

Michael Mackenzie 4597620

I TWEET THEREFORE I AM:

Social Media and the New Social Order

Michael Mackenzie

Supervised by
Assoc. Prof Tom Clark
and Dr Roger Averill

March, 2022

PhD (Integrated)

College of Arts and Education
Victoria University, Melbourne

ABSTRACT

Comprising an exegesis and creative component in the form of a novel entitled *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will*, this thesis will contend that the social media revolution has produced a social paradigm shift that constitutes a new social order. The exegesis examines theories surrounding social media and the Internet, and its repercussions, in relation to identity and belonging. The exegesis research both informs and contextualises the novel. The thesis proposes that for the novel to remain relevant for a generation that has only known the Internet, as a literary form it must be able to represent contemporary life, which today constitutes human experience that is lived both virtually and in reality. The creative component of this thesis, *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will*, is a response to this challenge, one which depicts the effects of the new social order and a hyper-connected globalised world.

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Michael Mackenzie, declare that the PhD '*I Tweet Therefore I Am: Social Media and the New Social Order*' is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotations, exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

.....

Michael Mackenzie

.....

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to extend my gratitude toward Dr Roger Averill and Associate. Prof Tom Clark for accepting to be my supervisors in the second stretch of this Doctor of Philosophy. Both supervisors have supported and guided me in the writing of this thesis and have supported my future academic ambitions. Dr Averill has particularly been a valued mentor in relation to the creative component of the project which is a novel. He has encouraged, challenged and shared his knowledge generously as an author and been committed in supporting me to fulfil my full potential as a writer.

I would like to thank my first principal supervisor, Dr Ian Syson, for taking me on as a Doctor of Philosophy student at the beginning of my academic journey. During my second year while I was preparing for Confirmation of Candidature, I would like to thank Associate. Prof John Weldon for co-supervising my project for a period of time. I would also like to thank the following academics who taught me and my fellow cohorts during the first year of the Integrated PhD program: Dr Rosemary Lucas, Associate. Prof Deborah Zion, Dr Maria Prokofieva, particularly Assoc. Prof Marcelle Cacciattolo and Prof Ron Adams, who both gave me glowing references in which I was a successful applicant for a scholarship.

I wish to thank Harley Johnson for his friendship and support as a fellow doctoral student. And also like to thank Dr Mike Hyde, Dr Tim Corney and Dr Dianne Hall for their assistance in helping me navigate the academic world. And I am extremely grateful to Victoria University for accepting me as a PhD candidate as well as the financial support provided by the Research Training Program. Last but not least, thank you to friends and family whose friendship, love and emotional support enabled me to embark on this project, particularly my wife Nan, and my two daughters Coco and Mia, for their patience, love and understanding.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	2
Declaration of Authenticity	3
Acknowledgements	4
Preface	8
Novel / A literary reflection of the new social order	9
<i>It's Going To Be Okay. It Will. a novel</i>	10
Glossary	12
PART / ONE / ROSE	20
Ch.1 Funny not funny.....	21
Ch.2 I would like to apologise to any cis or trans-gendered women I may have hurt in the past. Please forgive any pain I may have caused. I will strive to be better.....	35
Ch.3 Daily rituals for divine feminine energy.....	52
Ch.4 I like the idea that Jennifer Lawrence is a hologram.....	66
Ch.5 I know a lot of you are struggling with the origins of the term 'meme' and anyone who thinks queer liberation is possible within capitalism.....	93
Ch.6 ok lemme give you some advice: yeah hi, could you not?	105
Ch.7 Congratulations! Now go out there and be the worst	117
PART / TWO / LUCA	135
Ch.8 Neo vs sad keanu.....	136
Ch.9 Incel uprising at the maid cafe.....	154
Ch.10 Mom anal pounded by loser son.....	166
Ch.11 Things people talk about on Reddit: Chads. Jordan Peterson. Not masturbating. Looksmaxxing. Nice guys. Pokemon. Yearning for other people.....	176
Ch.12 Femdom pegging sub in spreader bar.....	197
Ch.13 So, where do you see yourself five years from now? Exactly where I am.....	211
Ch.14 Won't leave your house. Can't get a supermodel. SAD.....	222

PART / THREE / ROSE	234
Ch.15 thank you for ruining everything	235
CH.16 I don't enjoy being present and in the moment but I really like sirens and people vomiting blood.....	252
Ch.17 Cracking up hysterically while also understanding their personal journeys.....	264
Ch.18 Jaden Smith: Do not leave New York City without letting me see you. Justin Bieber: Gone	282
PART / FOUR / LUCA	286
Ch.19 Go ahead. Say be yourself one more time. I dare you.....	287
Ch.20 Pornhub community.....	305
Ch.21 Cotten candy hentai and the extra wet pussy.....	317
Ch.22 Ruin everything. It feels great. Trust me. Do it. Trust. Me.....	339
Ch.23 His apology was lacking in authenticity, regardless.....	363
Ch.24 Insanely hot thick pikachu girl fucks horny virgin.....	375
PART / FIVE / ROSE	385
Ch.25 World populace actually fine with climate change denial. YOLO!	386
Ch.26 What do you do? I'm working on my dream.....	401
Ch.27 Instagram vs reality.....	420
PART / SIX / MARK	422
Ch.28 OLD MAN YELLS AT CLOUD!	423
A C T I Exposition	426
A C T II Rising Action	434
A C T III Turning Point	449
A C T IV Falling Action.....	456
A C T V Denouement	473
Exegesis / The theoretical component that informs the novel	481
Introduction	482
Chapter One / Digital narratives, small stories, and the new social order.....	487
1.1 Digital Narratives and the 'small stories' paradigm.....	487
1.2 Media Convergence and Transmedia storytelling.....	493
1.3 Technologies of power and horizontal propaganda.....	495
1.4 A social media revolution has created a new social order.....	499

Chapter Two / Identity construction within virtuality and reality.....	503
2.1 The self is multiple and fluid.....	503
2.2 The presentation of online self.....	505
2.3 The commodification of self.....	507
2.4 Curating self.....	510
2.5 (Positive and negative) true-self.....	512
Chapter Three / The Internet is a place to find belonging.....	516
3.1 Digital tribes.....	516
3.2 Echo chambers.....	518
3.3 The culture war.....	522
3.4 Information is power.....	524
Chapter Four / The Internet Novel.....	528
4.1 Novels that engage with virtual-reality	528
4.2 It's Going To Be Okay. It Will.	533
Conclusion	545
References.....	548

Preface

Prior to embarking on this academic journey, I was feeling anxious about the present state of the world and uncertain about the future. This was exacerbated by the birth of my two children. Watching the evolution of fringe fascist ideologies and conspiracy theories entering mainstream politics in the Western world felt like a tipping point and a wake-up call to the power that social media wields in relation to influencing minds en masse. I wanted to creatively explore this present moment by writing a contemporary novel. In order to write this novel, I first needed to examine the social media revolution and its repercussions. This exegesis is the outcome of the research that has informed the creative component of this thesis which is in the form of a novel.

Novel / A literary reflection of the new social order

**It's going to be okay.
It will.**

A novel / Michael Mackenzie

NOTE TO READER: Many of the social media posts or re-appropriated digital communication within the novel are intentionally misspelt and grammatically incorrect either for authenticity or because they have been directly taken off the Internet.

GLOSSARY

The Decile Scale

[male]

10 - Gigachad: Considered attractive by 99% of females. Square face with masculine features and hunter eyes.

9 - Chads: Nearly a 10, but jaw isn't quite as chilled, eyes aren't as sharp, etc.

8 - Chadlite: Objectively good-looking, but looks suffer from three or more mild flaws. Girls call you "cute" or "handsome."

7 - High-tier normie (male): Well above average, but women will rate you as being average. 7's suffer from at least one major physical flaw, like this nose on the right.

6 - Brad (normie): "He's alright, I guess." Barely has attractive features. Not likely to be Incel, but finds much more trouble dating than 7's.

5 - Tanner (normie): Neither attractive, nor unattractive. These males will encounter significant trouble when looking for a spouse.

4 - Melvin / Lower-tier normie: Only a few 4's succeed in matching with 1's and 2's. Some are called "soyboys" because they put up with cheating to get laid.

3 - Incelish/semicel/failed normie: People will bully you because of your looks. Lowest possible ranking male to still have a chance to pay a prostitute to lose their virginity.

2 - Incel / Malecel: Possesses several serious flaws in facial structure. "Ewww, look at that creep. I bet he is a serial killer."

1 - Truecel (omega male): Actually, preferable to being a 2 or 3 because someone might pity-fuck/date you. The majority of women consider 1 to 3 to be subhuman.

[female]

10 - Gigastacy: Perfectly conventionally attractive. It is impossible to fail at life. If you become homeless, a modelling scout will scoop you up in under a day.

9 - Stacy: You're still on easy street here, but it will take you longer to get scouted than a 10. Anyone considers you to be beautiful and sexy.

8 - Stacylite: You're very attractive. You will be constantly bombarded by thirsty men. Men will spend their entire life savings to keep you in a relationship with them.

7 - High-tier normie / higher-tier becky: Your sexual rejection rate is 4%. Unless you are a prude, you will have at least 20 sexual partners before marrying.

6 - Becky / normie: People call you "pretty" and "cute". You can use your charm and above average looks to cheese your way through a career.

5 - Becky-lite / normie: Perfectly average. You are not ugly, but you aren't beautiful. You will be pursued by male 5's but will reject them in favour of a chance with an 8 or 9.

4 - Lower-tier Becky / normie: 4's are at just the right level to get with any level 5, 6, or 7 male. As a result, 4's can have dozens of sexual partners. These women ride the proverbial "cock carousel" and settle with male 5's.

3 - Femcelish / Femcel-lite / Higher-tier femcel: The lowest you will date is a 4. You may even get with a 6. Either way, you're not ugly enough to have a limited amount of potential partners.

2 - Femcel (female incel): Marries a desperate "4" or "5" male. Has had 2-8 sexual partners before the age of 30.

1 - True-femcel / omega female: Like a male 1's, you are conventionally hideous. Much like male 1's, male 6's will pity date you. Male 4's will go for you because they have lost hope.

Internet terminology

8Chan: Like 4Chan, it's an internet message board that was dedicated to anime. It's populated by incels who express their hatred of the world. Racist, sexist, toxic etc.

Antifa: Anti-fascist left wing political activists.

Bff: Best friend forever.

Bro: A male that subscribes to the manosphere.

Captain Save-a-Ho: Coined by the rap artist E-40, "Captain Save-a-Ho" rescues women and single mothers who have made previously terrible choices.

Cathedral: The term "Cathedral" was coined by a Mr. M.M. and reformatted by Chateau Heartiste (and probably others) for a general audience to mean the collective motivations and enlivening spirit of the bulk of the human machinery that powers the entertainment, media, government and academia industrial complexes in the West, but particularly in America. This human machinery is mostly progressive in political disposition, equalist in ideology, tyrannical in method, snarky in execution, and hypocritical in principle.

Chillin': To be relaxing or having a good time.

COD: Black Ops 2 : Call of Duty Black Ops 2 is a video game.

Confrontational Unreasonable Narcissistic Tormentor: CUNT

Conservadicks: (Politically) Conservative dickhead.

Cuck: A cuckold – or "cuck" – is a weak male whose female has allowed herself to get pregnant by a Chad, and is now forced to raise and support the result.

Cupcake: The gun is loaded, c~~~ed and pointed at your head. Cupcake has had her finger on the trigger from the moment you said, "I do" and she will pull it on a whim, the moment you cease to entertain her in the manner she so desires.

Darkcel: Technically Darkness-celibate. Involuntary celibate men that accept their loser-dom.

Dickstand: A man who props up a single mom while she's waiting for an Alpha to ride her hard. As a motorcycle needs a rider or a kickstand to remain upright, so does a single mom need either an Alpha rider or a dickstand.

DM'ing: Direct messaging.

ED: Erectile dysfunction.

ER: Elliot Rogers – Incel hero that committed a mass shooting.

Fakebook: Fake Facebook account.

Femcel: Involuntary celibate female.

Femoids: Female androids. A basic person. No personality.

fuk boi: A 'fukboi' is a man who sleeps with women without any intention of having a relationship with them or perhaps not even like them at all.

Goatse: goatse.cx, often referred to simply as "Goatse", was originally an Internet shock site. Its front page featured a picture, entitled hello.jpg, showing a naked man widely stretching his anus with both of his hands.

Gym rat: A person that is very body conscious and goes to the gym regularly. It is part of their identity.

Harambe: Harambe was a gorilla that got shot when a child fell into an enclosure at the zoo. Became an internet sensation for many reasons. One was that the general public showed more sympathy for the gorilla than they do people of colour that have been gunned down by police. Harambe also became a meme for racists.

Hicel: "Standardcel" is synonymous with "hicel" which stands for "high-standards celibate".

Hmu: Hmu is an abbreviation for the phrase "hit me up."

Incel: Involuntary celibate male.

Inspirin': To inspire people.

Manlet: A manlet means a man of shorter stature who is over-muscled; perhaps someone who is trying to make up for his short stature and standing out with his muscular physique.

Manosphere: Male world.

Merk: Spiritual dead, paranoid, delusional, darkness.

Mirin': To be admired.

Moids: Male androids. A basic person. No personality.

Molly: Ecstasy (drug).

Nazi barbies: Girls or women that subscribe to the house of Taylor Swift.

Negging: Being negative to a person in a way that attempts to manipulate them to seek your

approval or want to have sex with you.

Noodlewhore: A racist insult against an Asian woman.

Nonna / Nonna: Italian for Grandmother / Grandfather.

PUA: Pick Up Artist. A misogynistic group of men that manipulate women to sleep with them.

Randoms: People you don't know.

Receipts: Is proof of something generally gathered from text messages or communication via the internet.

Roids: Steroids.

Shitlib: A derogatory name for a leftist, democrat, liberal, SJW, and any of their ilk.

Shitpost: Shitposting is posting "aggressively, ironically, and of trollishly poor quality" posts or content to an online forum or social network.

Simp: Sissy + Pimp = "Simp". A classic simp thinks he has hit the jackpot but is actually being played, and is oblivious to how he allows himself to be treated like wallet.

SJW: Social justice warrior.

Sperm Donor: Biological father who is absent.

Srsly: Internet text for the word 'seriously'.

Volcel: Voluntarily celibate.

WAG: Wives and girlfriends of high-profile sportspersons.

Zyzz: Australian bodybuilder that became an Internet sensation. He died in Thailand from steroid use.

Zyzz clones : Bodybuilders that are part of the aesthetics scene. Acolyte of Aziz Shavershian aka Zyzz.

Chinese / English translation

Chǎo miàn: Friend noodles.

Chéngdū: City in Sichuan, Province.

Dà gē: Big brother.

Dà jiě: Big sister.

Guǎngdōng: Province in China

Guǎngzhōu: City In Guangzhou.

Hòuhǎi: Hutong area in Beijing.

Gāoqīng: Small town in Zibo, Shandong.

Guǐjiē: Street in Beijing.

Huà: Dialect, accent, language.

Hùnxuè'ér: Mixed race person.

Jiǎo zi: Dumplings

Jìnán: City in Shandong

Jiù jiu: Maternal uncle.

Lǎo lao: Grandmother.

Lǎo ye: Grandfather.

Mā mā: Mother.

Nánluógǔxiàng: Long street in Beijing in the Hutong district

Nóng mǐn: Countryside person.

Shāndōng: Province in China.

Shao jiu: Younger maternal uncle.

Tài lǎo lao: The mum of your maternal grandfather or grandmother.

Tài lǎo ye: The dad of your maternal grandfather or grandmother.

Wài guó rén: Foreign person.

Wàngjīng: Suburb in Chaoyang district, Beijing.

Wéifāng: City in Shandong province.

Zhōng guó rén: Chinese person.

“I suspect that cyberspace exists because it is the purest manifestation of the mass (masse) as Jean Beaudrilliard described it. It is a black hole; it absorbs energy and personality and then re-presents it as spectacle.”

- Humdog (1994).

part / **one** // rose

Ch. 1

Funny not funny.

Rose, 25

123 miles away Active 28 minutes ago

About Rose

If you're looking for a girl with a good personality you're in luck because I have multiple. I like eating and sleeping. I'm bi so hit me up.

In death, my father's appearance is peaceful; a last ironic joke considering his life was full of chaos and destruction. The lines and deep crevices that marked his face in life have disappeared – in their place, thick waxy foundation that smooths out his imperfections. Mark was the definition of 'problematic', a word that was initially helpful but is now a reductive catchphrase for well-meaning white people. He was a compulsive liar who took all our love and gave nothing back. His life was theatre. A perpetual performance with a vast array of characters for an audience of one. Himself. But the show must go on, and everybody continues with their roles in the comedy that was his life. The people here are not his friends. He didn't have any. He had acquaintances. People he bought drugs from. Or took drugs with. Or scammed money from. Or had gigs with. Everybody he associated with served his purpose somehow. He was a comedian. His death the final punchline. I just wasn't in on the joke.

Mum politely accepts condolences from people that found their way into Mark's orbit. Most of them strangers to her. For a man that fucked over every person he ever met his wake has a huge turnout. People are spilling out of the funeral home and into the street. I can guarantee they've all been wronged by my father at some point, but nevertheless they're here to say goodbye and celebrate his life: a testament to his so-called loveable but intolerable personality.

When Mum found out Mark died, she processed it in her own way. Mark and Mum met while they were working together in Běijīng. He was an English teacher at a private language centre. She was his assistant. Mum was young and had little experience of the Western world. Mark was a charismatic raconteur. I'm sure he 'bedazzled' her. I was not planned, but I was welcomed with enthusiasm. They hastily got married before her baby bump showed. Neither of my father's parents came over for the wedding or my birth. I didn't meet them until I was ten. It was anti-climatic. They're not a part of my life.

Mum gave birth to me in her hometown of Gāoqīng in Shāndōng. There were some complications. The hospital staff kept me in an incubator and refused to let Mum breastfeed me. Mark couldn't speak a word of Mandarin and had a meltdown. Eventually my grandfather bribed the doctor with one of his ink paintings. Once I was released, they rushed me to a hospital in the neighbouring city with better facilities. It was there that I finally fed from my mother's

breast. Mark has always hated our hometown since then. He would ridicule the place mercilessly. It would make Mum furious. Then we moved back to Běijīng about six months after my birth. It was my home.

A washed-up soap actor pushes through the crowd and hugs me without my consent. She is overly familiar even though we've never met. She tells me how much my father loved me, then starts regaling some of the 'shenanigans' she and Mark got up to in the '90s. From across the room, I notice some creepy guy staring at me. He's a little older than me but far younger than the rest of my father's 'friends'. He would have been attractive once, but now has the 'meth' look. Standing by himself he appears anxious, not interacting with anyone around him. Irritated by my lack of interest in the 'shenanigans' she got up to with my father, she finds somebody else more interesting to talk to. Thank fuck for that.

The creepy guy manoeuvres through the room until he stands in front of me, forcing an awkward grin. 'You're Mark's daughter, right?'

'Yep,' I reply unenthusiased.

'I'm, Jamie. I was a friend of your dad.'

'I assumed that.'

'I'm sorry, about... you know...'

'You're sorry, about, you know?'

'Like, him... dying.'

'Why? Did you kill him?'

Averting eye contact, he scans the room, clearly paranoid and on something. Clearly trying to hold his shit together, he faces me once again, his eyes discoloured. 'He was a real funny, you know?'

'So, I've heard.'

Neither of us have much more to say.

'It's nearly time for the eulogy,' I say.

'You're doing it?'

'Yep.'

His melancholic sigh fills the awkward silence.

'I'll let you do that then,' he mumbles. 'I just... wanted to come over and let you know your dad was a cool guy. I'll miss him.'

'Did you sell my dad drugs?'

Guilt washes over his face. 'Yeah,' he replies. 'Weed. I sold him weed.'

'Nothing else?'

'No. Just weed.'

'You still sell weed?'

'Yeah.'

'Can get your number?'

He gives me his number. Then says, 'Anytime, okay?'

'Yeah. Great. Thanks. Bye.'

He ambles back into the crowd.

Linh appears, giving me a hug. 'How's your Mum dealing with all this?'

'You know Mum...'

'For a terrible person your dad has a lot of friends'

'Friends? They're all fucking parasites.'

She smirks, then glances over at Jamie loitering near the toilers, staring self-consciously down at his phone. 'How do you know *that* guy? He looks familiar?'

'Apparently, he was one of Mark's weed dealers,' I reply. 'He gave me his number.'

'To buy weed?'

I shrug my shoulders.

'I think I bought drugs off him once at a Laneway Festival?'

The funeral director hands me the microphone. Mum stares back at me proud. I take a big breath and begin.

'Hello, everyone. My name's Rose. Some of you may know me as Mark's daughter, others know me as that picky Asian bitch on Tinder.'

‘My father was a comedian. He spent his life making people laugh. He would make me wet myself through laughter when I was a young. He thought it was hilarious. I would be mortified. I was thirteen.

‘Mark met my mother in China. They fell in love. Then when I was seven, we came back to Australia where he resumed his drug habits and abandoned us. When he did come to visit me, Mum and Mark would always argue. He would ridicule her about her accent. She'd ridicule him about his penis size. We didn't see him for two years after that.

‘I think Mark was a very sensitive person. He could only endure the world through comedy and drugs. But I could be wrong. Maybe he was just a selfish drug-pig who charmed his way into your life, then left with your laptop and valuables.

‘Mark valued creativity above all things but spent his life destroying everything around him. He was an introvert but craved attention. Sensitive to the world, always insensitive to others. He made people laugh but was eternally depressed. An idealistic cynic. He consistently hurt the ones he loved the most.

‘I was the last person to see him before he died. I saw his last gig. He killed it... literally. He was dying out there. It was brutal. His jokes went down like a case of Ebola. It was hard to watch. Like a car crash we couldn't look away. But that's what his life was like. Shameful and humiliating.

‘We talked after the show. Just me and him. We hadn't spoken in years. That last conversation felt like I had my dad back. The Mark I knew who put me on his shoulders when I was tired, and read me stories before bed, sleeping next to me each night so I could go to sleep. And then he died. Ha, ha, very funny.

‘But we've all got stories about Mark. Being around him was always an adventure. His life was a comedy. He used his pain to make people laugh. Because that's what comedians do, right? They make us see the world differently. They enable us to confront dark shit through humour. I think that's important. I think what my father did was important. That's why you're all here, right? Because if you're here to collect on a debt, you've come to the wrong place. I don't have any money, and don't ask my fucking Mum. She'll slap the shit out of you!

‘In order to honour my father, I urge you all to go out and tell somebody how much you love them, make them laugh until they piss their pants, or befriend a stranger and convince them to part with their last five dollars before you go your separate ways. We'll all miss him. But

once in a while let's live our lives as if it's a comedy, like he did.

‘Thank you all for coming.’

Rose Hong-Robson

11 hours ago

R.I.P. Dad.

Like

Comment

Share

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

Dave Chapelle declares Michael Jackson didn't do it. Buys Neverland ranch and invites pre-schoolers to a live comedy special and sleepover. Calls critics "ignorant!"

11:01 am 29 Aug 2019

908,228 Retweets **699** Favourites

MIXTAPE 25

By Rose Hong-Robson [SELECT](#) [\[Follow\]](#)

Mixcloud

00:00 ----- 1:20:18

1. Dance with me - Beadadoobee
2. Feel for you - Bat for Lashes
3. Sugar. Honey. Ice Tea (S.H.I.T) - Princess Nokia
4. Push it - Salt and Pepper
5. Nothing Compares 2U - Sinead O' Connor
6. N.Y State of Mind - Nas
7. Fade into You - Mazzy Star
8. Oath - Faye Wong
9. Final Form - Sampa the Great
10. Bodak Yellow - Cardy B
11. True Colors - Cyndi Lauper
12. Formation - Beyonce
13. Be My Baby - Wonder Girls
14. Breathe Me – Sia
15. Fantasy - Mariah Carey
16. Miss World - Hole
17. 2 Become 1 - Spice Girls
18. Everytime - Britney Spears
19. True Blue - Dirty Beaches
20. We Found Love - Rihanna ft Calvin Harris

It's my turn this month to show what I've been working on. I put up a series of portraits of Britney Spears that I've painted in oils. All the paintings are from a clip I found on YouTube, an interview from years ago. I freeze-framed Britney crying, as her interviewer triggers her with intrusive questions about her relationship with Justin Timberlake. They'd just broken up. Each painting replicates the others, yet is slightly different. I've hung them next to each other in a row up on a clean white wall in one of the empty rooms we use for assessment and feedback sessions.

Nick, a lecturer in the department, glances over at me and smiles his approval. He then takes in the rest of the class.

'So, before we give feedback,' he tells us, 'let's remember, I don't want to hear words like "I like it", or "I don't like" it. They are not helpful. It's about what the work is communicating. Now, who'd like to start?'

These sessions are always awkward. Giving feedback is always weird when it comes to your peers. There were tears in our first year, but in our third year, everybody seems to have settled in to getting feedback, as long as it's constructive. But the same super-confident future 'art stars' tend to dominate these sessions and can sometimes be harsh. I've never been that sensitive to criticism – I get that from Mum.

'I think there's something kind of problematic about these painting,' says Lauren. 'I "get" that they're responding to the current Free Britney movement, but they feel exploitative as the work is basically capitalising on what it's supposed to be critiquing.'

'That's one way to frame the work,' says Nick diplomatically. 'Anyone else?'

'I think the paintings capture a sort of cruel reality show,' says Rashid. 'And the repetition gives you this strange sense of familiarity, but like, distance too. I know who Britney is, obviously, but like, I don't *really* know her.'

'The paintings feel uncanny, as in strangely familiar,' prompts Nick, helpfully.

'Yeah,' replies Rashid. 'We see her crying but how sympathetic are we?'

'Like a cruel spectacle,' adds Nick. 'That's a great point. Anyone else?'

‘I just see a privileged white-blond woman crying,’ says Leila. ‘I know I should feel bad for her, but I don’t.’

‘That’s an interesting framing,’ prompts Nick.

‘I mean, I feel for her, kind of, but it’s like, how bad can you really feel for a person who’s has that kind of money?’ continues Leila.

‘She’s like, *literally* enslaved by her father, Leila,’ cuts in Robbie. ‘It’s disgusting!’

Leila pulls a face. ‘Enslaved?’

‘Yes, Leila. Enslaved!’ states Robbie, clearly triggered. ‘She was basically spelling it out for us since her hit, I’m A Slave 4 U!’

‘Really, Robbie?’

‘Okay,’ cuts in Nick. ‘These are all interesting points.’

He looks over at me and the class follow his gaze.

