the opposite of where happiness comes from. Being grateful for the intangible and tangible items that you already have is how you find happiness, like the food on your plate or the clothes you wear, and the presence of your loving family. Consumerism is the death of happiness. And social media is driving consumerism at unprecedented levels. Our youth need positive role models and messaging; not to be told that happiness is found with the next click purchase they make. I pose you this question,

how are you going to stop this
never-ending wheel?

Number (N)ine Autumn/Winter 2009

A Closed Feeling - Takahiro Miyashita's swan song

Will Naufahu | Year 11



Takahiro Miyashita presents his final collection from Japanese avant-garde label Number (N)ine – displaying a melancholic discontinuation, and marking the final moments of the brand. Although a departure, the innate aesthetic and ideals of Number (N)ine are only matured and heightened in this collection. *A Closed Feeling* is not only a perfect departure but also a perfect Number (N)ine collection – showcasing the designer's most profound ensembles through different materials, layering, cuts and influences.

The immediate aesthetics of this collection somewhat differ from previous years. The bold, screen-printed graphics and colours are nowhere to be seen here as they are ditched for a more muted and academic tone. Colours of brown, black, beige, grey and more are utilised heavily to construct a uniform aesthetic throughout this collection. The flashy and abrasive imagery is no longer present, it has evolved whilst still maintaining the innate ideals. Well-known layering and abstract cuts can be found in this collection, as well as immense usage of accessories, whether it be face coverings, hats, gloves or more.

Miyashita's obsession for Western imagery and lifestyle is certainly not lost and perhaps is pushed to its fullest extent for this collection. *A Closed Feeling* was inspired by colonial era ensembles, unveiling a classical and romantic notion with the already present Number (N)ine aesthetic. The beloved raw hems are still present, but now exist at the end of eclectic fabrics rather than the previous grunge influenced pieces.

Fabric face coverings are worn by the models, resembling a criss-cross pattern – a reference to the heavily used material of fishnet in previous collections. The signature fabric distressing of Number (N)ine can also be seen here, making its way to various items such as sweaters, scarves and skirts, however, instead of being prominent, this notion is perfectly cloaked in the layering of pieces.

The layering in this collection remains unmatched – very rarely is one clothing item present in its respective section of the body. Jackets are

never left by themselves but instead matched with sweaters, vests, scarves and even the occasional corset. Pleated skirts sit atop layers of white stockings and socks whilst the thighs of pants are enveloped by fur shorts. The fabrics of each of these items are dense and provide their own pattern to the cloth.

Of course, the soundtrack plays its necessary role in this collection, however, the abrasive punk and rock music from previous catwalks is no longer present. Miyashita opts for a more mature and classical approach, curating acoustic ballads from the likes of Beth Gibbons, Rachel's and Os Mutantes. *A Closed Feeling* is a maturation of the Number (N)ine brand, just as Beth Gibbons' *Out of Season* is a development of her musical aesthetic. Lead singer of trip hop band Portishead, Beth Gibbons ditched the psychedelic sounds of the band to pursue a more evocative and acoustic sound present in her 2002 album *Out of Season*, in collaboration with Paul Webb. Three out of the five songs of the soundtrack belong to Beth Gibbons; however, it is the final song in the soundtrack that acts as the harmonious departure. 'Baby' by Os Mutantes is a homely Tropicália love song that perfectly encompasses the sweet goodbye of Miyashita. This song plays as the models collectively walk out for the final moments of the show wearing eclectic white buttoned shirts with added detailing.

The previously linear structure of the runway has been abandoned for a dimly lit circular shape which the models walk through. Sections of this shape are thin, providing an intimate encounter with the clothing to the audience.

Whilst a morose finale, *A Closed Feeling* knows how to say goodbye – the potent swan song of Miyashita's career at Number (N)ine. The past is left harmoniously in this collection, foreshadowing the new endeavours of the avante-garde offerings of Miyashita's present label founded in 2010, TAKAHIROMIYASHITASOLOIST. Miyashita's final Number (N)ine project is one of maturity and development, showcasing a sweet closure to this chapter of his design career.