‘I think this work resonates with people in various ways which is really positive, Rose. Could you tell us about the development of this work?’

‘I just found Britney crying really interesting in terms of the whole *Free Britney* movement. And, I think the way pop stars are elevated in society is, like, interesting. To me, Britney’s like this doll, or dream. She’s this construct to aspire to. But she’s also trapped in a gilded cage. I mean, I wanted to invert what Warhol was doing with his celebrity images. He makes everybody look great. It’s all surface repetition. I wanted to do the opposite. Like, instead of silkscreens, when I paint Britney in oils by hand, each one is a little different and unique because I’m not a machine.’

Nick nods his head encouragingly, so I continue

‘And I find Britney Spears interesting. She was literally imprisoned into a conservatorship after she shaved her head. According to the patriarchy that was proof she was ‘crazy’. That’s crazy? I think her emotional breakdown showed us she’s normal. And I guess I was drawn to this particular image because it’s an example of something we’re all addicted to. She’s getting shamed and humiliated. Like Nick said before, it is like a cruel spectacle. The image I took was from an interview when she was young. I find it interesting not because I want to capitalise on her pain but, like, to me, in that moment she transformed from a doll back into a human being. For the public anyway. She’s just telling people to see her as a person.’

New Woke CIA Ad: Intersectional regime change? Queer drone strikes? Katie Halper joins Rania Khalek to discuss the CIA's latest recruitment video series "Humans of CIA," which weaponizes identity politics and left buzzwords to woke-wash imperialism and advance the agendas of war and empire. 4,654 views. [sic]

Rose Hong-Robson

May 21 at 10:46 am

Instead of listening to scientists that have spent their lives dedicated to understanding the world we live in, we find memes that reflect our world views and post them on Facebook.

Like

Comment

Share

Ch. 2

I would like to apologise to any cis or trans-gendered women I may have hurt in the past. Please forgive any pain I may have caused. I will strive to be better.

Samatha Thomas

You've always been a caring person. Love you more than ever.

Like

Reply

Scott Mason

We've all done things we regret. I think about some bad decisions I've made and reposted.
Thanks for sharing and inspiring.

Like Reply

Amara Assaad

Thanks for posting. It's important.

Like Reply

Rose Hong-Robson

A little superficial don't you think?

Like

Reply

Sherry Jackson

Acknowledging your own power of oppression is being an ally. Dismissing those that acknowledge their own power of oppression isn't helpful **Rose Hong-Robson!**

Like Reply

Connie Kavakis

At least he is taking responsibility.

Like Reply

Rose Hong-Robson

How so?

Like Reply

Sarah Issacson

Rose Hong-Robson Why is Ben's apology so threatening to you?

Like

Reply

Rose Hong-Robson

It's not. Just feels 'inauthentic'.

Like

Reply

Celeste Ngo

Those that show hate in the world hate themselves. Those that show love in the world love themselves.

Like Reply

Ben Thomas

Rose Hong-Robson I am owning up to any past behaviour that may have caused harm or hurt I have caused to any women, cis or trans! I'm sorry you feel so threatened by me taking responsibility for the past harm or hurt I may have caused.

Like Reply

Rose Hong-Robson

Posting it on Facebook feels disingenuous. Just saying...

Like Reply

Ben Thomas

Now you're just trolling.

Like Reply

Rose Hong-Robson

Just making a comment. Isn't that what Facebook is for? Randomly making broad assumptions about people we never actually see in real life.

Like Reply

Jennie Lao

I think if all men got fucked once in their life, they would understand women better.

Like

Reply

Ben Thomas

To everyone that has participated in this comment thread I would like to apologise. This thing got way out of hand. I have blocked Rose and am sorry and take full responsibility if this has hurt anyone in anyway.

Like Reply

Ch. 3

Daily rituals for divine feminine energy.

Dylan, 38

1 mile away Active 59 minutes ago

About Dylan

I hear you like bad boys.
I'm bad at everything.

When I arrive, he looks me up and down. Then smiles. He's a little older than his picture. I sit down across from him and ask if he's been waiting long. Not really, he replies. He asks if I've just finished work. 'Yeah,' I reply. He casually enquires where. I tell him somewhere boring. 'You want a coffee?' 'That'd be good,' I say. He signals the waitress over and I order a coffee with almond milk. He tells me he's a graphic designer, well-travelled and likes cool music and fashion. I tell him I'm in my third year at university studying painting. He asks me if I'm any good, half condescending. I shrug my shoulders. What am I meant to say? He then discusses the pros and cons of being a 'creative' in Melbourne. Twenty minutes later I make an excuse and leave.

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

Over 94% of girls hate anal but give in to the patriarchy that dictates organised power. Thanks for the clarification, dad.

1 week ago

90,828 Retweets **699** Favourites

Cop Flips Pregnant Woman's Car For No Reason: Arkansas state trooper Senior Cpl [sic] Rodney Dunn used a PIT manoeuvre on Nicole Harper's SUV, a pregnant woman, while she was attempting to safely pull over, flipping her car in the process. 89,036 views. [sic]

‘I feel like I’ve been fucked but not in a good way,’ moans a Nazi-barbie, lost in her reflection like a budgie on acid.

Her *bff* ignores her, deep in concentration as she re-applies blood-red lipstick with precision.

Once the ritual is completed, they take a number of selfies before pushing past the rest of us as if they're in an episode of *Real Housewives*.

I splash my face with water and hydrate, instantly regretting letting Amara and Linh drag me out to this club.

Outside, my anxiety kicks.

Weaving through the crowded room, in the darkness neon illuminates faces like an Andy Warhol painting, enhancing the good bits and giving everyone their fifteen minutes of fame.

Pushing through a pack of *bros*, I ignore them as they attempt to get my attention, and keep moving. The boys in this club are seriously thirsty. When I get to the bar it takes me five minutes to get the bar bitch’s attention. I order two gin and tonics. When the drinks finally arrive, I finish one, before taking the other with me.

On the periphery of the dance floor a posse of *Zyzz* clones are inspecting their ‘beautifully sculptured goods’ while fist pumping the air. When did *this* become a thing again? One of the boys takes his shirt off. Moments later a bouncer orders him to put it back on. That was funny.

Some guy pushes his body against mine. When I look over, he's purposely staring out into the crowd above my head before glancing down at me with an idiotic 'cool guy' expression. He wants me to believe that he may consider fucking me if I’m lucky, but he has an abundance of choice. It’s a subtle form of *negging* that I find tiresome. He takes me in, then mouths the words, ‘what's up?’

I mouth the words, ‘fuck off.’

He slithers away.

I spot Linh dancing with Amara as Doja Cat’s *Kiss Me More – featuring SZA* blasts from the speakers. Boys surround Linh gravitating to her energy. She’s enigmatic and has natural

charisma and has always been able to draw the room into her orbit. I fell in love with her as soon as we met. Everybody does. She spots me and waves me over.

Her arms around my neck, pushing her body up against mine, sweat trickles down her face as she stares into my eyes and mimes the opening lyrics to *Pyramids* by Frank Ocean. I want this moment to last forever. I close my eyes and surrender to the beats, the music permeating throughout my body as the synth kicks in, his voice like syrup.

In the other room, the music is more chill. Guys move aside as we approach the bar, hoping to earn Amara's attention from their gallantry. She smiles in gratitude then signals to the bartender. The other one. He arrives on command. The perks of being Amara. She orders vodka and orange for the three of us then ignores all eye contact as she waits.

'You come here much?'

I look up and realize he's talking to me. 'That's original.'

He attempts to say something, but nothing comes out.

'I was joking,' I say, feeling guilty because he lacks the confidence of most of the guys in here. 'I hate this place,' I add. 'My friends dragged me here.'

He perks up. 'I'm, Danny.'

'I'm Rose.' I glance over at my friends. 'And this is Linh. And Amara.'

'Hey,' says Linh politely before returning to phone.

Amara forces an obligatory smile, unimpressed; she's only interested in 'high value men'.

He attempts to impress us with his appreciation of the music. I'm the only one listening. It's hard to hear him over the music.

Soon his friends appear. Their names are Abdul and Tony.

Abdul glances down at my breasts, then sheepishly looks out into the crowd.

Tony nods his head up and down and licks his lips to keep them moist.

They're all obviously on drugs.

Amara hands us our drinks as *Apeshit* by Jay Z and Beyonce comes on.

Everybody goes ape shit.

*

A boy that Linh likes follows her around like a puppy dog. He's her type. Tall and handsome. She likes her boys softer, a little sensitive and creative, to counter her dominant nature. Her big personality has never had room for an equal. It hurts watching her with him. Although we both find ourselves in other beds, with other people, we always seem to come back to one another.

Close to me is a couple. They're completely lost in one another. The boy is skinny, attractive in an adolescent way: not a boy, not yet a man. She's short, thick, but carries herself with confidence. She gets on her tippy toes to kiss him. He embraces all of her, completely besotted. I feel a twinge of envy because I want to be loved like that.

A euphoric rush of nostalgia hits me as the piano intro of *Runaway* by Kanye comes on. Amara appears, her face illuminated by strobe lights, like a vixen in a Euro B-grade horror film. I'm soon dragged into the middle of the dance floor. Linh comes over and introduces me to the boy. His name is Atticus. I pretend I'm happy for her.

At the bar a boy stares. He sits alone. I order a vodka and tonic and catch him glancing over again. Our eyes lock. He's cute. My drink arrives and I walk over.

'Hey,' I say.

'Umm... hi,' he replies, shyly.

'You got any friends?'

'Yes.'

'Here?'

'I'm friends with the DJ.'

'You must be really cool, then,' I say, dripping with sarcasm.

'No, *he's* cool,' he replies, imitating my sarcasm, 'I'm just the entourage. Where are your friends?'

'On the dance floor.'

'I'd buy you a drink, but you already got one.'

I skol my drink and place the glass on the bar. 'No, I don't.'

He looks impressed or distressed.

'I'm Henry,' he says.

'I'm Rose.'

He orders me another drink when the bartender arrives to take my glass.

'You wanna meet my friends?' I ask.

He smiles and nods his head.

Once my drink arrives, I take him by the hand and lead him into the main room.

Through the crowd I see one of the boys we met earlier, clearly more fucked up than when we met, his body jerking erratically, arms poking and prodding the air like a homeless crackhead begging for change.

I finally spot Linh in a corner, talking to some girl I vaguely remember from somewhere I can't place. Boy in hand, I push through the crowded room over to her.

When Linh sees me, we hug and she introduces me to the girl I vaguely remember from somewhere I can't place, ignoring my new friend. Her name is Tia. I realise she went to our high school, but left soon after I arrived.

Eventually Linh acknowledges Henry and moments later her rudeness is forgotten.

We all head to the dance floor when *Bodak Yellow* by Cardi B blasts through the room.

Henry dances close by, possessively lingering. I smile seductively and move comes closer, placing his hands around my waist. I press my body against his, then lean in, locking my eyes into his.

We kiss.

I like the taste of this boy.

Linh barges over and takes my head in her hands. Looking directly into my eyes, over the music she shouts, 'I love you!'

I laugh.

She tells me she has a present for me. Then places two capsules into the palm of my hand.

'What is it?' I ask.

'Molly,' she replies, grinning.

“For you, *and* him,’ she shouts.

‘Thanks,’ I shout back.

We have a private moment.

I’ll always be hers.

Satisfied, she glances over at Henry and smiles, then walks off, the room her audience.

Henry holds my hand as we walk around to get some fresh air. We talk. He’s from Box Hill and studies Law at Melbourne Uni. But would prefer to make indie video games. He reveals his parents are both Chinese. His dad from Zhuhai. Mum from Guangzhou. I tell him I was born in China and make fun of him because my Chinese is better than his. He stops in front of a 7-Eleven and asks if I want anything.

‘A coffee,’ I say.

‘Anything else?’

‘No thanks.’

‘Sure?’

‘Yeah,’ I smile, ‘I’m sure.’

He smiles back then walks in.

I get a text from Amara. *U still here?*

Outside getting some fresh air. Be back in a minute. I reply.

Standing alone a car creeps up slowly behind me, an ugly head appearing through the front passenger-side window. ‘SHOW US YA TITS!’ he yells, laughing hysterically as the car speeds off.

That was ‘brave’.

Henry comes back out with our coffees.

Henry pushes me up against the wall as he kisses me. I lightly bite down on his lip when I reach down and squeeze his erect penis playfully. Surprised, he doesn't resist when I take it out of his

jeans and stroke it. Looking into his eyes with a grin I bend down and tease his erection with my tongue before putting it inside my mouth. His fingers gently caress my hair as I find my rhythm. I get aroused by his vulnerability. I could bite down at any moment and... lol.

When Henry goes to check on his DJ friend, I look for mine. I eventually find Amara with a 'high value man' named Paul. He has a quiet self-confidence. Amara introduces us. He reciprocates with a friendly smile.

'Where's Linh?' I ask.

'She left,' replies Amara.

'What?'

'That's why I texted you. I thought you might have left with her.'

'Fuck her! Why didn't she tell me?'

'You know Linh,' she says with a shrug. 'I'm gonna go home. What are you doing?'

'I don't know.'

'You wanna stay with me tonight?'

'Are you sure?'

'Yeah, of course.'

'Let's go.'

'What about your man?'

'I like him, but I don't want things to get weird.'

'What does that even mean?'

'It means he's nice, but I'm trying to keep my relationships to a minimum.'

Amara rolls her eyes affectionately. 'Okay, whatever.' She looks over at Paul. 'We're going.'

'I'll call you during the week,' he says, clearly hiding his disappointment.

She kisses him on the cheek without saying a word, then takes my hand and leads me through the dance floor.

On the way out I spot Danny staring at us.

I smile and wave.

He doesn't smile back.

Rose Hong-Robson

@rosehongrobson

Gwyneth Paltrow has moved on from giving her bestie's bulimia to trolling women worldwide.

2 hours ago

870 Retweets **40** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson

1 year ago

Climate change is going to kill us. Kim and Kanye name their fourth child Psalm.

Like

Comment

Share

Ch. 4

I like the idea that Jennifer Lawrence is a hologram.

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

So, Linh and me go to the park and take acid. She places the tab on my tongue. It's small and tasteless. I move it around chewing it before swallowing. She says it'll be fine. We're together. That's all that matters

2 years ago

74 Retweets **28** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

A possum is staring at me. It's nocturnal eyes hateful
because I don't belong here.

2 years ago

79 Retweets **21** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

Linh and I laughing because we're the only two people in the world that really know what's going on.

2 years ago

89 Retweets **34** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

I need to go to the toilet. Please don't. Gone

2 years ago

121 Retweets **54** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

Think positive thoughts / think / positive / thoughts /
thoughts / think / positive / think / po / sit / ive / th / oughts /
th / ink / posi / tive / thou / ght / s / thin / k / posit / ive /
though / ts / t / hink / positi / ve / th / ou / gh / t / s / think / p
/ os / itiv / e...

2 years ago

135 Retweets **78** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

...i / think / people are unkind / and only think / of
themselves

2 years ago

167 Retweets **98** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

You okay? Yeah, I'm fine.

2 years ago

203 Retweets **113** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

Walking. Somewhere

2 years ago

206 Retweets **78** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

A Lonely 7-Eleven. Minutes or hours?

2 years ago

267 Retweets **132** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

Inside my eyes sting from the intensity of capitalism.

2 years ago

298 Retweets **178** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

The coffee Machine looks complicated. Linh inspects the interior of a cup mesmerised. Not helpful.

2 hours ago

870 Retweets **40** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

Linh squeezes my hand tight for encouragement. I place a cup in the Machine then press a button. Nothing. I press another button. The machine screeches. We close our eyes helpless.

2 years ago

406 Retweets **182** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

it stops.

2 years ago

503 Retweets **201** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

This is stressful.

2 hours ago

870 Retweets **40** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

We put another cup in the machine. Linh presses a button.
The Machine repeats its painful howl. Liquid haemorrhaging
like an open wound.

2 years ago

932 Retweets **278** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

Then silence.

2 years ago

1,087 Retweets **234** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

Two coffees. Anything else?

Should we get something else? I don't know? Linh thinks hard. I think hard. Just the drinks, we say in unison.

Cash or card?

Linh places a card on the counter smiling triumphantly.

This is a library card.

Oh...

2 years ago

1,472 Retweets **560** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

Outside I taste the bitterness of black coffee. Linh stares into her cup. It's hot water.

2 years ago

2,771 Retweets **846** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

Linh takes my hand and we keep moving...

2 years ago

3,080 Retweets **4,56** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

Southbank. Deserted.

2 years ago

4,609 Retweets **1,098** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

A giant concrete owl is perched up high. It's beady hollow eyes gazing out over a lifeless constructed world

2 hours ago

5,763 Retweets **1,346** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

The casino is a capitalist hell-scape made up of bright lights and gaudy patterned furniture. Dream big. Lose everything

2 years ago

6,720 Retweets **1,840** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

We eventually collapse...

2 years ago

7,092 Retweets **2,040** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

Somewhere.

2 years ago

7,576 Retweets **2,124** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

I close my eyes momentarily drifting in / and / out / of /
consciousness.

2 years ago

8,095 Retweets **2,564** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

The darkness is replaced with golden light. It's magical.
I hold Linh / close to me.

2 years ago

10,870 Retweets **3,440** Favourites

Ch. 5

I know a lot of you are struggling with the origins of the term 'meme' and anyone who thinks queer liberation is possible within capitalism.

That which doesn't kill me makes me stronger, reads a row of golden bullets standing on a plinth, a letter engraved on each one to make the sentence. On the next plinth are more bullets, also lined up. They read, *I am surrounded by love*.

'That's so punk rock', says Robbie, somewhat bitchily as he hands me a glass of red.

Our art history lecturer walks over and stares intensely at the bullets on the plinth.

I say, 'hi,' very awkwardly.

She glances over, condescendingly grins an acknowledgment, then moves on to the next artwork without saying a word.

'I hate that *beee-atch*,' whispers Robbie.

'Me too,' I whisper back, rolling my eyes.

I always get anxious and hyper self-conscious at gallery openings. Robbie on the other hand has no shame. The show is a retrospective of Tony Garifalakis, an artist who came into our department last year to give tutorials. He liked my paintings and was really encouraging. The show is packed. Tony stands front and centre, dressed casually in a checked flannelette shirt and jeans, surrounded by various other established artists, critics and scenesters.

Glasses in hand, Robbie and I weave through the crowded room and head over to a wall of portraits, defaced by black enamel spray-paint except for their eyes or mouths, which feel like small windows into their subjects' soullessness. In one portrait, a businessman laughs hysterically. In another Queen Elizabeth's eye peeks through, inaccessible and unknowable. On her right is an American General stoically looking ahead into a black void. Other demonic portraits keep them company, all malevolent spirits that control us.

On another wall, an atomic bomb explosion, a waterfall, the twin towers are also defaced with the black icky enamel. A book cover is framed. Its title reads, *Was Karl Marx a Satanist? By Richard Wurmbrand*. Next to it is a series of nostalgic photographs taken from old magazines – tacky hotel bedrooms, cheap tropical bars, furniture, weird objects – the words, *Scum*, *Scumbag* or *Scumbucket* printed over them.

In the middle of the gallery space, hung from the ceiling, are two sleeveless biker jackets, one leather, the other denim, both covered in patches that read: *1%, 13, Ride with Me, FTW, Honor Guard* and *President*. Sewn on the back of each of the jackets are large patches bearing the official logos of the *European Union* and the *United Nations*.

Big sheets of colourful plastic sheets are pinned-up on the far end gallery wall. When we get closer, I realise they have text printed in the same colour. The artworks are titled: *Trash Talk*. The text on the various plastic sheets reads: *Doomed and Defeated; I'm gonna kill you and bury you in a box half your size; Suffer Time; And You'll Die a Thousand Deaths*.

I finish my wine and ask Robbie if he wants another.

'I'm good for now,' he replies, elegantly swishing his half glass.

I head over to the wine table and grab another glass, then go into a separate room where there's an instillation.

Inside, the wall is painted black, and the main light is turned off. A dim spotlight illuminates three large piles of papers that sit on a cheap wooden pallet. A large notice is pinned on the wall above the piles of paper. It reads, *25 Ways to Suppress Truth: Rules of Disinformation. By H. Michael Sweeney*.

I text Linh. *u coming? I'm already here*.

Feeling my confidence rise as the alcohol kicks in, I spot Rashid, Leila and Michael, who have just arrived. I go over and say hello.

'How cool is this show!' I merrily declare, finally feeling the warm buzz of the alcohol kick in.

'Yeah, *cool!*' says Leila, her tone dripping with sarcasm.

'Look at you, *girrrlllll*,' says Michael, amused.

Nick comes over. 'Great to see you all here,' he says, smiling warmly.

'I *love* Tony's work,' replies Leila, her sarcasm instantly evaporating into inquisitive student. 'Is he coming in this year to do tutorials?'

'I'm not sure, but I want to talk to him about it. I hope so.' He looks over at me. 'I think he'd be helpful in relation to the work you're doing at the moment. He's been exploring the semiotics of power for a long time and also engages in sub-cultural aesthetics. You guys want me to introduce you?'

‘Sure!’ replies Michael.

‘Let’s go,’ says Nick, encouragingly.

We all follow Nick.

‘Hey, Nick,’ smiles Tony when we arrive, ‘How’s things?’

‘You know, moving along.’ He glances over at us. ‘I’d like you to meet some of my students. This is Michael, Rashid, Leila and Rose.’

‘How’s all your work going?’ asks Tony warmly.

Michael answers with false modesty and disingenuous compliments. Leila asks ‘intelligent’ questions and Rashid talks politics. Suddenly Lauren appears out of nowhere and cuts in, dominating the conversation with the confidence of somebody that grew up in Camberwell. She name-drops people they both know as if he is her peer. I feel stupid standing there listening to a conversation nobody wants me to participate in, so I walk off to get another drink.

The guy looking after the wine greases me off as I pick up another free glass. I skol it, then take another before turning my back to him.

Linh appears, embracing me as if we’d been separated for years, then picks up a glass of wine.

‘Cool show,’ she declares, before taking a sip.

‘I think I want to go,’ I say.

She ignores me and looks over at the person behind me. Smiles. ‘Hey, you look *really* important. What do you do?’

Looking somewhat surprised but flattered, he says, ‘Me? I’m an art critic.’

‘Wow,’ she replies with performed enthusiasm. ‘Have you met my friend? She’s in her third year at the VCA and her work is *fucking* amazing.’

‘Hi,’ I mumble, humiliated.

‘Hello,’ he replies, mildly amused.

‘This is my friend Linh.’

‘I noticed,’ he says, obviously drawn to her big dick energy. ‘So, are you also studying art too?’

‘I’m an actor. I’m writing and directing a play for this years Melbourne Fringe Festival.’

‘Good for you,’ he says, forcing a smile.

Moments later Linh has the art critic fixated on everything she’s doing with her life. She then makes him promise to come to her performance and bring all his ‘creative’ friends. And to come my next show and review it. Seduced, mesmerised, and flustered, he agrees to all her demands. The Linh takes my hand and makes a grand exit, leading me out the door to a bar nearby.

US super-rich 'pay almost no income tax' - BBC News: Details claiming to reveal how little income tax US billionaires pay have been leaked to a news website. ProPublica says it has seen the tax returns of some of the world's richest people, including Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk and Warren Buffett. The website alleges Amazon's Jeff Bezos paid no tax in 2007 and 2011, while Tesla's Elon Musk paid nothing in 2018. A White House spokeswoman called the leak "illegal", and the FBI and tax authorities are investigating. 59,621 views. [sic]

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

All rich people dying. I'll get what I want because if I visualise it everyday.

5 hours ago

84 Retweets **9** Favourites

‘Rose?’ I look up and see a boy I can’t place. He gives me a funny look. ‘We met at Revolver,’ he says. ‘Did we?’ ‘Yeah.’ He takes a seat across from me as the train begins moving. ‘Henry. Remember? We umm... hooked up.’ ‘Oh, yeah,’ I reply, embarrassed. ‘You look... really different.’ ‘I saw on Facebook that your dad died. I’m sorry.’ ‘Yeah... we weren’t that close.’ ‘Where are you heading?’ ‘Just meeting a friend. You?’ ‘Finished work. Just going home.’ ‘Cool,’ I mumble, glancing out the window. ‘I get off here...’ ‘I guess I’ll see you around then,’ he replies, disappointed. ‘Yeah, maybe,’ I reply, then get up and walk over to the doors. I can feel him staring but will myself not to look back. The train finally screeches to a stop. I open the door and step onto the platform. As the train begins moving again, I glance over. For a moment we lock eyes. Then he’s gone.

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

Remember when Jennifer Lawrence earning 20 million dollars a movie was a win for all women... except it wasn't.

4 years ago

8,001 Retweets **919** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson

5 minutes ago

More than 470 First Nations people have died in custody. We demand justice. To all Australians that can't be with us today, we request you use your voice to raise awareness of the oppression of First Nations Peoples. We demand justice! Marching peacefully together, unified as one, on the land of the Bunurong Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Eastern Kulin Nation who are the traditional custodians, we show solidarity and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We demand justice! The federal government must revisit the recommendations made in the Royal Commission thirty years ago prior and fully implement them across all sectors. We demand justice! Since the royal commission, no police officer or authority has been convicted for black deaths in custody. We demand justice! There needs to be accountability. We demand justice! Five deaths in five weeks. We demand justice!

Like

Comment

Share

College Bros Get a Reality Check / efukt.com [sic]

Rose Hong-Robson

11 hours ago

The actual moment is a blur except for his words: You're gonna be ganged raped you fucking Asian whore. Then he lifted up his phone and took my picture. Then said: We're gonna find you. There's no way to hide. He stared directly into my eyes with a shit-eating grin. That is until my fist connected to his throat. That was the photo that became front page news. Him on the ground looking up in horror. Me standing over him smiling back. The headline: I Can't Breathe. The media have no shame. Suddenly the crowd enveloped me. Bottles were thrown. Violence erupted. They reported it as a riot. Blackness blamed. Whiteness exonerated. No surprises there.

Like

Comment

Share

CH. 6

ok lemme give you some advice: yeah hi, could you not?

Scott Colt: Our guest tonight is Rose Hong-Robson, a young woman who has gone viral due to a violent altercation she had at a protest that led to a riot. She has agreed to speak with us tonight about the incident and tell her side of the story. [Smiles] Rose, thanks for joining us.

Rose Hong-Robson: [Smiles back]. Happy to be here.

Scott Colt: There is footage of you violently assaulting a man who was peacefully showing support for the dedicated men and women in the police force that risk their lives everyday for our safety. Many people are asking *why* you would do such a thing?

Rose Hong-Robson: I was defending myself.

Scott Colt: From what?

Rose Hong-Robson: Racial abuse and threats of rape and violence.

Scott Colt: Did this man hit you?

Rose Hong-Robson: Did you want him to?

Scott Colt: Of course not. It's just your accusations have not been officially confirmed by anyone else outside social media comments. There *is* undeniable proof you assaulted this man...

Rose Hong-Robson: Defended myself from this man.

Scott Colt: But you attacked first.

Rose Hong-Robson: When a *man* who is twice my size starts yelling in my face that I'm a half-breed whore that needs to be raped, then photographs me and threatens to spread the image all over the internet so I'll be targeted to be raped...

Scott Colt: So, you attacked him for taking your picture?

Rose Hong-Robson: Let me finish!

Scott Colt: Go ahead. I'm just trying to get the facts.

Rose Hong-Robson: Do you find his behaviour acceptable?

Scott Colt: **Scott Colt:** I'm just trying to understand what happened.

Rose Hong-Robson: I just told you.

Scott Colt: **Scott Colt:** We don't have recordings of the incident you described.

Rose Hong-Robson: You think I'm lying?

Scott Colt: I wasn't there. But there *is* video evidence of you attacking this man.

Rose Hong-Robson: Defending myself!

Scott Colt: Because he threatened you?

Rose Hong-Robson: Yes.

Scott Colt: A lot of people don't like me. They write all sorts of threats. But I can't just punch people who I feel threatened by—

Rose Hong-Robson: It was not in the comments section. This man took a picture of me without my consent and—

Scott Colt: Do you believe violence was necessary?

Rose Hong-Robson: Do you believe it's okay to rape women?

Scott Colt: No. Most definitely not!

Rose Hong-Robson: Then why are you defending him?

Scott Colt: I'm simply interviewing you to get *your* side of the story.

Rose Hong-Robson: Well, I've told you *my* side of the story.

Scott Colt: Would you consider yourself part of, or in support of, the organisation *Antifa*?

Rose Hong-Robson: It's a movement, not an organisation. But, yes, I'm against fascist organisations and ideologies.

Scott Colt: Well, many consider the *Antifa movement* a left-wing terrorist organisation.

Rose Hong-Robson: No, right-wing fascists consider *Antifa* a left-wing terrorist organisation.

Scott Colt: So, you're a fascist if you consider *Antifa* a left-wing terrorist organisation?

Rose Hong-Robson: It does stand for *Anti-Fascist*.

Scott Colt: But many *Antifa* so-called protests lead to violence.

Rose Hong-Robson: That's because Fascists attack them.

Scott Colt: What do you believe is a fascist?

Rose Hong-Robson: A group of people or organisation that follows a dictator that attacks women, immigrants and other minority groups. Like News Corp. [Laughs].

Scott Colt: You believe News Corp is a fascist organisation?

Rose Hong-Robson: [Smiling] Well, the organisation *does* fulfil the criteria?

Scott Colt: I have to oppose you there. That's a false statement and you know it!

Rose Hong-Robson: Do you think it's okay to spread racist, misogynistic and homophobic lies?

Scott Colt: Are you saying people should *not* be allowed to say things that *you* think are untrue?

Rose Hong-Robson: You can sit there and downplay fascism as a right to free speech, patriotism or whatever you want to call it, but the reality is that to support or tolerate any neo-fascist movement allows hate speech to spread into the mainstream. And this 'news' network uses right-wing identity politics to justify fascism.

Scott Colt: I think we'll have to agree to disagree on that one. But to my last question, do *you* think people should be able to voice their opinions if you don't agree with them?

Rose Hong-Robson: When somebody celebrates genocide of a different culture, race, or religion, that is not freedom.

Scott Colt: So, people should be *cancelled* if they publicly state things you disagree with?

Rose Hong-Robson: If you're going to threaten to gang-rape me because I have a different opinion than you, then yes, there should be consequences.

Scott Colt: But isn't destroying a person's livelihood because they don't adhere to the right pronoun a kind of Fascism?

Rose Hong-Robson: I find it disturbing that you think people wanting to be respected and identified by a broader spectrum of pronouns is Fascist, yet when a man threatens to get me raped, he's just expressing his right to free speech.

Scott Colt: I'm simply asking if you believe in destroying somebody's life because they don't adhere to the right pronoun?

Rose Hong-Robson: When was the last time you witnessed a transgendered person walk into a kindergarten with a gun and open fire?

Scott Colt: I find that statement offensive.

Rose Hong-Robson: [Smirks] I'm simply asking a question.

Scott Colt: I'm against all forms of bullying, and 'cancelling' people is bullying. It stifles free speech and goes against the core values of a free democratic country.

Rose Hong-Robson: Are you serious? *You're* against bullying? You propagate public smear campaigns against anyone who goes against the owner of this fake news network all the time. Isn't that cancelling people?

Scott Colt: This show is about allowing all types of people to give their opinions on issues that are of public interest. You're an example. Nobody tells me what I *can* or *cannot* ask. This network is a strong proponent of free speech.

Rose Hong-Robson: No, your job is giving your audience a version of the world that makes them feel comfortable, and *you* get rewarded for pushing the 'right' agendas. You're a millionaire paid by a billionaire. The whole mainstream media is corrupted. Our democracy is an illusion. Rupert Murdoch decides who runs our country.

Scott Colt: That sounds a lot like a conspiracy theory?

Rose Hong-Robson: Conspiracy theory? Two Prime Ministers from opposing sides of the political divide have said this. Rupert Murdoch isn't even an Australian anymore! So, the guy who dictates who gets voted in as Prime Minister of Australia is a foreign national. If you think about it, it's a form of treason!

Scott Colt: [Laughs]. Your late father was a comedian and told offensive jokes. Is this all a big joke to you?

Rose Hong-Robson: He just died and you're bringing him up?

Scott Colt: His drug problems were well known. Was that difficult as a child?

Rose Hong-Robson: I'm not interested in talking about my father. This whole thing is a distraction. We are protesting the lack of accountability for the four hundred and seventy First Nation deaths in custody. Why, after thirty years, is there still no accountability?

Scott Colt: Does public support of the police force offend you?

Rose Hong-Robson: The so-called Blue Lives Matter 'movement' is a deliberate provocation to the Black Lives Matter movement.

Scott Colt: Supporting the police force is a provocation?

Rose Hong-Robson: You don't believe they were there to provoke a peaceful protest?

Scott Colt: Peaceful protest? It was a *riot*.

Rose Hong-Robson: It was peaceful until they all started attacking everyone.

Scott Colt: But *you* started the violence when you attacked a man who had a different opinion than you.

Rose Hong-Robson: It wasn't like that. It just happened.

Scott Colt: It *just* happened?

Rose Hong-Robson: I was defending myself.

Scott Colt: Do you feel at all responsible for the violence that erupted?

Rose Hong-Robson: I... don't know. Everything happened so fast.

Scott Colt: [Smiles]. Well, that's all we have time for tonight. Rose, thank you for coming in.

Rose Hong-Robson: [Quietly] Thanks for inviting me.

The Colbert Report
@ColbertReport

I am willing to show #Asian community I care by introducing Ching-Chong Ding-Dong Foundation for Sensitivity to Orientals or Whatever. [sic]

6 years ago

193 Retweets **255** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson @rosehongrobson . 6 years ago
Replying to @ColbertReport

'Edgy joke!' Next day leaves wife, buys leather jacket and plays tambourine for the Hollywood Vampires.

322,001 Retweets **1,953** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

I'm not sorry
For punching you in the throat
And making you cry
Because

You're a terrible person
Who hates yourself
And

Nobody will love you
If you can't
Love yourself

1 hour ago

102 Retweets **57** Favourites

Karol

“You know what the problem is, though? It’s definitely not me. I think it’s everybody else.”

[Definition] A Carol is the irritating but deadly combination of a person who exhibits the behaviour of both a Karen (1) and a Troll (2). Karen + Troll = Karol.

(1) Karen “I’m going to call the police!” [Definition] *Usually a white woman, between the ages of 18 and death, who is more concerned about her own safety rather than the freedom of everyone else. She will take on authoritarian and tyrannical tendencies if the government tells her that people's freedoms will cause her to be "unsafe". She will also use appeals to emotion, rather than factual evidence when discussing political or socio-economic issues.*

(2) Troll [Definition] *Someone who deliberately pisses people off online to get a reaction.*

Rose Hong-Robson 'jokes' about murdered children to push her political agenda

Suzie Rawling, The Daily Herald

Rose Hong-Robson, whose assault of a peaceful protester created a riot and went viral on social media. Hailed as a martyred Saint by the Far-Left, she was invited to give her side of the story on the program Scott Colt Tonight. In the interview, Rose Hong-Robson referenced the senseless killings of children in a kindergarten from a lone wolf shooter that happened in Iowa, USA last February to push her agenda. Social media comments have flooded in, disgusted by her disrespect for the parents of those deceased children.

“Absolutely disgraceful. Using the murdered children by a disturbed crazy person to push the far Left’s political agenda is a disgusting. My condolences to the parents,” wrote Will Johnson.

“I’m ashamed that she is Australian because she clearly doesn’t share the Australian values our diggers fought for. Not only has she disrespected those poor children's lives, but she has made the parents have to relive it all over again because she wants some attention. Typical millennial. Plenty have died so you can enjoy Australian freedoms. If you don’t value your life in Australia, LEAVE!” wrote Elizabeth Linski.

Senator the Hon. John Donaldson, Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment told The Melbourne Times that, “It is an outrage that we have vigilantes who use the freedoms our diggers have fought for time and time again to divide the nation.” He further stated that “Tens of thousands of Australians have gone to war and paid the ultimate sacrifice for the freedoms we take for granted. It’s obscene that young people like Rose Hong-Robson can't seem to acknowledge that.”

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

Oprah threatened to put me in hospital. JK Rowling accused me of terrorism. Kanye West got angry because I made fun of The Lego Movie and 'that guy' from Toy Story that isn't Tom Hanks called me a tool of the zionist internationalist menace. It's times like these I wish I had a pet.

1 month ago

102,894 Retweets **578** Favourites

Pirate King 3 years ago

I love coming back here just cuz everyone's so nice in the comment section which is really hard to find nowadays! 😊 [sic]

[View](#)

[Reply](#)

Ch. 7

Congratulations! Now go out there and be the worst.

Mauro Perasso

She seriously doesn't hear herself?? this person is DELUSIONAL. [sic]

Like Reply

Talia Ferro

Why are we giving so much power to people who are clearly severely mentally ill? [sic]

Like

Reply

mrmoofle

If she actually believes one word coming out of her own mouth, she must be certifiably insane.
[sic]

Like

Reply

P Hirokashimoto

What a diseased mind. [sic]

Like Reply

Mister E

I thought Asians were supposed to be smart. [sic]

Like Reply

LionHead84

And then when she gets hit back it's "oh I'm just a girl!" [sic]

Like Reply

Ren

I'd gladly punch that woman, take me to jail it would be worth it [sic]

Like Reply

nick62040

She needs to be on the receiving end of a #10 beatdown. [sic]

Like

Reply

Poot poot Gaming

did she just basically describe herself as a fascist? [sic]

Like Reply

Ethan Back

She tries to use violence to shut down opposition, to silence people of different opinions. That's exactly what a fascist would do. [sic]

Like

Reply

Sue Michaelson

She deserves to be in Prison!!!! Can't believe what I just heard. [sic]

Like Reply

Flour Power

I want to punch her and her kind in the face, what does that say about me? [sic]

Like Reply

Ft Pillow

freaking riceball slope [sic]

Like Reply

Charlie B

Skank [sic]

Like Reply

daniel280456

Those weak punches have brought shame to the Shaolin temple and to her ancestors. [sic]

Like Reply

Derfel Cadam

LOL it always makes me laugh the way that Leftists think people only have the right to agree with them. Free speech works both ways, snowflakes. [sic]

Like Reply

Rayana

dystopian times we're living in [sic]

Like

Reply

part / **two** // luca

Ch. 8

Neo vs sad keanu.

Luca, 29

23 miles away Active 8 minutes ago

About Luca

I'm a nice guy.

/b/IRL: It's been nine days since I last masturbated. I've made the conscious choice to refrain from masturbation and any consumption of pornography. To say it's been challenging is an understatement. But it's the only way to emancipate myself from the control femoids have over me due to my desire to have sexual intercourse with them. I refuse to punish myself any longer. The compulsion to live vicariously through Chad's superior sexual prowess is now over! I will not be humiliated by the spectacle of Chad fornicating with the long line of femoids who all willingly defile their bodies so that they can be impaled by his enormous cock. No more will I participate in the display of ecstasy from femoids when they get drenched in Chad's semen while I pathetically fumble around with my own inadequate deformed organ, the unwanted semen distributed into a dried up old sock that will be discarded on the floor after use. Chad ridicules us with his vast sexual accomplishments knowing it weakens our spirit. But it stops with the choice to abstain.

'Luuuu-ca!' calls out Nonna from her bedroom. 'Luuuuuuuuu-ca!'

'I'M FUCKKKKIIING COMMMING!' I yell back.

It's 10 am and I haven't slept as I've been on an all-night rampage instigating online fury. I disconnect from the comforts of virtuality once again become aware of my flesh body. It comes to my attention that my legs are numb and my back hurts. I grab some track pants off the floor and put them on before I go see what she wants.

'Did I wake you?' she asks meekly when I enter her bedroom.

'Nah. I was working.'

'What you working?'

'I infiltrated a group of bad people and exposed them.'

'Why these people bad?'

'They want to destroy our freedom to think.'

'Why they do this?'

'Because they want to control the world.'

‘And you stop them?’

‘Yep. That's my job. To stop them.’

‘You work so hard,’ she mumbles irritably. ‘They don't even pay you. I think they take advantage of you.’

‘It's for the revolution, Nonna.’

‘Luca, I know you want to change the world but first you need find wife and have family. I want to see you happy.’

‘I'm fine,’ I reply, opening the curtains.

The morning light reveals her broken body.

We share the same burden. A defective body that has no place in society. Hers from old age. Mine since birth.

I moved in with my Nonna when I was thirteen because the Confrontational Unreasonable Narcissistic Tormentor, also known as the *woman* that gave birth to me, thought it would be a good idea when she got remarried to Captain Save-a-Ho, whom she refers to as Andrew. The Sperm Donor that impregnated the Confrontational Unreasonable Narcissistic Tormentor, sometimes referred to as ‘Dad’, is very busy. He lives in Sydney, and has remarried a Cupcake in her 20s. She has a lifestyle blog and a pet Chihuahua named Prada.

‘I made mess,’ says Nonna quietly, avoiding eye contact.

She receives my hands as I help her lift herself out of her bed. I prop her up as she hobbles over to a dusty old armchair that sits in a corner of her room. I then strip her bed and go through her closet to find a towel, placing it on the wet patch before putting a fresh bed sheet on. Next, I get a warm cloth from the bathroom and wash her body. It's frail and bony. We never talk when we go through this ritual. It's humiliating for the both of us. Last, I change her loose nightie for a fresh one before putting her back into bed.

‘I'll make us some tea and toast,’ I tell her.

‘You such good boy,’ she says, smiling back.

She's done a lot of work in New York with disabled children, taking aged people shopping, working in pet refuges, and helping build houses for the needy.

The Darkcel Podcast | Episode #71: Forced Social Isolation / Alienation & Why It's Not Your Fault: Just wanted to get into the topic of forced social isolation and even alienation at the worst. This happens to a lot of us, but we're seen as the perpetrators [sic] to our own demises. This is simply not true, take a listen and tell me what you guys think? 953 views. [sic]

< Back **(* __ *) Luca** More

Sep 12, 2019, 11:56 AM

(* __ *) Hey There!

Sep 12, 2019, 11:58 AM

Hello ;)

Sep 12, 2019, 11:59 AM

(* __ *) Do you like ass games?

Sep 12, 2019, 12:00 AM

...

Sep 13, 2019, 9:34 PM

(* __ *) I like ass games.

/b/

/b/ is the guy who tells the cripple ahead of him in line to hurry up.
/b/ is first to get to the window to see the car accident outside.
/b/ is the one who wrote your number on the mall's bathroom wall.
/b/ is a failing student who makes passes at his young attractive English teacher.
/b/ is the guy loitering on Park Ave. that is always trying to sell you something.
/b/ is the one who handed his jizz-drenched clothes to Good Will. [sic]
/b/ is one who introduced you first to Goatse.
/b/ is a hot incest dream that you'll try to forget for days.
/b/ is the only one of your group of friends to be secure in his sexuality and say anything.
/b/ is the guy without ED who still likes trying Viagra.
/b/ is the best friend that tags along for your first date and cock-blocks throughout night. The decent girl you're trying to bag walks out on the date, /b/ laughs and takes you home when you're drunk, and you wake up to several hookers in your house who /b/ called for you.
/b/ is a friend that constantly asks you to try mutual masturbation with him.
/b/ is the guy who calls a suicide hotline to hit on the advisor.
/b/ is nuking the hard-drive next time someone knocks on his door.
/b/ is the one who left a used condom outside the schoolyard.
/b/ is the voice in your head that tells you that it doesn't matter if she's drunk.
/b/ is the friend who constantly talks about your mom's rack. [sic]
/b/ is the only one who understands what the hell you're saying.
/b/ is someone who would pay a hooker to eat his ass, and only that.
/b/ is the uncle who has touched you several times.
/b/ is still recovering in the hospital after trying something he saw in a hentai.
/b/ is the pleasure you feel guilty of when you tried playing with your anus during masturbation.
/b/ is wonderful.

#4Chan #/b/ #internet #anonymous #fuckwin

by AnonymosisWatching August 11, 2006 [sic]

Jordan Peterson: Why Do Nice Guys Nice Finish Last? (MUST WATCH): If you are struggling or having a hard time, consider taking an online therapy session with our partner BetterHelp! [sic] Subscribe for Motivational Videos Every Weekday, Helping You Get Through The Week! Special Thanks To Jordan Peterson for the license to share! Support his Patreon. 2,354,005 views. [sic]

(५)

Chad, 29

123 miles away Active 28 minutes ago

About Chad

Yo im Chad u don't like me 2 bad..things u should know bout me cus ull see the ankle monitor.im a convicted child rapist/molestor. Its in my past..made some mistakes but workin each day to fix em..lookin for fun, longer stuff is cool..but cant be around in a month cause i have to go back to jail for stupid thing between me n my ex, she is overreacting about a few slaps i gave her a year ago. hmu. aint that bad srsly. [sic]

/ b / I R L: It's been fifteen days since I last masturbated. David J. Ley PhD discovered that femoids see sexist males as more attractive. No surprises there. He further proves that even *feminists* displayed similar levels of attraction to sexist men. Kate Iselin, a *feminist* that writes for 'The Guardian', has stated that 'dating male feminists turned out to be one of the least empowering decisions she's ever made'. They don't want nice guys. They want Chad. Fact!

The ugly truth is that everybody is not worthy of love. That just 'being yourself' doesn't get you friends. There isn't a person for everybody. Telling us to go to the gym and improve ourselves is delusional. It will not change anything. There is no therapy for my face. I am a victim of my inferior genetics and society has deemed me unworthy of love. I accept the truth and refuse to participate in this big lie. I will not self-improve. I will not adhere to society's expectations of hygiene. I will not get a job. Or buy a house. Or plan for a family of my own one day. Why? Because I am a nice guy and nice guys finish last.

This how the world *really* works.

Nice guy tells her she's beautiful. Chad tells her he'll fuck her if she puts a bag over her head – guess what? Chad gets the girl!

Nice guy asks her if she's interested in dinner and a movie. Chad calls and demands she drive over to his house to suck his dick – once again. Chad gets the fucking girl!

Nice guy spends all of his lunchtime helping her with her homework. She sees Chad walking past in the corridor. Leaves – yep. Chad gets the girl!

Nice guy likes anime – he's a pervert! Chad likes anime – he's into 'popular culture'.

Nice guy plays video games – nerd! Chad plays video games – 'typical guy'. Lol.

Nice guy is quiet and shy – weirdo! Chad is quiet and shy – ohhh, he's sooooo deep.

Statistically, a significant percentage of women are like this.

Why?

Because everybody loves Chad.

And I have a Tinder account to prove it.

Tonight Brooke has made a connection with Chad.

Brooke is twenty-five. Her Tinder bio reads: *Kissing makes my whole day, but threesomes make my hole weak. As a Goddess I am very romantic, but I don't fuck around. Msg me if you play Pokemon. Btw I also do anal.* Brooke is telling potential mates she is looking for love but also 'fun to be around'.

Time to expose the hypocrisy.

Feb 3, 2019, 5:13 PM

Chad: *Hey.*

Brooke: *Hi handsome!*

Chad: *You wanna bang or what?*

Feb 3, 2019, 5:22 PM

Brooke: *Wow, you're forward.*

Chad: *You have a problem with my past?*

Brooke: *Well, it seems like you paid for your mistakes and you're bettering yourself.*

Chad is a convicted child rapist and went to jail but fuck it, look at those abs. Of course she wants to fuck Chad. Who wouldn't?

Chad: *Just get over here and suck my dick.*

Brooke: *I like a man that bosses me around.*

Of course you do you fucking whore!

Chad: *You must swallow!*

Brooke: *Doesn't everyone?*

Statistically, a significant percentage of women are like this.

Feb 3, 2019, 5:25 PM

Chad: *Meet me in the McDonald's toilets on the corner of Albion Street and Lygon Streets. 9 pm. Don't be late!*

Feb 3, 2019, 5:26 PM

Brooke: *Wow. Can't wait.*

Neither can I. Because tonight the ugly truth will be recorded, uploaded and revealed. Brooke will be named and shamed for the superficial shallow cock carousel she really is.

To kill time, I watch the last few episodes of *Kaguya-sama: Love Is War*. Season One. It's original title in Japanese is *Kaguya-sama wa Kokurasetai - Tensai-tachi no Ren'ai Zunōsen* (trans: *Kaguya Wants to Be Confessed To: The Geniuses' War of Hearts and Minds*). The series was created by the studio *AI Pictures* and the overall series direction is from Shinichi Omata (credited under his pseudonym Mamoru Hatakeyama). But individual episodes are directed by Yūjirō Abe, Tarō Kubo, Isono, Masaki Utsunomiya, Tsuyoshi Tobita, Takayuki Kikuchi, Masakazu Obara, Aya Ikeda and Mamoru Hatakeyama, and the series writers are Yasuhiro Nakanishi and Yuki Sugawara. I'm also a big fan of the *manga* (which I have already read) that was written and illustrated by Aka Akasaka.

The overall plot follows Miyuki Shirogane and Kaguya Shinomiya who are in love with each other but are too proud to confess their feelings for one another. They believe that whoever does it first will lose face. The *manga* series follows their many zany schemes to try to make one another confess their love. It's a story about testing the waters before dating, with heart-warming and hilarious results.

The anime series seems to be just as good and there's *sooooo many* funny one-liners, witty retorts and over the top reactions. Miyuki and Kaguya are a good match and the competitive dynamic between them becomes absurdly entertaining. Both are equal in intelligence and wit. Miyuki is better at thinking on his feet while Kaguya is very organised.

The thing that I *love* about Kaguya is that she isn't the sort of femoid who's gonna fuck some moid based on his dick pic. She's smart and funny *and* has class. If I'd continued with my schooling and had not been born with a genetic mutation, I believe Kaguya and I would probably get married if we met. I do have to mention Kaguya's best friend, Chika Fujiwara, a friend since Junior High, who is clueless about Kaguya and Miyuki's mutual attraction and seems to undo every scheme, ploy, and expectation they both have. She's cheerful, friendly and very attractive. I could see myself being with her too.

So far, the standout episode of Season One has to be Episode Three, in which Chika and Miyuki read a women's magazine article about teens 'doing it'. It's funny because Kaguya thinks it's not a big deal, misunderstanding the euphemism. I thought it was hilarious. Overall, I'm definitely looking forward to watching the second season.

'Can I get a Big Mac, medium fries and a cock, *please*.'

'Excuse me?'

'I *said*, can I get a Big Mac, medium fries and a cock?'

'You want a Big Mac, medium fries and a coke, yeah?'

'That's what I said.'

'That'll be \$10.95.'

I hand her a twenty.

She snatches the note, unable to hide her disapproval at my existence.

Statistically, a significant percentage of women are like this.

I take my food and sit in a corner near the back and message Brooke.

Feb 3, 2019, 9:05 PM

Chad: *Where u at?*

Brooke: *B There soon ;). Meet me in the first cubicle of the men's toilets.*

After I finish my meal, I walk into a toilet cubicle and push out a massive shit. I was originally just going to film her waiting for Chad on her own, but this will be funnier. She'll open the cubicle to me filming her reaction. The smell of my shit will be the icing on the cake. Then I'll follow her as she flees the scene in humiliation while I trail after her demanding to know why she wants to meet a child rapist in a McDonald's toilet. It'll be hilarious.

Feb 3, 2019, 9:13 PM

Chad: *Where are you?*

I know what she's trying to do. She's making Chad wait so by the time she arrives his throbbing dick will be ready to impale her. That's what all women do. They act like they want a relationship but in reality they just play mind games. But here's the thing. Femoids want Chad more than Chad want femoids. That is unless the femoid is on a higher docile scale, which means she may accept a Brad or below, in which case she's probably grooming him to be cucked by Chad eventually.

Feb 3, 2019, 9:23 PM

Chad: *You close?*

Who does she think she fucking is keeping Chad waiting? Chad doesn't wait. Chad is going to have to let the bitch know that Chad is unhappy.

Feb 3, 2019, 10:03 PM

Chad: *Where the fuck are you?*

Feb 3, 2019, 10:34 PM

Chad: *You're not coming are you?*

Feb 3, 2019, 10:56 PM

Brooke: *No.*

Chad: *You fucking whore.*

Brooke: *You're the one waiting in a McDonalds' toilet for sex. Lol.*

Typical. Nice guy finishes last. Again.

The Darkcel Podcast | Episode #130: She Never Wanted You to Begin With... Never Be "That Guy" She never wanted you to begin with... don't be "that guy", that "guy" as in me, as in, I made those mistakes that define me to this day. Don't fall into that hole that will drag you to the depths of the brimstones of defeat. 1,085 views. [sic]

Logan Paul

@LoganPaul

board a plane. flight attendant gives me the old eyeball. up and down: High socks. short shorts shaggy blonde hair. picture perfect fuk boy

give him my ticket. first class?

Stunned, he goes "oh. wow." And points me to my seat.

DON'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER 🙌🙌 [sic]

7/15/17, 8:29PM

2665 Retweets **32.7k** Likes

Ch. 9

Incel uprising at the maid cafe.