Artwork

Oliver Durand | Year 8

2 8 1 4 – 新しい日の誕生 (*Birth of a New Day*) – album analysis

Will Naufahu | Year 11

 新しい日の生 (*Birth of a New Day*) provides a one-hour and seven-minute window into a lush environment that is both melancholic and romantic – a futuristic cityscape where neon skyscraper signs blind the eyes of undersized citizens hazed through an omnipresent violet filter. Vivid motifs and ciphers force themselves onto buildings for attention – a not-so-distant vibrant advertisement emerges for its five-second run-time on the screen of an otherwise useless building – whilst the drones of machinery and vehicles provide a somewhat human comfort. It's always been raining, so the conversation of commute is drowned out by the puddling of what used to be the sidewalk. Through this window is the opportunity of stillness in this hyper-moving landscape, an eight-song arrival that desires a 'strong sense of place' – one that is incredibly achieved. A categorically ambient (and vaporwave) composition that juxtaposes the utility of ambient as a genre while still maintaining a dreamy and glamorised uniformity and consistency.

The first sight is 恢复 ('Restore'), entrancing the listener with an environmental surrounding motion of magnificence combined with distant sirens and technological sound effects. The song enters with faint audio from the Wong Kar Wai directed *2046*, loosely translated to:

*"Why can't it be like it was before?
Please don't go
Stay with me tonight
Let me borrow you..."*

Already, a sense of romantic nostalgia sensually pours into the album. Dreamy piano chords interact with a hypnotic underlying drone that constantly oscillates back and forth. Neither battle for attention, instead collectively strengthening each other in establishing an ethereal and glistening atmosphere. Though the song advances, the state of stillness is nonetheless pushed, creating an ecosystem that we cannot interact with yet are fully immersed in. Remote police sirens enable a sense of domesticity as the drone subtly intensifies, parallel to the sounds of moving machinery and activated vehicles. These drones and sirens assist in opening a world that is foreign yet utterly familiar, akin to the song utilising the qualities of ambient music (such as drawn-out sound palettes and repetition) under the guise of reverb and resonance.

Song three 新宿ゴールデン街 ('Shinjuku Golden Gai') enhances previous notions whilst installing a moving drum pattern, circulating what is perhaps the most moving and intimate moment of the experience. The drums maintain a similar fashion being soaked in rain and reverb, coming off as faint yet impactful. They persist a repetitive descending quality that meditates a circling wall of sound. What rides on top is a melody that is bright and seductive, fluently passing itself through the entire environment of the song to create a pretty and alluring atmosphere. The fundamental drone passes in and out of the song, never overstaying its drift. The song's name takes inspiration from a red-light district located in Japan – a similarly vibrant area that is networked by narrow alleyways and crowded by bright lights and technological offerings. The song name provides a real-life parallel that can be treated as aesthetically analogous.

As the album reaches the halfway point, song five, 悲哀 ('Sorrow'), enters to the hypnotic drum patterns of 'Shinjuku Golden Gai' whilst being slightly more ambitious. 'Sorrow' undertakes a holographic and oddly weightless quality where sounds are distant and reverberated although still clawing for attention. The drum pattern is hollow as it is soulfully intermediated by whimsical drones and a misty lull of a melody. The many drones in the song act like aerial vehicles drifting through purple filter against the sensual softness of constant rain. The central melody rings like a wind-chime in its attractive nature, activated by the ecosystem developed between itself and the surrounding sounds, bringing a sense of dynamic and real-life spirit. This cascade of mystical sounds all pour into each other to create a poignant and surreal soundscape that beautifully synthesises a hazily pretty urban cityscape.

The album-titled final song starts with a beaming synth that contrasts the otherwise understated harmonies previously exhibited. As this beam progresses, sounds of rain and faint drawn-out vocal samples slowly stream in to create a rich and familiar atmosphere. These non-musical additions consistently flow throughout, building on

the domesticity that has been maintained throughout the album. The electronic drums skip between themselves providing a rickety and energetic sentiment to the calm and solaced soundscape. A percussive wall keeps the central ambience from becoming too vaporised. There is perhaps a sense of light urgency in this swan song that leaves the strongest impression in the last moments of the album. Extending itself for the album's longest song length of 13 minutes, *Birth of a New Day* never overstays its welcome and maintains its polite and stellar nature.

Birth of a New Day offers a neo-futuristic anomalous environment that is fully immersive and rich with vibrance. Overarching and brooding city buildings project bright gleaming lights and symbols whilst the whirl of machinery is echoed in a hallway created by architecture. The window of *Birth of a New Day* invites an auditory experience that is equally aesthetically evocative. The album has been described as having no beginning, but rather "one you arrive at" – being able to fulfil an incredibly immersive state. And like a constant but reassuring rain, *Birth of a New Day* remains still through a sonically atmospheric wall of solace.