/ b / I R L: I's been twenty-seven days since I last masturbated. A new Chad hive has appeared on Sydney Road. A Stacey stands outside, flaunting her body in skin-tight lycra. She shoves a voucher into my hand as I walk past before harassing a middle-aged man, pitching her 'services'. She knows a cuck when she sees one.

She maps out a training schedule for him so he can build a 'better body' for a 'better self'. He nods his head like a good dog while salivating over her tits. It's obvious her victim is married to a cock carousel who refuses to fuck him while he works his arse off day in day out. Because on her 'girls night out' she fucks Chad.

Statistically, a significant percentage of women are like this.

I go inside the Chad hive for the *lulz*. High-energy techno blares from the speakers. At reception, a Chad sweating roids takes me in, clearly amused. His nametag reads, *Kon*. He's ripped, hard bodied and sculptured to perfection. His singlet shows cleavage.

Kon listens to *The Joe Rogan Experience*, has a hard-on for films starring Mark Wahlberg, and walks around music festivals with his shirt off. He's the kind of guy that punches a femoid he impregnated in the gut to make sure she miscarries, but still knows she'll still come back for more. On a docile scale, he was most likely a six (due to his face), but through 'hard work' his body brought him up to a nine.

I place my free gym pass on the counter, then declare, I want to get ripped and fuck bitches.

He nods his head in recognition. He was once me. I now predict he's going to give me the 'we're all gonna make it' speech.

'Bro,' he says with supreme confidence, 'you've taken the first step that will change the rest of your life.'

Bingo!

'I wanna make you my personal project,' he continues. 'This is what I was put on this earth to do. But *you* need to understand something first. This isn't a short-term thing. It's a lifestyle of constant improvement. It takes hard work and dedication. You don't stop once you've

reached some sort of standard. You are constantly striving to improve yourself. That's the revolution. If you're not one hundred percent dedicated, I can't help.'

'I want to get ripped and fuck bitches.'

'That mindset is a start. Now listen carefully. I'm here to guide and inspire, that's what I do. I know you might find this hard to believe, but I used to be an ectomorph like you.'

He's right. I don't accept his lies.

'The revolution is about becoming the man you deserve to be. You feel me?'

'I want to get ripped and fuck bitches.'

'*Good.* Number one. Your diet. Food is fuel. Pure and simple. If you're serious, you need discipline. I'd start you with about three hundred and fifty grams of protein a day. Keep junk food to the bare minimum. If you want to build up your body, respect and understand it. Listen to what your body wants and needs. Now when it comes to supplements, myself, I like to use one pack of animal nitro G, five grams of creatine and ten grams of glutamine. You have to mix the glutamine with water for about an hour before a shake or prior to your first post training meal. Trust me brah, it'll give you an edge.

'Number two. This gym will become your home, your temple, a place of refuge. The people in it, your family. You will be with like-minded people who share the same philosophy. To live your best life. When life gets you down, punish your chest, quads and biceps, it cleanses your spirit. When you come here, you're investing in your *self*, your *goals* and your *future*. In life you can self-destruct or build and grow. It's your choice, bro. I can see you don't respect your body now, but trust me, if you join the revolution, you will! If you put in the work, you will see changes. You will build body mass and muscle, like a house. In order to do that you will need strong foundations: spiritually, physically and emotionally to go the distance. It's all about discipline and structure. If you want to succeed you don't miss days. You don't take holidays. And if you need to travel for work, improvise a routine. If you miss a day or a week, you better work twice as hard the next week to make up for your betrayal. Your mission is routine.

'Number three. Mindset. Enter the gym with a purpose. Set goals to go beyond them. If you are in a positive mindset, you can handle whatever training regime you've given yourself. No matter how your day was. Your headspace is a matter of perspective. When you come in here, always try to do better, demand more of yourself and go that little bit further. Average is not in your vocabulary. Hard work pays off. Anything worth doing takes time. It's called bodybuilding

for a reason. You're building your body brick-by-brick, each day every day. Every meal, every training session is an investment in you. I will set you reasonable goals. You will accomplish them. One step at a time, bro. Each step leads you to your outcome to be a work of art. That work of art is to be admired, inspired, and wired. You're climbing a mountain. One step at a time. Your day will come if you have the courage to take the journey. Are you ready?'

'I want to get ripped and fuck bitches.'

Suddenly, his face screws up in disgust as the stench of my silent but *very* violent fart drifts into his nostrils. This one is particularly strong due to my digestion problems. He backs away with an expression of repulsion. I myself am smiling from ear to ear.

At home, I easily find Kon's Facebook profile. It's on public. *Kek*. He has a vast collection of photos of himself with other Chads in homoerotic poses. There's also a number of semi-professional shots of him *flexing* like a Greek god. The comments section is full of admirers, from Giga-Stacys down to Low-tier-Beckys, all begging him to murder their pussy. Other Chads respect his work ethic while High-tier-normies let him know he is 'inspirin'. Like a true Chad he responds to his 'fans' with humblebrags and messages that all can ascend with 'hard work' and 'dedication'. Kon has become my personal project.

I create a Facebook account as a Giga-Stacy and he instantly 'friends' me because he's a moid. Over time I flirt. We start DM'ing each other a week later. I curate a series of headless nudes for his pleasure. After a few weeks I publicly post on his Facebook profile that I'm underage and that he's impregnated me. He vehemently denies this. Nobody believes him. *Kek*. Two weeks later Kon posts that he's been fired and is in a dark place.

Welcome to the revolution Kon. ;)

Freedom Awareness Campaign

\$238 raised of \$5,000 target

46 donors **23** shares **12** followers

Share

Donate Now

46 people have just made a donation

Luca Romero is organising this fundraiser.

Created 8 days ago / Community

As many of us know freedom of speech is under attack. I am raising funds to create a freedom awareness campaign that brings together the brightest minds to fight against the oppression of cancel culture. Libtards and SJW are raging a war against anything they deem offensive and ruining the lives of regular people because 'they' feel offended. This is an imperialistic assault on our values. Lives are being destroyed. All funds generously donated will go towards creating an educational website and YouTube lecture series that will educate and empower anybody who is under attack.

Donate

Share

Organiser

Luca Romano
Organiser
Brunswick, VIC

Contact

Comments

Jason Jacobson donated \$10

Will support all causes that fight for the freedoms many of us take for granted.

7 hours ago

Lisa Thompson donated \$15

"The most courageous act is still to think for yourself. Aloud." - Coco Chanel

10 hours ago

Matthew Baker donated \$25

Great work!

14 hours ago

Nashville-based lifestyle blogger Tiffany Mitchell denies her mid-accident photo shoot was staged or sponsored. [sic]

/ b / I R L: It's been forty days since I last masturbated. On YouTube I watch the fruits of my labour. Four people dead and twenty in critical condition from a mass shooting at a protest.

The project began when I started agitating Antifa SJW's using a Fakebook account. I call myself Joanne, a non-binary gynocentric feminist shitlib who I have 'based' in San Francisco. Joanne subscribes to the Cathedral and is angry about *everything*. And likes to tell *everybody* about it.

Joanne 'discovered' an article that proved the local police force has been infiltrated by White Supremacists and posted it. Then she posted YouTube clips of police shootings. And more articles of corruption all the way up to the White House. Then she posted clips of a protest in which the police force are seen casually standing by while alt-right alpha-soldiers attack *Antifa* with impunity.

That got her base furious.

Having highlighted the problem, I then supplied a solution. A protest! Joanne declared that *we need everybody out there to show the new Fascist order that this behaviour is not acceptable*. Strength in numbers. It took about a month to organise the SJW Shitlib's to act.

Once the time and date was confirmed, Fedir from Ukraine, a friend and fellow beta-soldier instigated a counter-protest using his avatar Chuck, a faithful cuck that believes in patriotism, freedom and the right to have an opinion! Chuck didn't join the military but fully supports *any* war that America is involved in. He's sick and tired of immigrants leaching off his country, and he believes taxes are theft.

While I was fuelling rage to Joanne's base, Chuck was declaring an all-out war against the libtards. It was art. The comment section is a point of pride for all involved. We shit-posted extensively on both sides of the American divide to stoke the fire before the main event. And many of the rape threats Joanne' received from alt-Right conservadicks were recycled back onto the Facebook accounts of their daughters, a form of ironic performance art that keeps me entertained.

The shooting at the main event have led to various 'opinion pieces' by the lamestream media. They continue our work by 'debating the issue'. Podcasters commodify the message which

trickles down to the general population of normies globally, who further discuss their opinions via social media. More protests are organised. More violence will occur.

The Empire eventually will destroy itself from within. Its weakness lies in its belief in its own exceptionalism. The reality is that patriotism is an illusion. Nobody in that septic tank actually cares about one another. And the only freedom anyone believes in is their own. Like the true whores they are, they will submit all dignity and respect for a price, and willingly sell out their country for more subscribers. When the Empire crumbles, the rest of the West will follow.

As the developing nations rise, we will be there to rebuild their nations in our image. Our power now reaches across liquid borders. Through our fingertips, we control the minds and bodies of those who oppress us. In the flesh world we are weak. Within virtuality we are gods.

That is the revolution. I am (not) alone.

Nick Cannon

@NickCannon

Thought of the day: If every time you hurt someone's feelings you lost a day of your life, how long would you live?
[sic]

Posted 8 years ago

Stoneprecious583 13 hours ago

There is A cure for Herpes virus

I was tested Herpes positive in 2018 which I have been searching for cure from different doctor [sic] until I came across a testimony of Gabby Gabriel on a blogger who said she was cured from 2 years Genital Herpes with Herbal medicine and she included the doctors email which name is doctor Ahmed Usman, I contacted him and he replied and after much discussion he sent his Herbal medicine to me which I took for 21 days with his prescription. I discovered that I no longer have frequent fever and headaches and the sores on my genital parts were healed, after concluding the Herbal medication I went for test and my PCR DNA result was Negative, there was no trace of the virus on my blood thanks to doctor Ahmed for his cure. Contact him on drahmedusman5 1 0 4 @ g m a i l . c o m [sic]

Like

Comment

Share

Bruce Wayne 3 months ago
The revolution *will* be televised.

Ch. 10

Mom anal pounded by loser son.

/ b / I R L: It's been fifty-two days since I last masturbated. The Confrontational Unreasonable Narcissistic Tormentor and Captain Save-a-Ho have come over to the house without consulting me. They always pull this shit. And she always brings *him* as, I've been 'informed' numerous times, she feels unable to cope because, apparently, I'm 'emotionally abusive'. This from the woman who abandoned me as soon as I reached puberty. The hypocrisy of femoids astounds me. But then again, statistically, a significant percentage of women are like this. The fact that she is alone with Nonna has brought my anxiety right up. I'm waiting in the kitchen, outside Nonna's room, in case *she* gets abusive with Nonna. The Confrontational Unreasonable Narcissistic Tormentor is capable of anything.

Captain Save-a-Ho leans on the dining table and scans the kitchen unable to hide his disgust. We despise each other. He pretends to like me to keep the peace. I don't pretend to like him because I live my truth. He takes me in with his usual shit-eating grin. 'So, Luca, have you thought about what kind of career you'd like to do?'

'I'm a carer for my grandmother,' I reply curtly, his irritating fake non-judgemental tone making me hold back on stabbing him in the face with a breadknife. 'A career is not an option at the moment.'

'But *if* and *when* it becomes an option, what would you like to do?'

'Work for Cambridge Analytica.'

'I think *that* company is out of business. Any other ideas?'

'Gay porn. Like really hardcore stuff. Gang-bangs and ass-to-mouth. Letting guys shit and piss all over me. You know, stuff you and *her* get up to.'

He sighs, trying to project boredom. I'm not convinced. 'Are you... seeing anyone?'

'I'm looking at you.'

'I mean... romantically? Is there any, umm, guys you're interested in?'

'I'm only gay for pay, Andrew.'

'Then, are there any young women you're interested in? I can give you some advice if you feel anxious about taking the first step.'

‘I have a girlfriend. We talk online all the time!’

‘That’s great,’ he says, condescendingly. ‘How long has this been going on?’

‘A couple of months.’

‘Do you think you might meet up with this young lady at some point?’

‘That’s not an option.’

‘Why?’

‘She’s eleven. We met online through *Allkpop* and fell in love over our admiration of Blackpink.’

He shakes his head in disgust. ‘You deliberately push people away from fear of rejection. What you don’t understand is that you’ll always be alone with that kind of attitude.’

‘Thanks Dr Phil.’

‘Look, you can insult me all you want but I’m not going away,’ he says, with all the sincerity of a Sky News host apologising for past racist comments and political lies. ‘When you’re ready, I’ll be here. I love your mum and you very much, whether you want to acknowledge it or not. Don’t be your own worst enemy, Luca. Life is give *and* take. The world is not against you.’

‘Thanks, Andy. I love our little talks. You’ve always been a very inspirational father figure.’

That got him.

He takes his phone out of his pocket and ignores me.

Mission accomplished.

After fifteen minutes of silence, the Confrontational Unreasonable Narcissistic Tormentor walks out of Nonna’s room, wiping tears from her face.

A performance.

She glares over at me, hatred dripping out of every pore. ‘How can you let her live like this,’ she spits out with utter loathing. ‘You live here rent-free because you’re s’pose to be looking after her!’

‘I am.’

‘Look at this place. It’s disgusting!’

‘What you’re doing right now is intrusive. You didn’t consult with me before you came

over. If I knew you were coming, I would have cleaned up!

‘That’s the fucking problem, Luca! You shouldn’t be cleaning up just when I come over. You’re supposed to be doing it everyday. This place is fucking *filthy!*’

‘You’re always judging me!’

‘Judging you?’ She laughs. It’s full of cruelty. ‘Do you *not* see what we see? For God-sake, Luca. Look around! There’s left over food everywhere. You can’t even be bothered putting it in the bin. You just leave it there. Have you not fucking noticed there’s mould all over the kitchen and grime on the floor? This house is a disgrace! You can’t even look after yourself let alone *my* mother!’

‘You’ve never volunteered for her to live with you!’

‘She’s going into an aged-care home!’

‘No!’

‘It’s non-negotiable!’

‘You just want to sell the house.’

‘Can you *not* smell the urine in here?’

‘Bianca, please, don’t,’ Captain Save-a-Ho says.

‘Well, what am I supposed to do? He refuses to clean himself or shave. He stinks. Look at his dirty nails. It’s repulsive. He does it deliberately.’

She takes me in, repulsed by my existence.

‘You’re a *fucking* pig. I just... I can’t do it anymore. You do this out of spite, don’t you?’

She looks back over at Captain Save-a-Ho playing the victim.

‘I’ve done everything for him. It’s laziness. He’s complacent. Happy to be a spectator to his own pathetic life. He has no ambition. No drive. Nothing. He’s completely passive about his own existence. He literally lives in his own shit, because he can’t even wipe his own arse. I’m tired of it! I just can’t do it anymore. I mean, look at this.’

She stares down at the kitchen floor focusing on a puddle of mysterious substance working its way out from under the fridge.

‘This is abuse!’

‘You're the abuser!’ I shout back.

‘How *dare* you!’ she shrieks, full of hatred.

Captain Save-a-Ho steps in.

‘Bianca, this is an emotionally charged situation,’ he says calmly. ‘Don't let him trigger you. It's not worth it.’

He faces me, looking serious, in charge; a performance for the Confrontational Unreasonable Narcissistic Tormentor. He's playing the protector. A fictional character that doesn't actually exist in the shared experience we're having.

But I don't say anything to humour him. I let him feel like the big man. Why? Because I'm a nice guy.

‘Listen Luca,’ he continues with the same tone. ‘This isn't about you. It's about your grandmother's welfare. Let's just take a breather for a moment. Try to understand. This is an incredibly difficult time for your mother.’

The Confrontational Unreasonable Narcissistic Tormentor bursts into tears to gain sympathy.

Statistically, a significant percentage of women are like this.

‘I know this is difficult to understand but your grandmother would be in a much better living situation if she was cared for by professionals,’ says Captain Save-a-Ho, playing good cop to her bad cop. It's pathetic. ‘She's just getting too old for you to handle. She has dementia. It's only going to get worse.’

‘I promised her she wouldn't be put in a home.’

‘You're a young man. You're missing out on so many amazing experiences because of your loyalty to your grandmother. She would want you to go out there and build a life for yourself. You have so much potential. Don't waste your youth.’

‘I'm not letting you put her in a *fucking* home.’

‘IT'S NOT YOUR DECISION!’ screams the Confrontational Unreasonable Narcissistic Tormentor, hysterically.

Captain Save-a-Ho walks over and takes her in his arms. ‘Honey, try to be calm.’

‘Oh, fuck off, Andrew!’ she screeches back, pushing him away.

Now *that* was funny. Kek.

‘Well, darling, I’m just trying to *bloody* help,’ he snaps back irritated. He turns to me. ‘Look, nobody is asking you to leave right now. But the time will come when you need to get a place of your own and learn some independence.’

‘Not going to happen,’ I reply.

The Confrontational Unreasonable Narcissistic Tormentor doesn't like this.

‘She’s going into a home, and I’ll be selling the house,’ she snaps. “Time to fucking grow up.’

Pure fucking evil.

She storms off down the hall and out of the house, slamming the door behind her.

‘You know, it'd be nice if you tried to think about how your mother feels once in a while,’ states Captain Save-a-Ho, before pathetically traipsing after her.

Fucking Simp.

Anonymous

one_hundred_reasons_you_deserve_to_die

- >You worship Steve Jobs but don't know who Tim Berners-Lee is.
- >You're an 'Influencer'.
- >You watch Marvel movies but have never read a comic book.
- >You make sex-tapes with your 'boyfriends'.
- >You believe the footage won't be uploaded on to Pornhub Community.
- >You record unboxing videos on YouTube.
- >You upload step-by-step instructional videos on 'how to open an email'.
- >You don't use a VPN. Ever.
- >You think love conquers all.
- >You use a meme generator.
- >You have a 'personal' Facebook account.
- >You post pictures of your young children on Facebook.
- >You go on Tinder to 'meet new people'.
- >You pay for Netflix.
- >You quote The Matrix but have never seen the movie.
- >You have never heard of Chuck Palahniuk.
- >You watch anything with Seth Rogan in it.
- >You play video games in your 'spare time'.
- >You think Harambe is still a 'thing'.
- >You watch The Joe Rogan Experience.
- >You 'Netflix and chill'.
- >You wear Supreme.
- >You take selfies.
- >You do yoga.
- >You have a vlog.
- >You use a MacBook Air.
- >You won't date anyone who likes Woody Allen movies.
- >You refer to anime as 'cartoons'.
- >You admire Tony Robbins.
- >Your kids are fans of Logan Paul.
- >You listen to Justin Bieber.
- >You enjoyed Thor: The Dark World.

- >You 'share' travel photos.
- >You Yelp things.
- >You listen to mainstream media.
- >You argue over Android vs iPhone.
- >You meet up with friends for drinks.
- >You believe Ivanka Trump was born female.
- >You listen to Die Antwoord.
- >You drive a Prius.
- >You refer to your dog as your 'best friend'.
- >You have a personal trainer.
- >You use the word 'sensational' in conversations.
- >You think the Kardashians are 'relatable'.
- >You have moved out of your parents house.
- >You pay for music.
- >You colour coordinate everything.
- >You drink frappuccinos.
- >You think Ashton Kutcher legitimately works in tech now.
- >You listen to Coldplay.
- >You subscribe to Goop.
- >You call everybody 'bro'.
- >You hashtag #liveyourbestlife.
- >You go to music festivals.
- >You've watched every movie in the Fast and Furious franchise.
- >You read articles on Vice.
- >You listen to the radio when driving.
- >You have a car.
- >You 'worked hard' for your sneaker collection.
- >You refer to your 'personal brand' in conversation.
- >You try to 'improve' yourself everyday.
- >You use hair products.
- >You have long-term goals.
- >Your family is proud of you.
- >You think Kanye West is a 'genius'.
- >You have a suntan.
- >You still believe Brett Eastern Ellis is 'transgressive' and 'controversial'.

- >You don't believe in gender.
- >You go to the gym and work out.
- >You still believe in 'democracy'.
- >You consider yourself a patriot.
- >You thought the Jordan Peterson vs Slavoj Zizek was the 'debate of the century'.
- >You play sport.
- >You believe in 'freedom'.
- >You use the phrase 'it's important' when referring to pop culture.
- >You watch morning television.
- >You assume we live in a meritocracy.
- >You tell everyone 'how hard you work'.
- >You own property.
- >You read anything by Dave Eggers.
- >You watch make-up tutorials.
- >You refer to Ryan Gosling as 'The Goz'.
- >You follow Selena Gomez on Instagram.
- >You think Mickey Rourke shouldn't have had plastic surgery.
- >You're excited about watching a live action version of Akira.
- >You have 'ironic' homemade tattoos without understanding what irony is.
- >You shower more than twice a week.
- >You still watch Neighbours.
- >You just 'discovered' Joan Cornella's Instagram.
- >You participate in society.
- >You identify with a political party.
- >You like a man in uniform.
- >You believe in the rule of law.
- >You have sexual intercourse with somebody you 'love'.
- >You think Infowars isn't funny.
- >You pay for movies.
- >You have pets.
- >You believe you have 'fans' because you're on social media.
- >You prescribe to an 'ideology'.
- >You plan to have children.

#/b/

i slowed down all minecraft music and cried Timestamps: Subwoofer Lullaby: 0:00 Living Mice: 4:37 Haggstrom: 8:01 Minecraft: 11:57 Mice On Venus: 16:52 Dry Hands: 22:43 Wet Hands: 23:35 *CLARK*: 25:08 Sweden: 29:01 Danny: 33:26. 1,508,139 views. [sic]

16,570 Comments

Ch. 11

Things people talk about on Reddit: Chads.
Jordan Peterson. Not masturbating.
Looksmaxxing. Nice guys. Pokemon. Yearning
for other people.

Jtrain83

I use to be that guy. I use to talk to women who rejected me (both gently and preemptively harsh). Nowadays I'm just numb to being invisible to them. But at the same time I'm a bit messed up from it, when women do give me choosing signals (which is VERY rare), I can't tell if they're genuine about it. I've experienced the fake interest from them in the past. [sic]

Like

Reply

Larry 45acp

I've approached exactly 5 women in my life. All of them rejected me (for being short, my face and being black). Other than that, I've always been invisible to women, never even gotten a look from them [sic]

Like

Reply

Fred G.

My entire pathetic existence is a regret...my dad regrets releasing me from his sack [sic]

Like Reply

Airlord 1300

Try being almost 40 and feeling that way. I'm always tired. Most days there is no hope, no prospects. Watching everyone else have the life you should've had, but society felt you weren't good enough. Some of us are just not worthy of being a part of anything. Some of us are barely human if one truly thinks about it. The only consolation I have is that I didn't fuck up, I was never given the chance in the first place. My life was basically destined to be this way. I do things to have fun by myself, but sometimes I wish things were different. Many sub par men these days need to understand that life isn't a Taylor Swift song, not a movie. You don't get superpowers, taking risks only gets you hurt. The loser stays a loser, the good looking ones with bad personalities get great lives and laugh everyday. The cosmos care nothing for us. Suicide only gives the bastards the satisfaction, which is the sole reason I still exist. [sic]

Like

Reply

Friedrich Nietzsche

It's interesting social media really came to fruition during the last economic collapse. [sic]

Like Reply

Shy guy33

the blackpill is a form of evolution. the mind changes/ see the "theory of belief revision" and related mathematics [sic]

Like Reply

Taras Wertelecki

We didn't fail at life, life failed us. The way to deal with the shaming is to develop a tongue with serrated edges that draws blood.....in other words learn to do with words what others do with fists. I have served their shit back to them with a smile. [sic]

Like Reply

It is what it is

I personally take pride in giving up. After hitting on about 90 females in my life and having no results I think it's about time to call it quits. [sic]

Like Reply

Strangeosity

The vast majority of women out there are ridiculous and stupid; ignore them. Don't let them upset you. Life is too short for that. [sic]

Like Reply

Airlord1300

Nothing matters, in the end. I gave up long ago, best move I ever made. Though, all my problems would be solved by money. We are just meat-covered skeletons walking around on a floating mud ball suspended in a vast, cold space. No angels, no demons, no God, or Devil, no Heaven or Hell, just us. We are all that we have. Someday that will be gone too. History loves only the beautiful, and vilifies the ugly no matter their deeds. [sic]

[Like](#) [Reply](#)

Eric Cartman

I don't believe women and relationships are the 'salvation' you're looking for. I've seen enough marriages in my life (my parents included) to realize that this lifestyle would not be for me. You're not even guaranteed to get laid once you live with a woman. [sic]

Like Reply

is what it is

I had goals too and mine fell through the cracks as well. [sic]

Like Reply

Tofu64gamer

if you don't see success by 27, that's when the decline start to happen. post high school nothing work for me. I give up on life by 31 [sic]

Like Reply

Sir Honks-Alot

The whole system has been set on fire. Planned long ago, coming to a terminal end. [sic]

Like Reply

The Grim reaper

Tell it like is darkcel they dont care about our community suicide is leading cause of death in the world especially in the US UK and Japan look up hikikomori and kodokushi men are giving up en masse because of this feminist terrorism smfh [sic]

Like Reply

Keenan Griffin

I am glad more incels are starting to understand the true agenda of the elites, starting with social engineering of women. [sic]

Like Reply

bobby m

There is no conspiracy. The truth is simple: Women like handsome men. We are ugly. The end.

[sic]

Like

Reply

It is what it is

It's not your fault that people abandoned you. [sic]

Like Reply

Larry Cuckman

I'm so defeated. My shotgun will save me from this enslavement, goodbye fellow brothers, to those who still want to fight an uphill battle... sigh... [sic]

Like Reply

It is what it is

I might rope soon. Im tired of my life. [sic]

Like Reply

Ch. 12

Femdom pegging sub in spreader bar.

/b / I R L: It's been sixty-seven days since I last masturbated. I'm contemplating suicide. But I want to kill as many normies as I can before I do. This is difficult as I have no way of getting a gun. Or any other form of weapon that has the ability to kill a large number of people in a short space of time. Therefore, I must endure, each day eating my soul, bit by bit.

Captain Save-a-Ho aka Shitlord aka Dickstand aka The Simp had the audacity to pull the 'go outside theory' on me with a diatribe that living amongst other people is a good way for me to work on my social skills. I am now living in a fucking rooming house amongst those deemed useless by society. It's all I could afford on my budget.

In the room next to mine lives a washed-up DJ who dreams of living in Thailand. Over fifty, with most of his teeth missing, he keeps giving me compilations of his self-produced 'techno bangers'. On the other side are a couple with what could be described as 'the meth look'. There are constant screams coming from the bedroom and it's hard to distinguish if they're fucking or fighting?

I know the Confrontational Unreasonable Narcissistic Tormentor put me in this situation out of spite. Now that I've lost my Carers Payment from Centrelink and they've put me on fucking Newstart. I'm incessantly being hassled to find work. I'm seriously considering going ER on the fascists.

I am not okay.

Piers Morgan
@Piersmorgan

I want to die. [sic]

Posted Sep 3 2012

Man receives face transplant after suicide attempt: Andy Sandness received a near-full face transplant after shooting himself in the face in a suicide attempt. 252,732 views. [sic]

/b / I R L: It's been seventy-five days since I last masturbated. I press a buzzer outside the front door to be allowed inside. The interior pastel colour palette matches the floral printed furniture to disguise the horror within. Prison for the elderly.

Behind the reception desk is an immigrant. Another example of foreigners taking jobs away from Australians.

She looks up and smiles. 'And who would you like to see today?'

'Gia Moretti.'

She scans her computer screen. 'Gia Moreeeettiiii... oh, here she is,' she says, looking up at me with an imbecilic smile. 'Gia's in room sev—'

'I *know* where she is,' I snap back.

I sign my name and the time in unintelligible handwriting before heading through the familiar main hallway.

Passing the lounge area, I glimpse at a collection of the abandoned, silently staring at the television, waiting to die. On the screen, a Stacy-lite, well past her prime, is being shown how to cook a casserole by a D-grade 'celebrity' chef. She's attempting humour by being a 'klutz'. The D-grade 'celebrity' chef is scolding her. The studio audience laugh. This is entertainment?

When I enter Nonna's room, her eyes light up.

'Luca,' she beams, with a gummy smile.

'Hi, Nonna.'

'How my baby doing? Working hard?'

'Always.'

She points to a tray of leftover food on her side table. 'You want eat?'

'It's fine,' I say, sitting on the edge of her bed. 'I'm not that hungry.'

She takes my hand and squeezes it affectionately. 'You look skinny. You must eat.'

I force a spoonful of some cheap green jelly in my mouth. This satisfies her.

‘You wanna a cup of tea?’ I ask, politely.

She nods her head.

I press the buzzer near the side of her bed continuously until someone arrives.

Another immigrant finally emerges. ‘Yes, how can I help you?’

‘Why did it take so long for you to come?’

‘We have a large number of residents here to attend to.’

‘What if my grandmother was dying?’

The immigrant glances over at Nonna puzzled. ‘Is there something you'd like?’

‘Two cups of tea with milk and sugar on the side.’

The immigrant walks out.

‘Eat, more,’ says Nonna.

I spoon more of the jelly into my mouth.

‘I want go home now. When can you take me home?’

‘It's not up to me.’

‘But I feel much better now.’

‘Ask your daughter.’

Nonna goes silent.

‘Has she come to see you?’

Nonna looks out the window, ignoring my question.

The immigrant arrives with the tea.

She looks over and smiles at him. ‘Thank you, Virat.’

He smiles back. ‘No problem, Mrs Moretti.’

Anonymous

>Shit-post (2 hours).

>Instigate a riot in California (1 hour).

>Hang out on 4Chan (6 hours).

>Binge watch the first 5 episodes of Fruit Basket: Season 1 (2 hours)

>Play COD: Black Ops 2 (7 hours).

>Didn't commit suicide.

>It was a good day.

The Darkcel Podcast | Episode #115: The Decline of Motivation & Ambition : The decline of motivation and ambition... my week off just kind of proves it, huh? 666 views. [sic]

/ b / I R L: It's been one hundred and fifteen days since I last masturbated. The Australian Government are forcing me to participate in 'job seeking activities' and 'training'. It's all a farce. These 'training sessions' are performance spaces where 'bad actors' specialise in treating those of us that have been left behind like mentally ill patients who don't have the capacity to walk and talk at the same time. They interrogate, harass, and humiliate us to break our spirits and control our minds. If we don't 'attend' these meetings we get cut off from our benefits.

The whole thing is a cruel charade to punish those of us who are unwanted and despised. Even if I did get a job interview, it is doomed from the start due to the stigma of me getting benefits from Centrelink. Both the company seeking an employee and the 'Job Centre' (aka corporate shell masquerading as an organisation) are complicit in this act of degradation. The 'Job Centre' justifies the government contract and the company seeking an employee pretends they are participating in a meritocracy. I am being used as a diversion for corruption: the system isn't the problem, I am.

The pungent stench of oppression hits me as soon as I walk through the entrance. A few of the unwanted who have also been forced to participate in this charade glance up. We briefly acknowledging the unsaid. All of us must try to make the best of a bad situation. I walk over to the reception desk. 'I was told to be here at 1:30 pm,' I say.

The fuckboi behind reception looks up, unable to disguise his disgust. I haven't showered in a month. I'm wearing a jacket I found on a park bench and my jeans have never been washed. I cut my own hair in random moments of spontaneity and shave irregularly due to severe acne. My bad breath is a point of pride and I make sure to get close enough so he can smell it. Visibly uncomfortable, he takes my details in haste, then orders me to take a seat with the other losers.

Forty-five minutes later my name is called, and I'm told 'Ben' is waiting for me in cubicle five.

Ben looks up from his computer screen and smiles 'warmly' when I arrive. 'Take a seat, buddy.'

I take a seat as ordered.

'So, how's the job hunting going?'

‘Great.’

‘What positions have you applied for?’

‘Personal trainer. Kindergarten teacher. I think I came close to getting a job as a CEO for a non-profit organisation that helps former sex workers with Aids that have children with Aids find work.’

‘That’s *fantastic*. First of all, matey, I want to congratulate you on getting out there, and being open and ambitious about employment opportunities. Pat yourself on the back. Second thing, you are eligible for the Work for the Dole program. You'll need to participate in an approved activity for six months each year, and work fifty hours per fortnight to continue receiving your Newstart payments. It's a great opportunity to help you develop skills like teamwork, reliability and communication skills. You'll meet new people, maybe make some friends, and it's going to build your confidence. You may even make new contacts that can be referees for future job applications.’

‘Do I get extra money?’

‘You'll get an extra \$20.80 per fortnight for transportation and expenses.’

‘That's slavery.’

‘No, it's an exciting opportunity.’

‘What if I'm sick?’

‘Then you'll need a doctor's certificate.’

‘What if I'm vomiting blood and I can't leave the house?’

‘Then you phone a family member or friend and get to a hospital, and they'll give you a medical certificate.’

‘What if I get kidnapped?’

‘Then you'll be taken off your benefits but will have the opportunity to reapply.’

‘What if I get raped and don't feel up to coming in but feel uncomfortable about talking about it?’

‘You can discuss any of those things with one of our psychologists.’

‘How do you know those things haven't already happened to me?’

‘Have any of those things happened to you?’

‘I don't feel comfortable talking about it.’

‘*No problemo*. Let the receptionist know if you want the program fact sheet printed out or emailed to you. If you don't attend the days you are required to work your payments will be suspended. Is that clear?’

‘No.’

‘Any confusion you have will be answered in the program fact sheet. You start in a week.’

Kim Kardashian

@KimKardashian

Just saw The Social Network! WOW such a great movie!
Makes me want to start a company! [sic]

Posted 8 years ago

One Nation - Stop All Immigration

\$3,238 raised of \$5,000 target

1,546
donors

281
shares

343
followers

Share

Donate Now

1,546 people have just made a donation

Luca Romero is organising this fundraiser.

Created 21 days ago / Community

As many of you know, Australia is overpopulated with immigrants who are taking all the jobs. We at One Nation ask all our supporters to donate to our fund in order to take our fight to the courts and send back all so called 'Australian citizens' who are were not born here. We've had enough. Our culture is dying. We need to go back to our traditions and reject these foreigners invading our culture and values. We need to reject beef and black bean sauce noodles. Reject Kababs after a night out at the pub. Reject Red Duck Curry from the Thai restaurant around the corner when you can't be fucked cooking because you've had a big day at work. Western civilisation is at stake!

Donate

Share

Organiser

Luca Romano
Organiser
Brunswick, VIC

Contact

Comments

Colin and Cheryl Stewert donated \$200

Absolutely correct.

7 hours ago

Nathan Bigalow donated \$50

I admire your courage. Our beautiful country is being ruined. Fight the good fight!

10 hours ago

Gary Williamson donated \$500

You've got this Pauline

14 hours ago

Ch. 13

So, where do you see yourself five years from now? Exactly where I am.

/ b / I R L: It's been one hundred and twenty-nine days since I last masturbated. Today is the first day of my non-compensated servitude to the Australian Government propagated to the normie populace as the Work for the Dole scheme. I have been handed over against my will to a 'non-profit' organisation that receives peoples discarded belongings, used clothing and second-hand books and furniture that they sell back to the poor.

My masters are Narelle, an obese divorcee in her fifties, who has three teenage children and swipes right on Tinder. And Sam, an effeminate twink in his mid-20s who has body-dysmorphia. Sam graduated with a Masters in Directing from AFTRS (also known as the Australian Film Television Radio School) five years ago. It's in Sydney, and according to Sam, is one of the best, if not *the* best, film schools in Australia *and* most people in 'the industry' have gone there. He incessantly complains about not being able to get funding for his short film called *Ain't Love Funny*. It's about an attractive young gay man in his mid-20s called James who has body-dysmorphia. James works for a non-profit organisation with Cathy, a larger-than-life divorcee in her fifties who has three teenage children. Both James and Cathy are trying to find love in a digital world. According to Sam it's authentic storytelling that's profoundly funny *and* ground-breaking in its depiction of sexuality and body-dysmorphia. Sam and Narelle are besties and trade stories about their sex lives.

I'm in hell.

I have been ordered to buy them lattes, one with soy, the other regular. As soon as I arrive back, I'm assaulted by Narelle's description of being spit-roasted by two Tradies. Sam is enraptured.

'Here are your lattes,' I say, louder than usual, purposely interrupting Narelle before she gets to the climax.

She continues unperturbed, taking her coffee without missing a beat. Sam does the same.

'Is there anything else you want me to do?'

Narelle stops mid-sentence, irritated. 'We have a new shipment of clothes in the back that you can sort through. They need to be separated into their own piles. Can you do *that*?'

‘Sure.’

‘Great. Go do that.’

I walk off to the back room as Narelle continues to describe in great detail the sensation of being double penetrated.

An hour later and I've put all the clothing in the back into their separate piles. It's absurd that because something's 'not cool' it's discarded. This is typical of normies.

Narelle walks in and looks at the piles on the floor. “We can go through each pile to replenish the stock.”

‘I found a couple of t-shirts and some jeans that I want.’

‘That's fine, but you have to pay for them.’

‘Why?’

‘Because you do.’

‘But you sell clothes to help the needy, right?’

‘Yes.’

‘I'm in need.’

‘If you want some help from this organisation you will have to go through a different department.’

‘Different department?’

‘That's the way it works.’

‘Says who?’

‘The organisation.’

‘Who is the organisation?’

‘The organisation is the organisation.’

‘That's not answering my question. It's a meaningless answer.’

‘Look, it's not up to me!’

‘This is absurd! This ‘organisation’ is supposed to help the needy. I *am* the needy. But “the

organisation” wants me to pay for these clothes even though I'm working for “the organisation” *without* getting paid?’

She's pissed.

‘I'll call my supervisor and get back to you at the end of the day! Just go through the racks and see what piles can go out in the front. Can you do that?’

‘Yep.’

‘Thanks, we really appreciate your help!’ she says, full of patronising venom. Then waddles off furiously.

By the end of the day Narelle informs me ‘the organisation’ doesn't need my assistance any longer adding that they'd prefer I didn't come back to the shop. Ever.

Roseanne Barr
@TheRealRoseanne

I'm hungry [sic]

Posted 7 years ago

ROAD RAGE IN AMERICA - BEST OF THE YEAR | BAD DRIVERS USA, CANADA: Year 2018 Summary. Top Stories, Road Rage & Bad drivers in North America that gone viral in 2018. 18,982,371 views. [sic]

The Costanza Principle

"It's not a lie if you believe it."

[Definition] a philosophy to justify or legitimise information that has been proven to be absurd, stupid, factually incorrect, or identified as an outright lie, in order to continue subscribing to the worldview it promulgates.

Kamahl: Hello Luca, how are you?

Luca: [Shrugs.]

Kamahl: My name is Kamahl. I'm a psychologist whose purpose is to help you transition back into the workforce. Is there anything you'd like to tell me about yourself?

Luca: I'm a nice guy.

Kamahl: [Smiles] That's good to hear. Your record shows you've been long-term unemployed. My job is to listen and help find out what might be hindering your progress. We can talk about anything, though. Is there something you'd like to start with?

Luca: You work for Centrelink, right?

Kamahl: Yes.

Luca: So, when somebody can't get a job, they get sent to a psychologist? [Shakes his head] That's fucking hilarious.

Kamahl: That's not what this is about. Lots of people can't get work due to anxiety, stress; all sorts of reasons. I'm just here to listen and help.

Luca: [Sighs.] Help? The system is broken. It's dictated by bureaucracies that are controlled by bureaucrats who are controlled by politicians who are controlled by corporations that are controlled by the abstract concept of profit. But I'm *crazy* because I'm not interested in being a corporate warrior, or care about 'fitting in'. The whole system we have to abide by is bullshit. It's based on the *Costanza principal*.

Kamahl: And what is the Costanza principal?

Luca: It's not a lie if you believe it.

Kamahl: [Laughs] That's clever. You're a fan of *Seinfeld*?

Luca: It's okay...

Kamahl: You recently participated in the Work for the Dole scheme. The organisation you worked for asked you to leave. Would you like to tell me what happened?

Luca: Is that why I'm here?

Kamahl: No. I'm just curious. You don't have to talk about it if you don't want to?

Luca: I called them out on their hypocrisy.

Kamahl: In what way?

Luca: I found a couple of t-shirts and some jeans that I liked, and when I told this obese sex-maniac who works there that I wanted them, she told me I had to pay for them. I simply asked why? To be clear, I was working for *free*. By the end of the day, I was told not to come back. She didn't let me take the clothes either.

Kamahl: Would you like to tell me the kind of work you are interested in?

Luca: Why would somebody want to employ me?

Kamahl: Why wouldn't they?

Luca: [Laughs to himself.] I'm blackpilled.

Kamahl: Blackpilled?

Luca: It's over before it began.

Kamahl: Could you elaborate?

Luca: In life there are losers and winners. It's determined by society. The whole 'life is what you make of it' myth is bullshit. Sure, they let a few people at the bottom succeed to create the appearance of a meritocracy, but at the end of the day life generally is beyond one's control. To be blackpilled is to be a beta. To be a beta means you are genetically inferior and will forever be alone.

Kamahl: So, you consider yourself 'blackpilled'?

Luca: [Irritated] I don't *consider* myself blackpilled. I *am* blackpilled! It's not a state of mind. I was born this way! Foids are genetically wired to fuck Chad. Those of us who don't have the genetics of Chad are destined to be ignored or cucked. It's the way the world is, and always will be. To be a beta is to be eternally uninvited. To everything. We are the ones who are picked on. We're the punchline. The idea of procreating with one of us is an impossibility for any foid except a femcel. And *even* she wants Chad. He just won't fuck her. We will always be subservient to alpha males in the physical world.

Kamahl: Sorry, what is a Foid and Chad?

Luca: Foids are females. Chads are genetically superior men. Alphas. ‘Google it’!

Kamah! So, Chad is the popular guy, right?

Luca: Chad is great! Chad is funny and charismatic and loves his footy. Chad gets the promotion, dates the boss’s daughter, then rapes her, but because Chad is Chad the boss believes *him*. Why? Because Chad is such a top bloke. The boss’s daughter gets pregnant to Chad but marries him anyway. As a married man Chad fucks every intern that walks through the door and eventually ousts his boss and father-in-law to become CEO of the company because *that’s* how Chad rolls.

Kamah! So, Chad is the guy that wins all the time by being a terrible person.

Luca: Chad can’t be a terrible person because Chad is Chad.

Kamah! But the person you are describing is terrible.

Luca: It’s impossible for Chad to be terrible because the world loves Chad.

Kamah! What you’re saying is the world is corrupted by this ideal male you call Chad. To succeed in life, you have to be like this Chad guy.

Luca: [Rolls his eyes.] You can’t *be* like Chad. You are either *a* Chad or you’re *not* a Chad. It’s not up to you.

Kamah! That’s a rather bleak worldview.

Luca: It’s the truth. But a revolution is coming.

Kamah! Revolution?

Luca: The beta uprising.

Kamah! Would you like to tell me more about this uprising?

Luca: [Smirks to himself.]

Darkcel Gaming Stop calling us incels. Take some time away from begging for money on patreon, or orbiting femoids online, and learn to fucking read. We are #darkcel. We are not incel. There is a fundamental difference. Before making your shallow judgment, watch our fucking video on the Darkcel mindset, and try to understand our frustration for the hijacking of our hobbies, and the brainwashing that you unfortunate sheeple have endured. You have been conditioned to accept the vile and abhorrent content the media shits out. They de-platform and defame all who do not conform to their hive mind, and provide fickle compensation to their minions for spreading their filth. In time, some of you will come to see our point of view. But you must experience torment and loss before you can ever hope to understand our simultaneous apathy and anger towards the demons responsible for our torment. Our minds are free. We are darkcel. [sic]

Ch. 14

Won't leave your house. Can't get a supermodel.
SAD.

the_beta_uprising_a_manifesto

/b/

As betas, to disempower the infantile fools who ridicule, abuse and scorn us, we must bring humanity into our virtual kingdom. Once human existence becomes virtual, Chad's (and all those who follow him) influential dominance will be overcome and all people will be judged on their personalities, intelligence, and wit. Thus, all betas shall truly ascend. When humanity is freed from the flesh, all betas will transcend our cursed flesh bodies and be emancipated from the pathetic existence that we currently inhabit. #therevolutionisinmotion

1.

In the beginning there was the command line_ The Internet was born. From that point forward we were free from our genetically inferior bodies.

2.

We found others like ourselves. Online communities were created. Suddenly we could express our true-selves more freely and openly. We finally had a safe space where we could emancipate ourselves from the lifetime of cruel degradation that we have been forced to constantly endure. The autonomy of the Internet allows us emancipation from the flesh world a sanctuary away from the ridicule or scorn from normies.

3.

In the flesh world, our genetic inferiority and sensitive introverted nice guy personalities means we face many obstacles, but within virtuality, we have discovered our potential as individuals and as a collective. Online we have no limits to what can be imagined and acted out. The possibilities are endless. We have become gods!

4.

It was only a matter of time before fucking Chad (and all the insipid normies who follow him) decided to log on. They infiltrated our sanctuary and do what they always do. Ruin it! Why? Because that's what Chad does. Hence, we created 'social media'.

5.

The purpose of social media is to enmesh the vapid fools into our system where they can be controlled. To do this we created accessible technology that even a vegetable could use. The fools took to social media like moids to pussy. We then introduced superior technology in the form of mobile devices and laptops to encourage virtual use at any times.

6.

Normies are now the subjects of our constant gaze. Visible at all times. To destroy Chad, we must castrate him. To castrate him we first must entice him into our world. Like Sampson in the Hebrew bible, we must take away what gives him his power. Without his superior corporeal body, he is nothing. Without his big dick energy, he will be lost.

7.

What is directly lived in the flesh world must be created within virtuality through virtual representation. Simulacrum will succeed the real. The spectacle produced on the social media platforms we have created will become total and ubiquitous, merging life as they know it into an autonomous image of a world that we control.

8.

In the flesh world, an experience has little value until a normie posts it as a simulated representation for the normie collective to acknowledge. This feedback gives value to a normie's pathetic existence and enables them to feel a 'proof of presence'. Hence, their existence in virtuality will be under our control.

9.

A normie's reality is social. This means their reality is shaped by the social forces that they engage with. This is how people with friends understand their reality. In the flesh world they may control the social space we are forced to inhabit, but in virtuality we have control. Once they come into our world their reality is ours.

10.

The various tools we have given normies to create simulated representation of their daily lives construct social roles so they can identify where they 'fit in' within the lamestream. Normies understanding of self, and how they assume certain social roles is shaped by the collective feedback loop of the normie collective. This pathetic desire to be accepted by the normie collective to construct their identities is based on what other people think of them, or what we refer to as 'group think' aka 'the hive mind'.

11.

Because of this pathetic desire to 'fit in', normies are more likely to be fake and conform to social expectations. They hide negative aspects of their 'true-self', such as socially undesirable personality traits or unpopular opinions, for fear being cancelled by SJWs or femoids that are brainwashed by feminism.

12.

This refusal to acknowledge how superficial they are means that normies are constantly declaring how 'authentic' they are to each other. But being the sheep that they are, this is governed by 'systemic coherence', meaning their 'authenticity' is dictated by the hive mind. To counter-act this authenticity subterfuge that we have had to endure in the flesh world, the Internet's purpose was the creation of a world in which we are free to express all aspects of ourselves without judgement or retribution from social justice warriors and their like.

13.

Identity formation is often theorised in terms of the self in relation to others. This means that in the flesh world, although we are intellectually much superior and clearly have more interesting personalities, we will never be accepted by our oppressors due to our genetic inferiority and the lamestream's fucking shallowness. Forever blackpilled, our freedom lies within the virtual alternative we have created where we can finally 'be ourselves', free from Chad's relentless abuse and ridicule.

14.

Within virtuality, identity is not stable or pre-determined, instead, all are free to play and experiment in social interactions without the restraints dictated by Chad (all those who follow his cruel dictatorship of conformity). Online, we are able to express multiply identities that can be adopted and discarded at will, a notion referred to as 'floating identities'. There are no constraints on whom you want to be in the superior virtual world we have created.

15.

In order to truly conquer our oppressors, we must study them. To collect data, we introduced the ability for normies to 'friend' or 'follow' one another. Later, the 'like' button was introduced. When we implemented a camera into phones, the 'selfie' materialised. The act of 'creating' and 'expressing' oneself through 'selfies', along with other digital representations of self, encourages normies to perceive themselves as an object. This spiritually disembodies them, rendering them vulnerable to manipulation and control. This inspired the creation of Instagram, which was implemented to specifically appeal to Chad's narcissism.

16.

The 'like' button quickly evolved into a 'like' economy. There are three ways the 'like' economy has had an impact on online social interactions amongst normies. Firstly, the act of 'liking' perpetuates social activity, both by receiving and giving 'likes'. This creates traffic and user engagement. Secondly, the popularity contest can be scaled (or customised) to each normie through algorithms and also operate across various social media platforms that they use. Thirdly, cross-syndication of social whoring via the various online platforms they use facilitates content creation which becomes data we can use to measure their activity. To encourage data production our beta-lords enabled normies to exchange personal data for opportunities/money. The 'like' economy is now a virtual 'free' social market. Online social capital is produced through the circulation of virtual (intangible) goods in terms of an exchange, and that one or both parties in that exchange may gain an advantage.

17.

Due to their whorish nature, Chads and Stacys generally use our social media platforms to acquire online social capital. This encourages them to discard their personal identity in favour of a corporate identity, referred to in the lamestream as having a 'personal brand'. A 'personal brand' is the projection of a lifestyle that is perceived as a desirable success story which is disseminated to idiotic plebs. This lifestyle is an ongoing narration that is capitalised on due to the amount of attention it gets from the lower-tier normies who aspire to be like Chad. This is the foundation of how Chad (and Stacy) gain online social capital which they then transfer into financial capital. They do this through the creation of advertorials for products and services for corporations. This influences those who 'follow' them in turn also commodify themselves. This whoring of oneself in the lamestream is referred to as being an 'influencer', or if a Chad or Stacy acquires enough social capital to influence the normie masses, a 'thought leader'.

18.

Chads (and Stacys) use their online social capital as an opportunity to compete with large multinational companies by becoming its micro-equivalent: Chad Inc. This is a natural stage of late-stage capitalism. Becoming Chad Inc. means Chad is head marketer for his own personal brand. Chad is now an entrepreneur that markets both himself and the products he is promoting. Chad projects the persona of leader, teacher, visionary, and businessperson. Corporations that work with Chad Inc. are absorbed into his virtual self-representation and visa-versa. This will essentially disembodify Chad (and all those pathetic imbeciles who follow him).

19.

The success of implementing online social capital into daily life means that the lamestream now believe that self-branding is an inevitable necessity in 'the future of work'. Normies that use our social media platforms to promote their 'personal brand' both produce virtual content as well as produce the self as a perpetual work-in-progress product. Eventually online social capital will be the way the world population exchanges goods and services. All financial transactions will be in the form of NFT's which will enable us to wrangle the global economy away from Chad.

20.

The revolution was prophesised by Guy Debord as he stated in *The Society of the Spectacle* back in 1967 that 'social life will eventually progress from 'being' (I am), to 'having' (property or objects that define identity), to mere 'appearing' (I am the image I project of myself on social media)'.

21.

In order to control the normie masses we must control the narrative. This is why we provide 'suggested content' through algorithms dictated by artificial intelligence. This allows us to curate and distribute our beta-narratives to the normie masse. This privileges the circulation of content we control.

22.

The importance of narratives is that they provide context for raw information and facts. They help shape how normies understand themselves and the world in which they inhabit. Due to the basic nature of normies, it is easier for them to remember and make decisions based on 'meaningful stories' (narratives) rather than engage in complex information and data analysis.

23.

The personal and cultural identities that normie's subscribe to are predominantly defined by ideas and narratives rather than nationalities or ethnicity. If a normie's opinion is not yet structured, then there is a void that needs to be filled. The beta-narratives we create should give them answers to their basic need for structure and predictability. This is how we influence them.

24.

We should always present every issue as a binary 'choice' within the beta-narratives we distribute. Using identity politics, we can stoke violence and aggression to justify and rationalise active retribution on both sides of the culture war normies perceive themselves to be in. Our power lies in their rage. Divide and conquer. Those who are left after the carnage of destruction shall submit.

25.

The beta-narratives we circulate should provide normies with information, talking points, and an explanation of how the goals we prescribe to them fit into their worldview. To change a passive normie into a participating normie we need to crystallise their ideological motivations. Our beta-narratives must furnish a complete system for explaining the world, and with it the problems the individual normie is facing.

26.

A successful beta-narrative should crystallise what were just vague inclinations into solid ideas or 'truths' for a normie. Our beta-narratives should play on the feelings and 'values' that are already established in their minds. The narratives we disseminate should reinforce the opinions we give them and harden stereotypes. Keep the narrative simple. This will crystallise an explicit public opinion. Do not use any nuances and gradations that diffuse the story, instead the 'explicit public opinion' needs to state a narrative that asks: Are you with us or against us? This binary mentality keeps dissenting opinions at bay and under our control.

27.