Prose

Yoknapatawpha Overture

Sameer Aziz | Year 11

(Excerpt - Scenes 1 and 2)



TITLE - “MEMORY BELIEVES BEFORE KNOWING REMEMBERS.”
- WILLIAM FAULKNER (AS I LAY DYING)

TITLE - YOKNAPATAWPHA OVERTURE

TITLE - 3 days from today.

EXT. NORTH LOUISIANAN HIGHWAY - DAY

A lone patrol car flies across the road leaving a trail of gravel and sand in its wake. 'Ring of Fire' by Johnny Cash plays over.

The highway patrolmen scan the sides of the road that seep into the forest. One of them notices something and they park the car.

WE LOOK from the perspective of this object as both patrolmen advance on US shot at a very low angle. They are puzzled.

PATROLMAN #1

What on Earth?
(beat)

Oh. Lee. Get the HRP from the trunk.

PATROLMAN #2 retreats back to the car as PATROLMAN #1 advances further from US. They continue down a path and then stop dead in their tracks. The song is cut off.

PATROLMAN #1 (CONT'D)

Make that a couple more.

PATROLMAN #2 (O.C.)

How many?

PATROLMAN #1

I- I don't know there's too many bits.
(stammering)

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE - TODAY.

EXT. SOUTH MISSISSIPPI HIGHWAY - DAY

TED and SIDNEY, both men in their 30s, are in a turquoise 1969 Mercury Montego. SIDNEY is driving. There's paraphernalia from New Orleans in the back of the car.

TED

You know I never really understood what that feller meant.

SIDNEY

The one from Natchez?

TED

Yeah.

SIDNEY

Obedience to lawful authority is the foundation of a manly character?

(beat)

Really does knock it outta you. This i'n't flyover land but still.
(SIDNEY looks around at the vast emptiness on the highway)

TED

Been so long so long since I've seen blue water.

SIDNEY

You denigrate us, sir.

TED

Where in Mississippi did you grow up?

SIDNEY

Right in Jackson. City not county.

They pass a billboard advertising a regional musician.

TED

You ever considered coming to an embassy here?

SIDNEY

I'd do it just for the ribs.

TED

What are you thinking of?

SIDNEY

Africa. Maybe Nigeria or South Africa. You?

TED

Well, I've been told I can be sent to the UN mission.

SIDNEY

But you don't like New York or Geneva

TED

No.

SIDNEY

It is better pay and better cred'.

TED

True.

The car begins to splutter a little bit.

SIDNEY

Check the map, where's the nearest town?

TED gets a map out.

TED

Uh Marr.

SIDNEY

Marr?

TED

It might not exist. This map might be old.

SIDNEY

It's a shame. There's probably sheds and stilts only. These poor country towns are suffering hard.

TED

As you say.

To play omnipotent God

Nathan Chong | Year 8



The elderly man stared for a long time at the android's face, imagining the smoothest metal contours lying beneath a layer of artificial epidermis, the softest keratin slowly growing into a lively fringe of dark brown hair, the ocular lenses of twin cameras enveloped by vitreous humor forming colourful eyes.

Those twin cameras stared back, blinking in a measured way — but no more measured than the delicate turning of cogs inside the man's own body. The stretching of muscles in response to electrical signals throughout his nerves, the rhythmic expansion of his diaphragm, the regular beat of his own heart.

What differed man from machine, if not material?

At last, the man proffered his hand, joints crackling from a body that had seen better days. It was as if his flesh betrayed him; it knew his time was up.

The android proffered its hand, motors whirring from a body that would see hundreds more days to come. It was as if it was mocking the man; it knew the android's time had just begun.

A pause. Despite designing the android himself, the man wondered what truly lay behind the grey matter suspended within its metal skull, whether its electrical activity came close to the likes of neurons firing, whether something nearing a true *consciousness* had formed: an awareness of awareness.

The two entities moved forward to shake. As they stood apart, the android glanced at the rows and rows of human embryos, floating in vats of viscous gel to preserve the precious stem cells that lay within. The human glanced at the rows and rows of metal frames, vessels to be filled with the dying light of his race.

The android spoke to him for the last time. A smooth, mellifluous tone which belied its mechanical nature.

'You must bear the burden of the omnipotent God – for you have created a rock too heavy for yourself to lift.'

'You are the lesser artifice, and I am the new human.'



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