There are two ways to propagate a beta-narrative, either horizontally or vertically. Vertical propaganda comes from the top down, as in a select group of propagandists (the elites) conjure up ideas and feed them down to the people (the masses). Horizontal propaganda is when individuals spread a narrative or idea with other individuals. This allows for decentralisation. The dissemination of our beta-narratives are horizontal due to the structures we created for social media.

28.

The most important part of constructing a convincing beta-narrative that will appeal to the normie collective is to create a 'problem'. Without a problem there is no need for action since there is no need for a solution. To successfully convince a normie to support a 'cause' we prescribe for them, the beta-narrative must show them that the present situation they live in is in dire need of improvement due to the 'other sides'' evil actions. To lure normies into our rabbit hole our beta-narratives should propose that the normie's personal problems are part of the larger societal problem. Then offer them a resolution! The solution to the problem should be clear as long as the individual normie takes action.

29.

Consistently feeding beta-narratives into the normie collective will eventually codify standards, furnish thought patterns, and makes the ideas we've disseminated irrefutable and solid. Our goal is to make details and subtleties disappear, so that the ideas we've planted into their minds becomes impervious to reasoning or contrary information. Truth as a fact or piece of information has no intrinsic value.

30.

A normie will believe a beta-narrative not because of its verifiability, but because it appears to be 'real' or 'true'. A normie only needs to find 'a truth' that appeals to their worldview. The 'truth' we have created for them then becomes the motivation and justification they need to take action against the proposed evil we have prescribed them. Normies will find a 'truth' socially acceptable through a false sense of freedom and reasoning if aided by the collective normies with which they associate. Once a normie has found the 'truth' they in turn become propagandists and help us convince other normies to reach the same conclusions. Thus, they continue our good work.

31.

If our beta-narrative doesn't align with an individual normies worldview it can still have power because when normies distrusts the source of the information at the time of intake, over time they will forget that distrust and remember the message, or at least the impression of that message.

32.

There will always be push back on the beta-narratives we prescribe to the normie collective. To deal with normies who attempt to dissuade their peer group from our narratives, we must be diligent in showing these annoying rodents that if they do not comply, they will get punished! When the objecting normies witness the punishment of those who resist, through trolling, doxing, and other forms of online abuse, this will make the normie sceptics who privately disagree to falsely conform to avoid punishment. The normie sceptics will then be eager to prove their conformity by enforcing the group ideology on others around them when they feel personally threatened. This will spiral a false conformity and enforcement amongst the normie masses that will eventually create the 'truth' we have propagated. Each individual normie helps to form the opinion of the collective, but the collective also helps each individual normie to discover the correct line. Perception is everything.

33.

Betas have always been collaborative in knowledge sharing for the greater good. As individuals we are weak, but as a collective we are strong. We must diligently facilitate the dissemination of beta-narratives in order to control the normie collective's reality and self-identity.

34.

Our power is never to be occupied by a known leader or clear ideology. This will enable our community to concentrate our power, but to do so ambiguously, which de-centres our power and makes it unclear to normies what our ruling ideology might be.

35.

The production and circulation of meaning and knowledge is what produces power. Michel Foucault refers to this as technologies of power, which are techniques used in the practical operation of power. This is what inspired the creation of Google. Once we owned the global search engine that controlled the flow of knowledge, this enabled our movement to control collective discourse that establishes 'regimes of truths' (also a term coined by Michel Foucault), which are types of discourse regarded by society as true. We now dictate collective discourse, therefore we have the power to influence certain ways of interpreting the world. We decide what information is privileged, given credibility and accorded the status of 'knowledge', and we decide what information to discard, subjugate and deem untrue if it doesn't benefit our revolutionary goals.

36.

Future phases of the beta revolution will create technology that interprets information on an emotional level as well as logically. Technology will act in true symbiosis with human experience, as human thought will organically intertwine with a technology that will be able to think, reason, and respond on its own. Artificial Intelligence will perceive the emotions of an individual user and respond appropriately to their needs which will enable more personal and intimate interactions with technology.

37.

With brain implants, all humanity will be connected into virtuality and free from the constraints of the flesh world. The unbearable features of life within our corporeal bodies will be eliminated in favour of a purely virtual experience that will far surpass the ugliness of reality. Technology will be inseparable from every aspect of life.

38.

The final stage of the revolution will enable all of humanity to transcend the flesh world and exist as virtual beings. Once all human experience is virtual, the lamestream social hierarchy that has been forced upon society by Chad will become redundant and a new society will rise. In this new society humanity will evolve into a new level of consciousness that respects our intellectual superiority, the hilarity of dank memes and our nice guy personalities.

part / **three** // rose

Ch. 15

Thank you for ruining everything.

‘You’re that girl, right? The one that punched that guy at the protest?’

‘No–no, you’ve got the wrong person.’

‘I know it's you. I just want a quick selfie. It'll just take a sec.’

‘I’m *not* that person.’

‘It’s just a fucking selfie!’

‘Please... just... leave me alone.’

‘C'mon!’

‘I want to be left alone.’

‘What the fuck’s your problem?’

‘JUST LEAVE ME *THE FUCK* ALONE!’

‘Fucking bitch!’

The Internet Never Forgets / efukt.com

I'd be tempted to run over Rose Hong-Robson, commentator says

Radio 3GB defends Penny MacPherson's comments as being 'in jest' and 'nonliteral' after she says Hong-Robson was right not to feel safe in Australia

Alice Chung

A conservative commentator on Melbourne's 3GB radio station has joked about wanting to "run over" Rose Hong-Robson, after her interview on Scott Colt Tonight. Former journalist Penny Anderson made the comments on 3GB's Darren Martin's show on Wednesday, on a segment called "Martie's Deplorable's".

Anderson told Martin that Hong-Robson is blaming everyone else instead of apologising to the parents of the victims of that tragic kindergarten shooting. "Personally, if I saw her crossing the road, I'd be tempted to run her over."

Martin responded by laughing and agreeing that Hong-Robson was 'a chip off the old block.' Her father, Mark Robson, a comedian, recently died of a heroin overdose.

Responding to critics on Twitter, Anderson defended her comments as humorous banter and free speech and attacked critics as "Social justice warriors with too much time on their hands." She later told News.com.au that, "It's unfortunate some people have lost their sense of humour. Larrikinism is a cultural institution in Australia and should be celebrated".

But critics denounced Anderson's comments for encouraging violence against Hong-Robson.

Anderson, a former radio host and contestant on Celebrity Big Brother, has been a regular guest on "Martie's Deplorables" segment since it began last November.

On Sunday, conservative radio host Ron "Dicky" Dickson, went on Martin's segment and said that Hong-Robson, "Is a Cultural Marxist and should go back to China." He then doubled down on Anderson's comment by offering \$2000 for somebody to 'accidentally' run her over.

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

Stop hate following me, Kayleigh.

23 minute ago

2,894 Retweets **57** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson

23 minutes ago

Once you've gone viral you've lost 'something' that you previously believed to be yours. That 'something' is now theirs. Online my existence has been appropriated into the collective hive mind: my narrative Colonised and identity debated, sexuality discussed and fuckability evaluated – please respond in the comment section. It's a battle between love and hate. Those that give love respect my courage and realness. They empathise with my difficult childhood and admire who I have become. Those that give hate see me as vile and disgusting, my race a focus and citizenship questioned. I'm just an innocent bystander in the war to obtain my soul.

Like

Comment

Share

It began with people staring. Then they started coming up to me and taking selfies without asking. The abuse came randomly. They yell out from car windows or shout at me in the street. Nobody does anything to help. My shaming and humiliation is uploaded and commodified on their personal YouTube channels.

Once the Bitter Virgins found out where I worked, they came in groups to troll me. They asked me stupid questions or got huge piles of clothing for me to scan only to decide they didn't want them anymore. After doing that for a month they spray-painted *Traitor Fuck Off* on the window. I quietly resigned. I should have expected this, but fame (or infamy) creeps up on you.

My father was somewhat famous, and the aura never quite left him. He fulfilled all the clichés. Celebrities are childish and demanding and prone to tantrums due to their impenetrable belief in their God-given talent. They surrounded themselves with parasites that create an echo chamber of disingenuous approval that temporarily fulfils their cringey desperation for love. Untrustworthy due to their obsession with themselves, their whole existence is based on attention and adulation. My father was no exception.

But his relationship with fame was somewhat contradictory. He despised the establishment, but craved its attention. Once they got sick of his act he was discarded, but he spent the rest of his life yearning for their approval. It was sad and at times I was cruel to him about it. I know he would have been proud of my current notoriety. I, on the other-hand, despised it.

Rose Hong-Robson

@rosehongrobson

Under the shower / I close my eyes
the warm water / collects my tears
I imagine / blue light / surrounding me with / positive energy
To protect me
But the online merk / is continuous / always there
Never ending
And
Omnipresent

My story
Is now theirs?

They want to cut me up and eat my flesh

2 weeks ago

20,106 Retweets **4,909** Favourites

Adrian Doge-Come II

It's getting hard to tell what's a meme and what isn't anymore. [sic]

Rose Hong-Robson

@rosehongrobson

On my way home today a man ran out of his car, punched me in the face, then 'courageously' jumped back in and drove away. I counted ten other dudes standing around watching.

7 minutes ago

12,106 Retweets **4,409** Favourites

Linh cradles my head against her breasts.

‘I love you,’ I say, quietly.

‘I love you, too.’

‘But I love you more than you love me.’

She says nothing, then leans in and kisses me.

Lizzy K, 1 year ago

3:56 a brief moment of bliss, before falling back into the abyss. [sic]

The Fascist hive mind says: Absolute true free speech is for all speech, even speech you hate, which means even unpopular speech is Free Speech, so the best thing to do is for conservatives to educate liberal idiots who don't understand the principles of free speech as Politicians will never disown the lefty loons because MOST politicians are inviting these nuts, it's idiotic, and why does it seem like the Leftists who throw around "fascist" like they don't know what it means are always Fascists themselves and are just projecting their own Fascism as they are the only ones engaging in fascist behaviour, it's obviously they're projecting their own fascist tendencies as Leftists are not smart people, they learn a couple of words, not the history behind them, and toss them around to make themselves feel good about themselves to sound smart because if the Left was really as intelligent as they would have us believe they would understand that if they believe "the Right must be stopped by any means necessary" (and they consider all the Right to be fascist now), then that will lead to the logical conclusion that we (the Right) may employ "any means necessary" to succeed ourselves, if in fact they are willing to use any means to stop us, so basically they're ok with civil war, and in the formal spectrum of political theory it is the Left which meet virtually every criteria of Classic fascism, and they alone, and you would think that self-preservation would kick-in at some point and that they would realize they're starting a Civil War with a group of people who they would definitely not win against, but it's hard to see a limit to the Leftist self-delusion and fantasy, and this is exactly the road to fascism, I mean, the Left gets crazier and crazier, driving normal people to the Right and in search of a strong man who will shut them up once and for all so that everyone else can just get on with their lives, I've never understood how sane people can say fascism is exclusively from the Right, sure it has some Right-wing traits (but a lot more extreme than normal Right policies), fascism involves more governments, usually a dictatorship, but how many Right-wing people do you know that want more governments? It's also a form of nationalist government with a strong military that suppresses opposition etc, do people actually believe communist government's don't have strong militaries, are not Nationalistic, and don't suppress their opponents? No, that doesn't sound like China, Russia or North Korea at all, I mean, ffs, it's obvious the Left like to push the right/fascism agenda, but why do sane people believe it? It's obvious that there is no great difference between Communism/Socialism/Fascism, just some minor differences, and sure fascism is to the Right of the other two, but that doesn't make it Far-

right, the Left never discuss Classic fascism, just Neo-fascism, which adds elements of racism, etc, to classic fascism, and the Left actually have both because they have a network funded by the likes of Soros and others and can flash mob at a moment's notice, and we as a rule have jobs, taxes to pay, and responsibilities to consider, and the Left-wing thugs know this, so we have to show these Lefty scumbags the real meaning of violence! By any means necessary...

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

YOU'RE MY FAVOURITE SUPERHERO OF ALL TIME
BECAUSE YOU TAUGHT ME TO BELIEVE IN MYSELF
MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE AND YOU'RE TRUE TO
YOURSELF AND HAVE DRAGON ENERGY AND WEAR A
CAPE *hands over knife. points to toaster.

11:01 am 29 Aug 2019

206 Retweets **29** Favourites

Two US mass shootings in 13 hours leave at least 29 dead: The United States is once again in shock tonight after 29 people were killed in two mass shootings within hours of each other. Dozens more were injured, many still in a critical condition. *723,357 views.* [sic]

Rose Hong-Robson

3 hours ago

Grumpy cat dies at age 7. (Crying emoji).

Like

Comment

Share

CH. 16

I don't enjoy being present and in the moment
but I really like sirens and people vomiting blood.

Outside it's dark, only the streetlights illuminate the park in front of us. Inside his car it stinks of weed. *Sad People* by Kid Cudi plays through Jamie's car speakers. We just sit in silence for a while listening to the music and looking out into the darkness.

He passes me the joint.

'What's happening to you is fucked up,' he says. 'The system. Everything. It's all fucked *really* fucked up.'

'Yeah...' I reply. 'It is...' I add, trailing off.

I hand the joint back.

A moment of silence dedicated to the mess I'm in.

'Can you get me some Xanax?'

'Yeah, if you want,' he replies, glancing over with concern on his face. 'You need to be careful with those.'

'I will.'

Masterpiece by DaBaby comes on.

Jamie looks over and just stares at me.

'What?'

'Nothing... umm... sorry,' he says, self-consciously. 'It's just... I see your dad's mannerism in you.' A smile creeps onto his face. 'He talked about you all the time.'

'What did he say?'

'All sorts of shit.'

'Like what?'

'Sometimes it was stories about when you lived in China. Other times it was funny shit you were posting. He was really proud of you. I think you were the one good thing in his life.'

'My dad was a compulsive liar. He'd say anything.'

'You really think that?'

‘He chose to be with you over me, didn't he?’

A moment of silence dedicated to my dad's duplicitous nature.

I take out some money from my pocket.

‘Here,’ I say. ‘For the weed.’

‘Don't worry about it.’

‘What do you mean? You drove all the way out here.’

‘Nah, it's all good,’ he says, somewhat rueful. ‘Your dad helped me out when I was got into a really bad place. I probably wouldn't be here if it wasn't for him. I know he was a shitty dad, but he wasn't a bad person, you know?’

Another moment of silence dedicated to my dad's duplicitous nature.

‘I better go home. It's getting late.’

‘You want me to drive you?’

‘It's fine. I live close by. Thanks anyway.’

I get out of the car.

He opens the window.

‘Call me whenever you need more, okay?’

‘I will,’ I tell him. ‘You got any rolling papers?’

He searches through his car and locates some in his glove box. He hands me the half-empty packet through the window.

‘Thanks.’

He grins back, then starts the engine, his car slowly creeping away and disappearing into Ballarat Road.

I walk into the park and sit on the swings.

I smoke another spliff before heading back home.

Rose Hong-Robson

@rosehongrobson

The song is about:

1. Ebola.
2. Minecraft.
3. Being horny.
4. Masturbating to minecraft gameplay.
5. Self-care
6. Being in love.
7. Not being loved back.

It's not finished yet.

3 weeks ago

28,165 Retweets **789** Favourites

White Guy With Terrible Goatie rides in the back of a car filming himself. He pulls out a handgun and smiles to himself. Then glances out the window momentarily before facing the camera again and opening his mouth. He points the gun up to his cheek. Bang! The footage becomes disorientated from the blast but soon stabilises. We're facing White Guy With Terrible Goatie again. He's bleeding from the inside of his mouth. He holds his cheek where there is a bullet hole. 'Oh, you did it!' says a guy off-camera calmly. 'You hurt bad?' 'Yes,' says White Guy With Terrible Goatie. He then says, 'Fuck!' He spits out blood and holds his cheek where the hole is. 'I don't give a fuck about nothing anymore. Damn!... [Inaudible]... I swallowed the bullet,' he says. 'Shit. You swallowed the bullet?' asks Off-Camera Guy. 'Yeah,' replies White Guy With Terrible Goatie. 'Oh Fuck... [Inaudible]... Go!' The car drives faster. 'Shit. Shit. Run it? Run it?' asks Off-Camera Guy. 'Yeah, run it,' replies White Guy With Terrible Goatie. 'Go. Shit. I'm fucked up. Whatever. Fuck it. If I die. Fuck it. [Inaudible] Oh, shit. Fuck.' 'I can't believe it,' says Off-Camera Guy. White Guy With Terrible Goatie laughs. 'Are you dog ass [Inaudible], bro?' asks Off-Camera Guy. White Guy With Terrible Goatie continues laughing. 'Are you dog ass n*gga, bro?' he asks again. White Guy With Terrible Goatie wipes blood all over his face laughing. [Inaudible]. 'Oh, what are you doing?' asks Off-Camera Guy. White Guy With Terrible Goatie spits blood out. 'You're not still recording, are you?' he asks. 'Yeah, I'm still recording,' says Off-Camera Guy. 'Oh my God.' [Laughing]. 'I swallowed the fucking bullet,' says White Guy With Terrible Goatie. 'You swallowed the bullet?' asks Off-Camera Guy. 'Yeah,' says White Guy With Terrible Goatie.

Mark Robson
@Markrobson

Ignore last nights tweets. Meth won that round.

17 February 2016

67 Retweets 19 Favourites

Linh: hey bitch. [sic]

Rose: hey. [sic]

Linh: I'm doing rehearsals. How's prison?

Rose: Binge watching The Assassination of Gianni Versace. American Crime Story.

Linh: Good?

Rose: It's pretty gay.

Linh: Lol. Is your mum still pissed?

Rose: Yep.

Linh: u talking yet? [sic]

Rose: Nope.

Linh: I'll come over when I can.

Rose: I miss you.

MIXTAPE 32

By Rose Hong-Robson SELECT [Follow]

Mixcloud

00:00 ----- 1:29:51

1. DHL - Frank Ocean
2. C.R.E.A.M - Wu Tang Clan
3. S.T.F.U! - Rina Sawayama
4. Feel It Out - Yaeji
5. ラビリンス - Mondo Grosso
6. Plastic Love - Mariya Takeuchi
7. DDU-DU DDU-DU - Blackpink
8. Dive - Lulileela
9. Home With You - FKA Twigs
10. Because I'm Me - The Avalanches
11. Gosh - Jamie xx
12. Never Catch Me ft. Kendrick Lamar - Flying Lotus
13. Ordinary Pleasure - Toro y Moi
14. Nothings Gonna Hurt You Baby - Cigarettes After Sex
15. Homecoming Queen - Thelma Plum
16. Purple Rain - Prince
17. Loch Raven - Animal Collective
18. Girls Need Love - Summer Walker
19. Xanny - Billie Eilish
20. The Greatest - Cat Power

Rose Hong-Robson

@rosehongrobson

God damn it! I can't believe my favourite twitter account that posts exclusively about body dysmorphia just got cancelled. Fascists!

3 days ago

10,563 Retweets **9,999** Favourites

Leopald Stotch 1 year ago

This is horrific and makes me want to go cry in a corner. [sic]

DR Rashid Richie 'INDISPUTABLE': Man Throws Tantrum After Getting Kicked Out Of Bar. Open Racist Given Prestigious Federal Job. Police 'Accidentally' Shoot Man, Handcuff His Family. Hundreds Of Kids Were Illegally Jailed. Male Karen Complains To The WRONG Guys. Zoo Apologizes For Police Killing On Grounds. Cops RIP Disabled Man From His Car. NEW FOOTAGE: Police 'Hunt Down' BLM Protestors. Man Throws Acid In Attack On Ex-Girlfriend. Cops Arrest Man For 'Rapping Too Loud'. Man Cleaning Gun Shoots Neighbor In Head. Active NYPD Cops Are Right-Wing Extremists, Data Leak Shows. Deaf Man Tazed Because Of Cops Misunderstanding. Police Body Cam Catches DISGUSTING Attack on Female Cop by Another Cop. Karen Goes After Black Man In HIS OWN Parking Garage. 'Christian' Woman Leaves Ugly Voicemail. Karen SPITS On A Man At Red Sox Game. Teen In ICU After Security Guard Shot Her. Police Responsible For Death Of 8-Year-Old Girl. Woman Says Violent Arrest Caused Her To Miscarry. Police Dept. Used Meme Page For Derogatory Posts. Teacher Cuts Little Girl's Hair Without Permission. College Professor Charged In Hate Crime Against Woman. Karen Slaps A Navy Veteran, Claiming He's A 'Fake Soldier'. Drunk Couple Goes Viral For Unruly Flight Behavior. Police Pepper-Sprayed And Arrested A Tourist For Recording. A Dad Killed His Own Children For A Conspiracy Theory. Drunk Couple Runs Over Woman's Dog With Scooter. LGBTQ+ Teen Attacked By Fellow Student For Pride Flag. Cop Assaults Woman Trying To Walk Her Dog. Woman RUNS Over Children, Gets 25 Years. Veteran Officer ARRESTED For Child Sex Crimes. Man Gives Nazi Salute And Punches Person.

Oklahoma Just Made It Easier to Run Over Protesters: A new law in Oklahoma will punish protestors who obstruct street traffic or cars with up to a \$5,000 fine and possible jail time. The law also protects drivers who kill or injure protestors while “fleeing from a riot” if they believe they were in danger. VICE News goes to Oklahoma to find out how this law could make protesting a lot more dangerous. 276,419 views. [sic]

Andy Cohen
@Andy

Yes I am racist! I hate white people! [sic]

219 Retweets **77** Likes

Ch. 17

Cracking up hysterically while also understanding their personal journeys.

Leonardo Dicaprio urges over 19+ million of his followers to reduce their meat intake. Grace Victory has awoken from a coma after nearly three months. The Blue Mountains did not receive a cent from the \$177 million NSW Bushfire Disaster Fund. Labor urges Facebook to act against Craig Kelly's 'harmful' content. Myanmar army blocks Facebook access as civil disobedience grows. Kanye West's former bodyguard Steve Stanulis is working on a documentary about his time with the rapper. Pat Dodson has called for mining Royal commission after reports of damage at Aboriginal sites. Collingwood players have written an open letter apologising to anyone who suffered racism at the AFL club. The Bachelor basically told us who won. Joe Scarborough annihilates Kevin McCarthy. The Harry and Meghan interview is not just a crisis for the royal family – but for United Kingdom itself. A woman, 45, has been charged with the murder of an 87-year-old Coburg man. Malcom Turnbull and Kevin Rudd want a royal commission into media diversity – focusing on Murdoch's empire. The Golden Globes spark an inclusion debate. 'Scared' parents seek an end to violence and racism at Shepparton High School. The New York attorney general names duo to investigate the Cuomo sexual harassment claims. Dragons end Israel Folau talks after backlash over proposed NRL return. Tension with the President of Mexico escalates as protests against attacks on women turn violent. Crown Resorts is not suitable to operate its Sydney casino. John Oliver declares that US unemployment chaos is the result of deliberate choices. Owusu states that he's 'Prince, if he were a rapper in 2020's Australia'. France has underestimated the impact of nuclear tests in French Polynesia. Andrew O'Keefe's lawyer says he is 'not the aggressor' in alleged domestic violence. Wanted Hong Kong legislator lands in Australia. Sam Asghari wants kids with Britney Spears.

grimes (verified) Follow

21 posts 929k followers 755 following

MISS ANTHROPOCENE

Neo-metal surrealist girl group_ {Unfollow..... [sic]

www.adidas.com/us/adidas_by_stella_maccartney

Grimes (Verified) ADIDAS: Tell us about ur training regimen ?[sic]

GRIMES: My training is a 360 approach. I first maintain a healthy cellular routine where I maximize the function of my mitochondria with supplements such as NAD+, Acetyl L-Carnitine, Magnesium, etc. This helps promote ATP and it's incredibly visceral. From that point I spend 2-4 hours in my deprivation tank, this allows me to "astro-glide" to other dimensions - past, present, and future.

In the afternoons I do a 1-2 hour sword fighting session with my trainer, James Lew, we go over the fundamentals that work the obliques, core stabilizes, and triceps as well as a few tricks. To wind down from this I spend 30-45 minutes on an inclined hike at roughly 4-4.5 miles per hour, arguably the most efficient workout.

I then spend 45 minutes stretching before heading into the studio where my mind and body are functioning at peak level, with a neuroplastic goal between 57.5 and 71.5 AphC's (which is my preferred range for my blood type). I've outfitted my studio with the highest grade of red light. It is pretty much 1000 sqf IR Sauna. Hana then comes over and we do a screaming session for 20-25 minutes while I slow boil the honey tea that maximizes vocal proficiency. [sic]

I have also eliminated all blue light from my vision through an experimental surgery that removes the top film of my eyeball and replaces it with an orange ultra-flex polymer that my friend and I made in the lab this past winter as a means to cure seasonal depression.

I go to bed with a humidifier on.

#asmc #adidasparley#createdwithadidas #gentrifymordor [sic]

1,239,666 likes

Department of Immigration and Border Protection to revoke Rose Hong-Robson's Australian citizenship for her public support of the terrorist organisation Antifa

[Petition details](#)

[Comments](#)

[Updates](#)

Luca Romano started this petition to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection

Antifa terrorist Rose Hong-Robson has committed treason by attacking Australian values of freedom. By inciting violence on patriots who express their rights to freedom of speech she is attempting to destroy the foundations of our great nation. As she was born in China, we ask the Department of Immigration and Border Protection to revoke her citizenship status and deport her back to where she came from.

This is following the February 13th interview she had on the Scott Colt Tonight program in which Rose Hong-Robson got into a fiery argument with Scott Colt over attacks on Australian values and freedom. We condemn her anti-free speech rhetoric and terrorist links to Antifa and believe that Australians should respect one set of laws, that no religious law is higher than the law of the land and that her blatant lies about Rupert Murdoch will not be tolerated.

The ALT News Service team feel that it is very important to note that we are Australian Patriots who will fight for our Nations values and freedoms.

41,842 supporters

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

I am writing a children's book called: The Unidentifiable Rage That Makes Life Worth Living. I will be posting more about this tomorrow.

22 minutes ago

121 Retweets **44** Favourites

The Mass Psychology of Fascism

by Wilhelm Reich, Mary Boyd Higgins (Editor), Chester M. Raphael (Editor), Vincent R. Carfagno (Translator)

Vikas Lather rated it (Five stars)

A wonderful book. Through his Freudian-Marxist analysis, Reich shows how the sadistic character of race ideology is an extreme expression of patriarchal and oppressive family structure. As he puts it, 'fascist mentality is the mentality of the subjugated "little man" who craves authority and rebels against it at the same time'. [sic]

Tosh rated it (Three stars)

I often wonder if I am a fascist, and I know people who for sure hate Fascism to their very bone, yet I believe that they are fascists in their heart. In fact I wonder if Fascism is somewhat in our DNA. I often think the family trait, the love of animals, and a sense of order is somehow tied in to Fascism. And especially with the family we feel with other living beings. The need to belong to some social group. Isn't it better to join than be apart? Isn't our very sexual need is to be with someone? is Fascism connected to our sexuality. These are all open questions and I don't have an answer to any of this. I am just wondering... [sic]

Eric Phetteplace rated it (Three stars)

good for the synthesis of Marx and Freud, a simpler predecessor to Deleuze & Guattari. bad for the rampant assumptions: 1) sexual repression during childhood is the root of all evils 2) people are innately good 3) there is an objective rationality which is evident to all once their illusions are stripped away. None of these are sufficiently defended, and Reich makes the typical mistake of overestimating the importance of his own discoveries. [sic]

Kandee rated it (Four stars)

great look at what it takes to make a fascist state, how the people behave individually as well as a whole, what pieces need to be in place and how a government or society can cultivate certain elements to insure that the populace goes along with whatever the plan might be, it also eerily familiar. [sic]

Rose Hong-Robson

@rosehongrobson

It's not my fault / nobody wants / to fuck you

it's not / my fault / nobody / wants / you

nobody wants to

fuck

you / nobody

wants

you.

14 minutes ago

23 Retweets **18** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

it's / my / body

14 minutes ago

19 Retweets **16** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

no
body
wants / you

you / fuck

13 minutes ago

16 Retweets **11** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

it's not my fault

13 minutes ago

14 Retweets **5** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

nobody wants / you

13 minutes ago

15 Retweets **4** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson

@rosehongrobson

no / body / wants / to / fuck / you

13 minutes ago

18 Retweets **9** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

it's not my fault
nobody wants to
fuck / you

12 minutes ago

29 Retweets **13** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

it's no/t
my fault / no / body / wants
to / fuck you

12 minutes ago

30 Retweets **19** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

it's not

12 minutes ago

2 Retweets **0** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

my fault

12 minutes ago

4 Retweets **0** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

nobody wants / you.

11 minutes ago

1 Retweets **1** Favourites

Middle school teacher secretly ran white supremacist podcast: Dayanna Volitich, a Florida middle school teacher, said through an attorney that her "Unapologetic" podcast was "political satire and exaggeration." Volitich has been removed from the classroom while the school district investigates her behavior. 1,653,341 views. [sic]

Mark Robson 3 years ago

How the fuck did Fascism become fashionable? I mean, when did THAT happen?

Soon-Yi Previn

@RealSoonYi

IMdrunk [sic]

Posted 7 years ago

Rose Hong-Robson @rosehongrobson · 7 years ago

Replying to @RealSoonYi.

Call 911.

201 Retweets **95** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson

3 hours ago

I was around twelve when Mark started giving me 'experimental Japanese cinema'. I think the first DVD he gave me was Tetsuo: The Iron Man (1989), a cyberpunk film directed by Shinya Tsukamoto. I liked it so he bombarded me with his collection, introducing me to the films of Takashi Miike, Seijin Suzuki, Nobuhiko Obayashi, Nagisa Oshima, Takeshi Kitano, Shohei Imamura, and Kiju Yoshida, just to name a few. It was our thing that we shared. The only time Mum got angry was when she discovered me and my fifteen-year-old friends all giggling hysterically while watching In the Realm of the Senses (1977). She didn't put a stop to the films though. Over the years the DVDs came less frequently and so did Mark; his appearance more dishevelled and broken the rare times he did appear. And as I got older it became clear why. In his long periods of absence. I continued to buy Japanese films online, passing them on whenever he reappeared. But he never returned them, so I stopped lending them out. 'Our thing' that we shared stopped being a thing.

Like

Comment

Share

‘What have you been doing?’

‘Watching a Japanese movie called *Love Exposure*. It's directed by Sion Sono.’

‘What's it about?’

‘It's a four-hour epic about true love, family, desire, religious piety, cults and up-skirt photography.’

‘Sounds terrible.’

‘It's a masterpiece.’

‘What else have you been doing?’

‘Reading strangers fantasizing about raping me.’

‘You should just leave.’

‘And go where?’

‘Anywhere.’

‘But they're everywhere.’

The Caretaker - Everywhere At The End Of Time (Stage 2)

By Rose Hong-Robson [SELECT](#) [\[Follow\]](#)

Mixcloud

00:00 ----- 41:54

1. C1 - A losing battle is raging
2. C2 - Misplaced in time
3. C3 - What does it matter how my heart breaks
4. C4 - Glimpses of hope in trying times
5. C5 - Surrendering to despair
6. D1 - I still feel as though I am me
7. D2 - Quiet dusk coming early
8. D3 - Last moments of pure recall
9. D4 - Denial unravelling
10. D5 - The way ahead feels lonely

Billed 2003 2 years ago
its getting foggy [sic]

‘What are you doing in my room, Mum?’

Slap!

I'm in shock.

‘You want to take drugs? Like your father? You want to die?’

‘They’re... they’re just sleeping pills... to help me sleep.’

Slap!

‘YOU STUPID, GIRL!’

Slap!

Tears stream down her face.

Ashamed, I let her beat me.

She's trembling.

Neither of us can speak.

She leaves and moments later the toilet flushes.

All gone.

The house is quiet.

Around midnight I crawl into her bed.

She's still awake.

‘*Wǒ duì bù qǐ, mā ma,*’ I say.

She reaches out and doesn't let go.

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

For mothers day I got Mum some big dick energy!

11:01 am 29 Aug 2019

82 Retweets **17** Favourites

Ch. 18

Jaden Smith: Do not leave New York City without letting me see you. Justin Bieber: Gone.

In the airport I've buried myself in a hoodie and sunglasses. *They* have finally succeeded in making me go away. Finding freedom in a totalitarian dictatorship. Mark would have loved that. I kinda do too.

Mum and I stand at the departure gates. It's not lost on either of us that this is the first time we've lived apart.

'Bu yao lao zai can guan chi fan,' she says. *'Bu jian kang.'*

'I won't, Mum.'

'Ni xiang yao zai zhe zhu duo jiu?'

'Wǒ bu zhi dao,' I reply.

I hug her tightly, my nose pushing into her neck as tears spill down her jacket.

'Gei ni jiu jiu da dian hua ba, yao shi yu dao wen ti. Zhe yang ba?'

'I will, Mum.'

She squeezes my hand then pushes me forward through the departure gate.

That's her way of saying I love you.

On the plane I rarely leave my seat. Nine hours later we arrive in Guǎngzhōu. My anxiety slowly recedes when I head through customs as the few white people I shared the plane with become vastly outnumbered. I take comfort once I hear Guǎngdōng huà replace English, and I blend into a sea of Chinese people who have no idea who I am. The great firewall will protect me.

Three hours later, I'm on a domestic flight to Jinan, Shāndōng, the province of my birth. Outside the terminal I get a taxi to the train station. When I arrive in Zhāngdiàn, my Jiù jiu (my mother's brother) is waiting for me. As he drives us home, he asks questions and tells jokes. Feeling tired I get lose myself in the landscape outside. Concrete and steel populate what was once farmland.

*

My grandparent's eyes light-up when I walk through the door.

'I can't believe how much you've grown,' says Lǎo lao (grandmother), clutches my hand.

I give her a big hug.

On the wall hangs a framed revolution poster of Mao playing with children, the edges torn, and the paper aged and brown as if soaked in tea.

Lǎo lao smiles when she sees me staring at the poster. She was a child of the revolution.

I smile back and say nothing.

'Sit down,' says Lǎo ye (grandfather). 'You must be tired.'

He leads me to their sofa. A bowl of sunflower seeds is on the coffee table next to a tea set in readiness for guests. I answer all his questions, skipping the part about being attacked by the media, stalked by racists, and trolled by bitter virgins.

On the dining table plates of jiǎo zi are steaming, along with various vegetable dishes and a mushroom soup.

Lǎo ye brings out the bái jiǔ and fills three small glasses.

He takes one, hands the other to Jiù jiu, then pushes the other glass over towards me.

'Gānbēi,' he shouts with a big grin.

Fire erupts down my throat, but I refuse to give my Lǎo ye the satisfaction of seeing me flinch.

He's amused I'm drinking bái jiǔ, as he's a little old school when it comes to women.

I hungrily devour another jiǎo zi as he refills my glass, ignoring Lǎo lao's disapproval.

Smiling at both of us, he lifts up his glass once again. 'Gānbēi!'

My cousin Nan Nan comes over with her daughter Fei Fei, with her mother, who is my Jiù ma. I'm filled in in all the family gossip. My other cousin, Song Hong, has a boyfriend, but Jiù ma thinks he isn't marriage material. And her brother-in-law recently has been accused of corruption. She tells me the whole of China is corrupt and that the anti-corruption campaign is

a weapon of control. This starts a family argument. My grandparents start yelling at her. I stay out of it. Later, Jiù ma quietly asks me questions about Australia. She wants to find out if her brother-in-law can immigrate.

Lǎo lao walks into my room without knocking. A habit of hers I'm going to have to get used to. She lays down next to me on the bed and begins to caress my hair, quietly singing an old song from her youth.

At this moment I realise I'm finally free. Back in Australia I normalised the pain and anxiety I was feeling over the last couple of months. My abuse was omnipresent. It was like being covered in a sticky substance I couldn't wash off. Each comment chips away at your soul. It's not natural to have a conversion with hundreds of people at the same time.

I'm crying. What began as soft muffles turns into violent sobs as I bury my face in her lap.

Lǎo lao continues singing and caressing my hair.

When I eventually calm down, she doesn't enquire about my outburst, and instead tells me that she's happy I'm home.

I am too.

part / **four** // luca

Ch. 19

Go ahead. Say be yourself one more time. I dare you.

/ b / I R L: It's been one-hundred and fifty days since I last masturbated. I have created a new Fakebook profile by 're-appropriating' some photos from a Cultural-Marxist-half-breed-noodle-whore who supports the 'LGBTQI+' community. I have named her Hitomi Sato. She's twenty-five years-old and lists her interests as K-pop, anime and nice guys. She's *not* a social whore, instead she uses Facebook to post useful information like personal anime reviews and which Blackpink member is her favourite – which is Lisa btw. Hitomi's against the establishment and refuses to conform to the rigid ideals of feminism. She can't stand Grimes and despises Chads. Within two weeks, Hitomi has three hundred and eighty-eight friends. Typical.

What do you think of Jennie of BLACKPINK?

Answer Follow Request

Hitomi Sato

Answered July 12.

(2019-present)

Attitude: Her attitude can be arrogant and rude. Some blinks justify it as being 'savage' but compared to the other members of Blackpink comes across as entitled. Also, when she acts cute it can appear to be fake. Also, she seems selfish because when they perform, she lets the rest of the group down because her work ethic is lazy. This is not fair for Lisa, Jisoo and Rosé.

Favouritism: It's obvious Jennie is YG's favourite, and this may be the reason for her entitlement. This has been proven because of all her scandals; entitlement and selfishness. If Lisa, Jisoo or Rosé behaved like Jennie that would not have had it as easy. It's obvious.

Stage presence and performances: Jennie is inconsistent when performing. Sometimes she's great but other times she seems bored. This is unfair to fans. Blinks defend her saying she has 'personal issues' like depression, but I don't buy it. Jennie signed up to be a K-pop idol so she should know what is expected off her. There are many trainees that would kill to be in her position so you can't just pick and choose when you want to give a good performance. DO YOUR JOB! Yet, when she does perform she is amazing so we all know she has the talent and drive. Also, sometimes she tries to be the centre of attention. Blackpink are a group, and she should respect that so she needs to focus on singing and group harmony.

Actions towards Lisa, Jisoo and Rosé : I have noticed during award ceremonies Jisoo always tries to encourage Jennie to be positive and happy, but Jennie ignores her with a sour face as she watches others perform. And she seems jealous of Lisa's bubbly and loveable personality.

OVERALL: Jennie is not a bad person, but out of the group she is the most entitled and selfish. She deserves to be in the group, but YG need to stop the favouritism and make her adjust her attitude to her fans and give more respect to Lisa, Jisoo and Rosé. She is very talented and has the potential to be a good role model.

Full disclosure: My favourite member is Lisa.

2.4K views

Nine-year-old girl accidentally kills gun instructor: Jean Casarez on a nine-year-old girl who accidentally killed her gun instructor while shooting an Uzi sub-machine gun. 3,150,879 views. [sic]

/ b / I R L: It's been one hundred and seventy-five days since I last masturbated. Nonna lies in bed elated by my arrival. Her room stinks of death.

'Hey, Nonna,' I say, feigning happiness. 'I have some good news. My girlfriend's pregnant.'

'You not married?'

'Not yet.'

'She want to trap you.'

'No, it's not like that. We've been trying for a while. We didn't want to get married until you got out, so you could come to the wedding. We just bought a place in Preston. It's a three-bedroom house.'

'Get married and you make me happy.'

'I got a promotion too. I'm the vice-president of an accounting firm.'

'I very happy,' she says.

Luca: I sometimes lie in bed for hours. When I feel like this, I want to end it. I wish I had no feelings. To feel nothing.

Kamah! Feelings make us human.

Luca: Sometimes I think life is meaningless, like, what's the point? I mean, if I died today nobody would care. I think about suicide regularly, like, sometimes opening my eyes and realising I am trapped in this defective body feels too much of a burden. But if I did end it I'd like to kill some Chads on my way out. I wish I could body swap. I'd be a Chad and get Aids, then plough my way through as many Femoids as I could to infect them. Or walk into Centrelink with a gun and shoot everybody.

Kamah! You want to shoot everybody in your local Centrelink office?

Luca: No, only the workers. If I could get to the government people I'd shoot them – like the Prime Minister – or somebody like Rupert Murdoch or James Packer.

Kamah! What is it about 'government people', or people in power like Rupert Murdoch or James Packer, that you dislike so much as to want to kill them?

Luca: Because they control people but only think of themselves.

Kamah! So, you want to kill them because they're selfish?

Luca: Why do they get to do whatever they want, and I have nothing? They're Chads through money. If Packer didn't have any money no women would fuck him.

Kamah! Have you noticed you base everything on the ability to have sex with women.

Luca: That's because society judges us on our fuckability. That's it. Everything else is just a lie.

Anonymous

>It's my birthday.

>I am 30 years old.

>Kissless, Touchless, Handholderless, Virgin.

>I made it.

/ b / I R L: It's been one hundred and eighty-nine since I last masturbated. I haven't showered in three weeks. This keeps the trainwrecks I have to live with at a distance. My neighbour (the DJ) has stopped harassing me and finally come to the conclusion that I'm just not fucking interested. The meth-heads on the other side of my room got booted out for kicking in the door of some guy that lives down the hall. They beat the shit out him because they thought he cursed them. My new neighbour is a middle-aged whore who brings clients into her room. She is also on drugs. So now I have to endure the sounds of random men that she fucks at all hours of the night. I hope she has Aids and is spreading it to all her clients. Thank fuck I have headphones and an X-box.

The revolution is in motion. I've been contributing with betas from Ukraine, Russia and Poland. We've been antagonising the Empire. Divide and conquer. If we can destroy the foundation of democracy there, then the rest of the Western world will follow. Ironically, most citizens of the Empire are partial to fascism in some form if it subscribes to their worldview. The country was built on slavery, after all.

Currently, we're pushing alt-right 'patriots' to go out to BLM protests with guns. Then encouraging black militants to arm themselves and defend their people. We've had a huge success rate in instigating fireworks. Chad minds (and all those who follow him) are malleable as long as you give them a relatable heroic narrative and exacerbates their fears. In this case, it's the dread of Tyrone's superior gigantic black cock impaling their wives. Once they go black, they'll never go back. Statistically a significant percentage of women are like that.

The beauty of the attention economy is that once we plant the seeds, *they* disseminate our narratives for us. Due to the individualistic and greedy nature of Chad, he will passionately attack the founding institutions that hold the Empire's power (if they perceive it to benefit themselves). Politicians have surprisingly embraced our narratives into the mainstream far more quickly than anticipated. It was an amazing feeling hearing my own words come out of the mouth of their President. That was a good day.

In the meantime, for my personal entertainment I catfish Chads, Brads and Lower-tier normies with Hitomi. She's very popular. A beta who still believes he can ascend named Daniel, is in love with her. He dreams of going to Japan to teach English one day. He's declared to

Hitomi that he feels a 'connection'. She has revealed she feels the same way. Daniel wants to meet Hitomi but she's not ready to meet IRL. He says he is happy to wait until she's ready. Daniel needs to learn that nice guys always finish last.

Hitomi: Hey whatchu doing?

Daniel: At work

Hitomi: I won't bother you then

Daniel: No, it's quiet. I'm so bored. What are you doing?

Hitomi: Listening to AKB48

Daniel: What album?

Hitomi: Koko ga Rhodes da, Koko de Tobe!

Daniel: I love that album. My favourite song is "Reborn"

/ b / I R L: It's been two hundred and seven days since I last masturbated. When I visit Nonna these days, she's generally barely lucid. She's also lost a lot of weight. Her skin now appears taped on, saggy and uneven, a grotesque version of her former self. She was once a Stacy. She used to show me old photos of her and Nonno when they first arrived in Australia. Age has destroyed her flesh body and the act of living exhausts her. In the nursing home, everybody's waiting to die.

I know the Confrontational Unreasonable Narcissistic Tormentor deliberately put her here to hurt me. She's always been jealous of our relationship. She can't stand the fact that there's somebody in this world that actually cares for me. Nonna's always picked up strays – cats, birds with broken wings, homeless dogs. When she was mobile, she used to go into the city and feed the pigeons. How she gave birth to such a cold bitch, I have no idea.

Some days I just sit and watch her sleep, but today is a good day because she's awake. She tells me, I'm a good boy, again and again, her speech soft and raspy, her small bony hand in mine. She tells me she doesn't like it here. That she doesn't have anything in common with the other residents. She wants to be back in her own house with me. She says she doesn't mind being alone if my wife doesn't want to live with her. She begs me to take her away. And every time this happens, I have to give her the bad news. The Confrontational Unreasonable Narcissistic Tormentor sold her house. This is her home now. Every time, her heart sinks.

We talk for two hours today. When I say I need to leave, she asks me how the Confrontational Unreasonable Narcissistic Tormentor is doing?

'I haven't talked to her in a while,' I reply. 'Has she visited recently?'

'She very busy,' mumbles Nonna.

The Darkcel Podcast | Episode #126: The Death of Socializing, Anti-Social Behavior is the New Norm.. : In this episode, I discuss how the decline and shall I say "death?" of socializing is amongst us right now and how anti-social behaviour; something that had once been thought of as unpopular, is now popular among the masses and it's only growing. Although this is mostly a worldwide phenomenon and not particularly about incelism, I do believe it has a influence to the growing epidemic of autism and outcast behavior. This is something that has been growing forever, we're just now seeing it becoming popular... unfortunately. 827 views. [sic]

Daniel: I haven't seen u online?

Hitomi: I was feeling depressed and all alone and don't like to bother you when I feel this way. I don't want to influence you.

Daniel: What's wrong?

Hitomi: My father has dementia. I take care of him. Sometimes he doesn't remember me. I feel alone because my mother left us when I was young. It's just me and dad. We have no other family.

Daniel: That's fucked. I wish you told me earlier.

Hitomi: Thanx. You're a nice guy. Not like other guys.

Daniel: I'm always here for you.

Justin Bieber
@justinbieber

I wanna challenge Tom Cruise to fight in the octagon. Tom if you don't take this fight your scared and will never live it down. Who is willing to put on the fight? @danawhite? [sic]

June 10, 2019 10:34 AM

16.5K Retweets 75.3k Likes

Kamahl: How do you feel when you inhabit your physical body? The flesh world as you call it.

Luca: Like I'm in a video game. Maybe like that movie with Jim Carrey. The one where everybody is an actor.

Kamahl: The Truman Show.

Luca: Yeah, like that. But it's like, everything that's happening is only inside my head. Like now, we're talking, but maybe there isn't an external reality, like, I could kill someone, but it wouldn't matter because it only existed inside my head. I don't know...In the flesh world I feel empty. I don't feel anything. Like a ghost.

Kamahl: The living dead.

Luca: Yeah, but we all are if you think about it. It's just that normies live in denial. Like in *The Matrix*.

Kamahl: Do you relate to the ideas explored in *The Matrix*?

Luca: *The Matrix* helped us understand our power.

Kamahl: How long have you felt differentiation to those you refer to as normies?

Luca: [Shrugs]. Since I was a kid. I just couldn't articulate it back then. I was bullied. I've always been bullied. People have always wanted to hurt me. I'm genetically prone to abuse. I had to leave school because it got so bad. My parents didn't care when I stopped going. They said it was *my* decision. I pretty much brought myself up. If I didn't leave school, I would have committed suicide. Or gone on a rampage.

Kamahl: Do you still have violent urges to kill people or commit suicide?

Luca: Yeah, at least once a day.

Kamahl: Why do you think you feel these urges?

Luca: Why wouldn't I feel these urges?

Kamahl: Well, I'd like to hear in your words why you feel this way. It could be helpful.

Luca: You can't help me.

Kamahl: Why do you say that?

Luca: Because you have no idea what it means to be blackpilled. It's outside your experience or reality. You're a Normie. You *fit* in.

Kamahl: You don't have faith that one day you'll have the opportunity to have a good life?

Luca: That's a ridiculous question.

Kamahl: Why is that a ridiculous question?

Luca: *One*, I'm blackpilled. *Two*, I refuse to participate in the performance of the lie.

Kamahl: The Costanza principal?

Luca: Yes. But when you tell the truth you get destroyed because people would prefer to live the lie.

Kamahl: Like in *The Matrix*?

Luca: Uh huh.

Kamahl: Have you heard of Rene Descartes.

Luca: No.

Kamahl: He was a seventeenth-century philosopher whose work inspired *The Matrix* movies. He asked the question, 'how do we know that everything we experience is in fact not being conjured up by an evil demon intent on misleading us?' This is basically the story of the movies, right? The evil demon being the machines that are misleading humanity with an illusion of a reality.

Luca: Yeah.

Kamahl: Another French philosopher called Jean Baudrillard was another big influence.

Luca: Yeah, I know him. He says we live in a fake world, right?

Kamahl: Not quite. But he explores how modernity creates simulations that become our reality. The Internet is an example, as it's a world constructed by simulacra and simulations.

Luca: God is a Hacker.

Kamahl: Do you feel powerful online?

Luca: Yes.

Kamahl: But in reality, you have no power.

Luca: In the flesh world I have no power. There are many like me who endure.

Kamahl: These are your friends?

Luca: Yeah. We're all blackpilled.

Kamahl: Are these friends also part of the revolution?

Luca: [Smiles]. Uh huh.

Kamahl: Do you ever meet up with your friends? In the flesh world?

Luca: What's the point?

Kamahl: Human contact is important.

Luca: Human contact is for normies.

Kamahl: Do you desire human contact? Platonic or romantic?

Luca: You mean sex?

Kamahl: Sexual and non-sexual human contact. For instance, meeting up with one of your friends in person for a coffee.

Luca: It doesn't matter.

Kamahl: How about having a sexual relationship with somebody?

Luca: Impossible.

Kamahl: Why do you think it's impossible.

Luca: I'm *fucking* blackpilled! I have to control my desires.

Kamahl: How do you control your desire?

Luca: I refuse to give Femoids my attention, online *or* offline. And refuse to masturbate.

Kamahl: You refuse to masturbate because you don't want to desire a person?

Luca: If you desire a Femoid they will control you. That's how men get cucked.

Kamahl: You mention the word cuck a lot in our discussions. Do you fear that if you form a relationship with a woman, she will try to control you? Is that why you wear dirty clothes? To repel them?

Luca: [Smiles]. I refuse to conform to society's superficial expectations and confront normies with their superficiality. Femoids project an ethical stance, but in reality, they don't abide by it. Femoids don't want nice guys. They want Chad. Statistically, a significant percentage of women are like this.

Ch. 20

Pornhub community.

ladyluvr

2 months ago

Damn I felt the heartbreak and that ain't even my girl. They probably would've been better off if they didn't go through with it. I feel sorry for the poor guy [sic]

Like

Reply

polow86

4 months ago

You're right, he probably thought he was strong enough or man enough to handle it or not be bothered by it. The truth is he probably never made her feel this way or moaned this loud etc....He cried at how much she enjoyed and she's remorseful at how it made him feel. Damn that was a mistake. [sic]

Like

Reply

cl1989

5 months ago

Nah, he cried not her. She wanted to try a bigger dick and he accepted it, gave it a try, tried to be open minded about it. When he saw her moaning and groaning. It got to him and he shed tears. So when the guy who fucked her asked, "come get some". He said "Nah, I'm good." She felt like she was in guilt as well because she did want a bigger dick. She realized she also broke his heart. You can see her cover her head with her hair at the end feeling the remorse of doing it as well. Truth [sic]

Like

Reply

lightsaber7

6 months ago

i was thinking she started crying because she realized sex will never be as good with her bf ever again. Lol [sic]

Like

Reply

BeckyWhyte

6 months ago

They look happy fucking her. [sic]

Like

Reply

cock_ness_monster

7 months ago

to each their own, but take the time to *read other couples' experiences first*. You will definitely learn something, even if you decide to go through with it. you can't be too prepared for something like this. something that could've been fun and wonderful can turn into a relationship-destroying event -- don't take it from me, take it from the hundreds of stories, on reddit and elsewhere! [sic]

Like

Reply

realpartypeople

7 months ago

nice. thanks for sharing. we are considering doing it and this is an interesting perspective. [sic]

Like

Reply

unknown

9 months ago

I used to feel the same but I let my partner purposely go out one evening and hook up. Hasn't gotta be sex, just flirting and kissing, if you feel comfortable with it, get them to stay in touch, if not, its just a stranger she may never see again and you can both move on. However, my partner went all the way and it was amazing when she came back to me and told me all about it. The rest is history. BUT, 100% trust is needed, not 99% not even 99.9%, you cant throw in each others faces. [sic]

Like

Reply

Equalizerman

9 months ago

Well would you look at that: a reasonable person. [sic]

Like Reply

OCGuy4

9 months ago

This posting has been awhile but you are pretty much right on point. The only way it is really any good for your wife is she has to have an interest and connection with whomever she wants to do it. I'm cool with my husband's closest and most trusted friend, but with a few I did for him and out of some curiosity were just a dick in me going in & out. I closed my eyes and watched Family Guy in my head. Thankfully they came in less than about 5 minutes! Waste of good sex time! Don't do it. [sic]

Like

Reply

Celeblith

9 months ago

I've fantasized about sharing my girl, but reading the comments and seeing this makes me think maybe that's not such a good idea. Another commenter put it really well: "Once you cum and sober up, sharing your lady isn't so fun." For those of you for whom it works, great. But don't tell other people their love is toxic just because they don't want to watch each other fucking other people. I for one plan to keep my fantasies just that, because what I've got is too important to risk losing. [sic]

Like

Reply

Ch. 21

Cotten candy hentai and the extra wet pussy.

/b / I R L: It's been two-hundred and twenty days since I last masturbated. I wanted to take my relationship with Daniel to the next level so I've 're-appropriated' some photos of an Asian whore masturbating for a Chad that I found on Reddit. I edited her head out before I sent them to him, with the message: *I've never done this before. C how much I trust u. xoxo*. He reciprocates with a selfie in the bathroom mirror holding his erection (with Hitomi's permission, of course). Hitomi doesn't mind his size because she's more interested in nice guys rather than the monster cocks. Although statistically a significant percentage of women are like that. Later Daniel messages Hitomi to ask if she considers him her boyfriend now. Hitomi messages back 'yes'.

Ali Wong Remembers Her First Micropenis Encounter | Netflix Is A Joke: Ali Wong shares very important dating advice you're gonna want to tell all your friends. 171,162 views.
[sic]

Kamahl: What do you look at when you go on the dark web?

Luca: Murders. Rapes. Massacres. A lot of that stuff is filmed during wars. Like cities getting carpet bombed. There's definitely families in those buildings. Women and children. Getting blown apart. I've seen people burnt alive from a Civil War in Eastern Europe. I forgot what country. It doesn't really matter. Humans are depraved. Like, once I found this video of a woman letting her dog fuck her. The dog literally mounted her. You could see the dogs dick go inside. I could give you the link if you don't believe me.

Kamahl: No thanks. I'll take your word for it.

Luca: You can see anything on the Internet if you know where to look. Sometimes I watch stuff with children.

Kamahl: Child pornography?

Luca: Yeah, but I turn it off when they cry, though. It makes me feel bad. I don't get off on it. I do it to test myself. The first time you see someone die, or being tortured, sexually abused or whatever, it feels horrible. But after a while you don't feel anything. I want to feel nothing. If you feel nothing you can accept the truth. But other times I watch stuff and I cry. Sometimes I have this overwhelming desire to care. Then I hate myself for it. It's weird. I can be really sensitive, but other times I know I can be heartless. I do things to people I know are bad. I've ruined people's lives. Then a week later I feel bad about it.

Kamahl: How have you ruined people's lives?

Luca: I don't want to talk about those things. You'll narc on me.

Kamahl: Narc?

Luca: You'll report me to the police.

Kamahl: I can't do that. Everything you say to me is confidential.

Luca: Yeah, sure it is.

Kamahl: So why do you tell me the things you do?

Luca: Maybe I'm lying.

Kamahl: I'm just here to listen, Luca. I'd like to help you.

Luca: [Laughs to himself]. To get a job?

Kamahl: Not necessarily just that. I think that the world can feel like a very hard place to navigate, and we all need some help to find a way to live our lives. Especially through the hard periods.

Luca: [Sniggers]. Hard periods? I'm not going through a *hard period*. This *is* my life.

Kamahl: It doesn't have to be like this forever.

Luca: You don't get *it*.

Kamahl: What don't you think I get?

Luca: How *it* is.

Kamahl: How *what* is?

Luca: We're all conditioned.

Kamahl: Conditioned for what?

Luca: To endure. To be controlled and enslaved.

Kamahl: By whom.

Luca: Alphas. Billionaires. Lizard people. There are many names for them. Regardless, they're all cunts. The current global financial and political system is completely corrupt. I mean, even using the term *The One-percent* acknowledges who we are controlled by. Democracy and freedom are illusions.

Kamahl: Do you feel controlled?

Luca: They want to control me, but I refuse to play the game. That makes their mad. That's why they sent me to you.

Kamahl: Do you think I'm trying to control you.

Luca: No. But you *fit in*. You don't need to question anything when you *fit in*. That's the beauty of the Internet. The Internet shows the truth. Now they can't pretend anymore.

Kamahl: They?

Luca: Normies. Like you. [Sniggers]. Everything you do, every choice you make, each email, tweet, and post becomes data. The whole human experience is online. Information is power. Through my fingertips I am a god.

Kamahl: You feel like a god when you're online?

Luca: I've destroyed million-dollar corporate websites from my bedroom. I can see the intimate lives of my enemies and expose their secrets.

Kamahl: Do you feel powerful when you know people's secrets?

Luca: Yeah. Because then I know the truth. People lie all the time. The whole system we live in is a lie. People don't work hard to make money. All people aren't equal. Girls don't actually want nice guys. The world isn't fair.

Kamahl: You're right. The world isn't always fair, but part of life is learning how to cope with the world. When we make connections with other people, and find communities to be part of, the world can be a more hospitable place. Human beings need one another to survive.

Luca: There you go with fitting in again.

Kamahl: But you have friends online. That's a community.

Luca: I guess. It's different though.

Kamahl: How so?

Luca: I don't know... it just is. When I walk around in the flesh world, sometimes I don't even feel I'm in my body... it's like I'm in a video game. The real world doesn't feel real.

Kamahl: You feel disembodied?

Luca: Yeah. Other times when I go out, I feel like everybody is watching me, or talking about me. There are times I think I'm being controlled by remote control. Or God is talking to me. Maybe it's not God, but somebody or something sending me signals. It feels like the real world is an illusion when this is happening. But then the next day it all feels different. And I'm invisible. When I feel like that, I pretend I'm homeless and ask for money or cigarettes. People pretend they care about homeless people, but when you confront them, they ignore you, or make excuses not to help. Sometimes I feel completely hopeless. Everything is black. It feels like I'm surrounded by fog and emptiness. Other days I feel good. I'm part of something special. That I'm part of something that will save humanity.

Kamahl: Like the beta revolution?

Luca: Yeah. It's important.

Mark Latham - Penis Enlargement

\$9,238 raised of \$15,000 target

7,346 donors	10,987 shares	3,248 followers
------------------------	-------------------------	---------------------------

Share

Donate Now

7,346 people have just made a donation

Luca Romero is organising this fundraiser.

Created 18 days ago / Community

Mark Latham is a living legend and political warrior. After working his way up to become the leader of the Labour party he left due to their communist sympathies and has joined One Nation with Pauline Hanson to save Western civilisation. Mark is a great bloke and sensitive man. He is a courageous fighter but has been battling with a dark secret that has eaten away at his self-esteem over the years. He has a micro penis. Mark uses the money he earns to provide for his family and rarely spends any money on his own needs. That is why we are asking that his supporters donate to this fund to help us help Mark. He deserves this.

Donate

Share

Organiser

Luca Romano
Organiser
Brunswick, VIC

Contact

Comments

Matty Rogerson donated \$200

As a man who also has a micro-penis, I understand his pain. I haven't had the courage to seek help, and this is inspiring. Thank you for giving me strength.

7 hours ago

Marissa Little donated \$50

Sending positive, healing vibes your way, Mark XXX

10 hours ago

Tania Hardy donated \$500

Mark deserves this. He has battled for Australia all his political life and I am proud to donate to this fund! Big hugs and kisses. xoxox

14 hours ago

Britney Spears
@Britneyspears

Does anybody think global warming is a good thing? I love Lady Gaga. I think she's a really interesting artist. [sic]

4,338 Retweets **988** Favourites

/ b / I R L: It's been two-hundred and thirty-five days since I masturbated. When I walk in to visit Nonna's room she mistakes me for my Nonno. He was a manlet who fucked anything that moved. She thinks he's come back for her. Holding my hand tight, she speaks in her native tongue, begging to be freed. Recently, she's been fluctuating between thinking I'm Nonno, and some kind-hearted stranger who's come to visit. As her mind deteriorates all she has is her memories. When she does sometimes snap out of it, she has to relive her traumatic reality. That she's been abandoned here. I have the urge to put a pillow over her face and end it. It's the least I could do. But I don't because I'm a coward. After twenty minutes of rambling, she breaks down in tears. I tell her I love her.

Kamahl: Could you tell me more about this darkcel movement you've aligned yourself with?

Luca: [Smirks]. We understand there is no light at the end of the tunnel. Our community lives in darkness. Unlike the rest of the blackpilled community we accept the darkness. Our suffering has enlightened us in the same way Christians believed in Christ's suffering. Through our suffering we transcend the normie hypocrisy. We understand that we will never obtain things like love or 'being in a relationship'. Those petty desires are for moids. Our disconnection from such primal urges as *sex* and *love* enable us to go beyond the normie status quo and into a new state of enlightenment. We see the world as it *is*, and have ascended the limits of the typical basic normie. You subscribe to *old thinking*, we subscribe to the *new thinking*.

Kamahl: What is new thinking?

Luca: It's a complete paradigm shift.

Kamahl: Can you elaborate?

Luca: [Sighs]. Our movement is conscious of the next step of evolution for humanity. We understand that normie ideological constructs like of *Right* or *Left* are an obsolete belief system from last century.

Kamahl: So, your movement has no ideology? Or is it a new ideology?

Luca: First of all, it's not *my* movement! We are a community that accept the truth. Ideologies are for fucking *idiots*! The Left have this bullshit sense of false morality based on emotions and self-righteousness. These blue-pilled maniacs are basic and no different from any brainwashed whore devoted to a pimp who beats them each day and takes all their money. Slaves. Then you have the fucking so-called Centralists who pretend they're not part of the establishment.

Kamahl: So, you're saying Centralists are people that don't subscribe passively to Left or Right ideologies?

Luca: *No!* Centralists are ridiculous individuals that believe they are free-thinkers and project intellectual superiority, yet say nothing that actually makes any sense. And those that take the red pill understand the truth somewhat, and have been enlightened, but at a very basic level because *that* movement is full fucking moids-on-roids that listen to Joe Rogan.

Kamahl: And he's an Alpha, right?

Luca: He's a manlet.

Kamahl: What is a manlet?

Luca: A short male that will never be accepted as a full man due to his height. No matter how much money and fame he acquires he is what he is.

Kamahl: He's very popular, though. Especially with young men.

Luca: You asked. I'm just being honest. It's the truth. [Smiles]. But Joe Rogan understands the revolution is coming, so he has already submitted himself to us. He spreads misinformation and conspiracies in order to confuse the normie masses and protect the Beta-lords from harm. That's what he is paid to do.

Kamahl: Who are these Beta-lords?

Luca: Zuckerberg. Bezos. Musk. Dorsey. They are leading the revolution.

Kamahl: Are you saying Joe Rogan is protecting billionaire tech entrepreneurs by spreading misinformation?

Luca: Yes. His purpose is to inflame the 'culture wars' and distract the normie masses from attacking our leaders.

Kamahl: So, would you say is the ideological stance of the beta uprising?

Luca: We accept the truth.

Kamahl: And what is that truth?

Luca: That the international Liberal social order is just an illusion. I am neither free, and we are not equal. It's a lie propagated by the elites. But the normie masses are being awakened as you can see from the current global unrest. The lie is being unravelled. The liberal social experiment has been proven a failure.

Kamahl: How so?

Luca: Because it's evident the elites, the very people that dictate the rules, don't themselves follow the rules. Ever!

Kamahl: Well, we are confronting some huge problems in the system, and I can see, especially for the young, how disappointing that could be, but I personally believe democracy is worth fighting for.

Luca: [Laughs]. We don't live in a democracy. Rupert Murdoch, a foreign national, dictates the rules in Australia. Not the Prime Minister.

Kamah! He certainly has an influence, but I wouldn't say he *dictates* the rules.

Luca: Political power is handed over to those that *bend the knee* to Murdoch and swallow whatever bile he discharges.

Kamah! That's a crude analogy but there may be some truth to that.

Luca: May be some *truth to that*? Two former Prime Ministers on either side of the divide that represent our so-called democracy say so.

Kamah! Not in those exact words.

Luca: How can you tell me to have faith in a system when the people that dictate the rules don't follow them.

Kamah! You talk about truth in a very absolute way. What makes you think the way you see the world is *true*, and say, the way I see the world is *untrue*?

Luca: Because I engage in the ugliness of the world that *you* choose to ignore. On the Internet I see what people really think.

The Darkcel Podcast | Episode #75: Giving Up or Acceptance.. Is There Really a Difference? : Giving up or accepting your fate as a human being... is there really a difference or just a way to make yourself feel better about yourself? Hmm.. 675 views. [sic]

Cardinal George Pell is acquitted.

/ b / I R L: It's been three hundred and twenty-one days since I last masturbated. On the bus, I stare down at my phone, careful not to make eye-contact with any of the other passengers. Public transport is particularly dangerous for betas. I scroll through an article about a fourteen-year-old boy who stabbed a pregnant woman for her car keys.

At the next stop a natty bearded Charlie Manson look-a-like gets on with his whore. She's damaged beyond repair, scowling at anyone who catches her eye. The fact that *this guy* can find a Femoid to fuck him, and I can't, is a perfect example of how the world I am forced to inhabit is against nice guys.

A couple of stops later Manson yells, 'SHUT UP! JUST SHUT THE FUCK UP!'

His victim? Some Lower-tier Normie dressed in Uniqlo. He's the kind of guy that only fucks 'women of colour' and lives in a sustainable apartment complex created by an 'ethical' architectural firm. His apartment is curated with vintage furniture bought from op-shops, carefully selected over the years, as well as a few tasteful pieces from boutique designers. Paintings and photographs from friends cover the walls, and the shelves he bought from *Muji* stock a vast collection of records and books. He only goes to cafes that serve Fair Trade organic coffee and thinks playing video games is childish.

Manson raises his fist, yelling more vitriolic abuse.

Our victim stares back calmly, not making any sudden movements, clearly trying to hide his terror. He knows he's dealing with a beast and nobody on this packed bus will help him. Instead, we watch. Silent. Waiting. Violence hangs in the air. Phones come out, including mine, in anticipation of entertainment. We all want this to happen. To witness his humiliation and record it so we can upload it so others can enjoy. As the views climb, so will our bank accounts. This is the revolution.

Manson's whore casually pulls on his sleeve, 'Carn babe,' she whines. 'It's our stop next.' His fist comes down. He looks confused. When the bus eventually stops, the doors screech open. He mumbles something at our Victim before stumbling off the bus with his whore.

The rest of the bus avoid eye contact with the Victim, collectively guilty of not giving a fuck. Humans are cruel. We always have been. I learnt this early in life.

A few stops later, our Victim gets up from his seat and stands in front of the door, waiting, visibly shaken and humiliated. When the door opens, he quickly jumps out.

Outside he takes a moment to himself, still in shock.

Phones return to pockets as the bus drives away.

Anonymous

- >saw the new Joker movie
- >completely surpassed all expectations
- >it is unquestionably the #DARKCEL movie of our times
- >a story of a man finding himself
- >and revealing the true state of the world
- >I couldn't stop smiling as I was watching
- >by the end I had tears of joy
- >I gave a standing ovation
- >nobody else clapped
- >went outside and bought a ticket for the next session
- >bought a choc top combo
- >sat down and watched it all over again
- >money well spent

The Darkcel Podcast | Episode #32: Cope or Rope? You Decide... : Cope or Rope?

That's the question of the day... 1,052 views. [sic]

/b/IRL: It's been two hundred and fifty-three days since I last masturbated. I bought a Seagate Expansion Portable Hard Drive for \$98 off Daniel today. It was interesting seeing him in the flesh. Hearing his voice. He had no idea that I know *everything* about him. His secrets. His dreams. The size of his dick. I have many pictures of Daniel. He has many pictures of Hitomi.
KeK.

Kamahl: Can you tell me something that makes you happy?

Luca: Speaking to my girlfriend online.

Kamahl: Oh? You have a girlfriend! That's fantastic! Can we talk about her?

Luca: [Shrugs]. If you want.

Kamahl: What changed your mind about having a relationship with a woman?

Luca: [Shrugs]. She's different from other femoids. We're into the same stuff. And she hates Chads too.

Kamahl: [Smiles]. So, it would seem some women do like nice guys.

Luca: [Rolls his eyes]. She lives in Japan. I need money to go and see her but that's not going to happen.

Kamahl: We could take steps to help you get a job to get you there. That's part of the reason you're here, right?

Luca: You're pretending.

Kamahl: Pretending?

Luca: Nobody wants me working for them. Let's stop the charade. *That's* why I'm here.

Kamahl: Nothing is fixed. You don't have to be in the situation you are in forever. But it has to begin with you.

Luca: You stole that from Anthony Robbins.

Kamahl: [Laughs].

Ch. 22

Ruin everything. It feels great. Trust me. Do it.
Trust. Me.

/ b / I R L: It's been two hundred and seventy-eight days since I last masturbated. The middle-aged whore who lived two-doors recently got kicked out for moving in her pimp. Things got violent. They were asked to leave. Now a new femoid has replaced them.

She acknowledges me as we head down the hallway to our rooms.

'You live next door, right?' she asks, smiling warmly.

'Yeah,' I mumble, avoiding eye-contact.

'I'm Catherine.'

I stay silent hoping she'll fuck off and leave me alone.

She doesn't.

'And your name is?' she asks.

'Luca.'

'Well, I've had a big day and I'm making myself a cuppa. Would you like one too?'

'A cup of tea?'

'Yeah.'

'Like, you want me to come into *your* room?'

'If you like. We *are* neighbours.'

'It's not safe to invite strangers into your room around here. What if I rape you?'

She finds that humorous for some reason, then says, 'I'll take my chances.'

'But you don't know me.'

'Isn't that the point? I just moved here, and I noticed you don't come out of your room very much, so I thought it would be nice if I introduced myself. Anyway, I'm having a cup of tea, make up your mind if you want to come in and have one too.'

Clearly, she's over forty and desperate to fuck me. She probably has Aids too. I'll play along for now, and when she throws herself at me, I'll reject her, or piss all over her face before leaving, just to teach her a lesson.

Inside her room, a book shelf covers one wall. In front, an armchair with a side table and reading lamp. A futon is folded neatly under a window that looks out onto a brick wall. The rest of the walls are covered with paintings, drawings and photographs. It's cluttered, but tidy.

She moves the armchair and table into the middle of the room then brings out another chair.

'Take a seat and make yourself comfortable.'

I sit down nervously as she prepares the tea.

'Comfortable?'

I nod, quietly, watching her every move. She hasn't brought out a knife to stab me so I glance over at her bookcase. Many of them are old hardcover novels.

'Why do you have so many books?' I ask, looking at the one of the titles that reads, *As I Lay Dying*. 'Isn't it a waste of space?'

'No. You can borrow some of them but only if you give them back.'

'Books are irrelevant. I can get anything I want on the Internet.'

She glances over, amused. 'Milk or sugar?'

'Both.'

'How many spoons?'

'Five.'

She hands me a red mug and sits on the chair.

It's only now I notice her man-ish features and figure out who 'she' really is!

'Are you a man?' I ask, bluntly.

'No, but I was born male.'

'I'm not going to suck your dick.'

'That's presumptuous,' she says, staring back at me with pity. 'You like trying to make people uncomfortable, don't you?'

‘No. I’m just asking a simple question. For all I know you may be trying to poison me. I might wake up surrounded by ten gimps with erect monster cocks ready to use and abuse me!’

That makes her laugh.

‘Now I can see why you’re the only person here that never gets visitors.’

‘I have friends!’

‘Really?’ she says, unconvinced.

‘Yeah. I just don’t subscribe to the lamestream’s Fascist ideals of social propriety.’

‘Oh, I see... Well, I guess I don’t subscribe to the ‘lamestream’s’ Fascist ideals either, so we have *that* in common.’

I have a sip from the mug she gave me. It’s nice tea. Probably expensive.

‘Why did you move *here*, anyway? This place is a house of horrors.’

She takes a sip from her mug. ‘Well, long story short, I broke up with my partner and needed a place to live quickly so I came here. How ‘bout you?’

‘I used to live with my grandmother. I was her carer. But my Mum has a huge gambling problem and forced her into a nursing home so she could sell her house to pay off her gambling debts. She’s also addicted to meth and sells drugs to school children. She fucks all the local cops, so they turn a blind eye. I came here so she couldn’t find me because I have evidence of a murder she committed. The cops know about it, but they’re corrupt and want to pin the murder on me. It’s complicated.’

‘Yeah, that certainly does sound complicated. I’ve got some Arnott’s teddy bear biscuits. You want a couple?’

‘Umm... yes, please.’

PEWDIEPIE FORTNITE FRIDAY ft. NINJA | Fortnite Friday Livestream PewDiePie and Ninja Duo: PewDiePie Fortnite Friday Livestream ft. Ninja Fortnite Fridays Livestream PewDiePie and Ninja. 203,855 views. [sic]

Kamahl: Have you been taking drugs regularly?

Luca: Yeah. It helps me open up and talk to people. You said I should try and make connections with people, so I've made an effort. There's this woman down the hall who sometimes invites me into her room. Just to talk. Her name's Catherine.

Kamahl: That's a big social progression from when we first met.

Luca: [Shrugs]. Yeah, I guess... I sometimes talk with other people I live with, most of them are fucked though, but there's a few that are okay. Sometimes, if I have no money for alcohol, I drink with this old guy. He's desperate for company. He's okay in small doses. He's had a fucked-up life but he's always telling jokes and shit.

Kamahl: Now that you're communicating with people directly, how does that make you feel?

Luca: I don't know...

Kamahl: Have either of your parents checked in recently?

Luca: No.

Kamahl: They never call to see how you're doing?

Luca: Nope.

Kamahl: Do you miss them?

Luca: I don't think about it.

Kamahl: Have you thought about what we discussed last session? About contacting your mother?

Luca: I don't think that's going to happen.

Kamahl: Can you tell me why you feel that way?

Luca: She never wanted me. My father left her because she was a junkie. She used to prostitute herself on the street with me in the pram. That's why I lived with my grandmother. They wouldn't let me live with my dad because he was in the mafia. He was a hit man. He killed people.

Kamahl: Is he still in the mafia?

Luca: No. He's a real estate agent now.

Kamahl: Would you like to reconnect with your dad?

Luca: He's pretty busy. He has real estate deals all over the world. His wife doesn't like me. She's young. Like twenty. They got married a few years ago; when she was eighteen. I think my dad was fucking her for a few years before they got married. Her name is Claire. I once went onto her Facebook account pretending to be a Chad and sent her a picture of a ten-inch monster cock. Claire was really into it and sent some pictures back. She really wanted to meet me. I asked if she had a man. Her message back was that she did but that it was fine. He likes to watch. That's how I found out my dad's a cuck.

Kamahl: What did you want to achieve by doing this?

Luca: It makes me happy. I put the photos of her on the Internet.

Kamahl: Why did you put her private photos on the Internet?

Luca: Because she was dumb enough to give them to me. So she deserved it.

Kamahl: [Sighs]. How is your grandmother doing?

Luca: She has her good days and her bad days. Sometimes she can remember me. The human body is disgusting.

Kamahl: What else have you been doing since we last saw each other?

Luca: Playing on my X-box, mainly. I sometimes like listening to music. The DJ guy gives me music. I listen to it on Xanax. It's techno. I didn't like it at first but on Xannies it sounds pretty good. It takes me somewhere else.

Kamahl: Where do you get the xanax from?

Luca: The DJ guy. He can pretty much get me whatever I want.

Kamahl: You want to escape from reality?

Luca: Yeah. But when I sober up, I'm still me. It's like, in my body I feel useless. It feels kind of unnatural. That's why I like playing games on my X-box and PlayStation. I feel that when I play, it's the best version of myself, it's weird – I don't know how to explain it – for me, life has a purpose when I play video games, there's a goal, or whatever, but in real life everything feels pointless.

Kamah! Have you thought about trying to do something different. Even something as small as getting a haircut or catching a train some place you haven't been before might help. Changing your routine might create a different outcome for you.

Luca: It won't change anything. I'm blackpilled.

/ b / I R L: It's been two hundred and eighty-three days since I last masturbated. Daniel wants to try cyber sex over Skype. Hitomi isn't ready for this. She would prefer to wait. Daniel understands. Why? Because Daniel is a nice guy. Hitomi suggests sending video instead. Daniel is excited. I find three clips of a Japanese noodle whore masturbating on Pornhub Community. She has a similar body type to the pics I've been sending Daniel. Hitomi still has minor trust issues so she sends clips where you can't see her face. Daniel consummates our relationship by sending a video of himself masturbating in his bedroom. He ejaculates on his stomach then looks directly at the camera and says, 'I love you, Hitomi Sato.'

Hitomi: Did you miss me?

Daniel: Everyday. It's killing me not to be able to meet u IRL.

Hitomi: Do u really love me?

Daniel: Yes.

Hitomi: Really?

Daniel: YES!

Hitomi: Maybe it's time. Let's meet at Macdonald's, on the corner of Albion Street and Lygon Street. 6 pm. Monday. I'll be sitting near the back eating a Happy Meal. Is that okay?

Daniel: Yes. Yes. And yes. I can't wait to see ur beautiful smile.

Hitomi: I'm nervous.

Daniel: So am I.

/b / I R L: It's been two hundred and eighty-nine days since I last masturbated. I'm already here when Daniel arrives. He's a clean-cut nerd who believes he's an independent thinker but likes to fit in. And he's punching above his weight with Hitomi as he's barely a six. He orders a Happy Meal and sits in the back nervously looking at the entrance every couple of minutes. No Hitomi. *Kek*. It's clear Daniel is a nice guy. That's why Daniel will never fuck Hitomi. Because while he sensitively waits until she's ready, Chad will notice her in the supermarket, or on a train, and spark up a conversation because he's feeling horny that morning. And then she'll go back to his house and fuck Chad. Because statistically a significant percentage of women are like that. Then Hitomi won't answer Daniel's messages because she's busy pining for Chad. Weeks go by. Daniel is anxious. Stressed out. He'll have no idea what's going on. Finally, Hitomi answers one of Daniel's messages because Chad's moved on. But she won't meet him because she got burnt by 'another guy' recently and isn't ready to date. Daniel will accept this because he's a nice guy. And nice guys *always* finish last.

Daniel: What happened? Where were you? Is everything okay?

/b / I R L: It's been two hundred and ninety-one days since I last masturbated. I had a dream. I was in my old high school walking down the corridor with a gun. I find the classroom I'm looking for and go inside. Everybody stares. I see Murat and shoot him three times. Then Sakis and Sagoon next. They will never instil fear in me again. The rest of the class flee under their desks. Mrs Freeman, my Maths teacher, orders me to stop. I shoot her in the face. Blood explodes on the whiteboard. I laugh. It's funny for some reason. I see Maxine staring at me. We were in fifth grade together. She's alright. Her friend Sarah is next to her. She used to talk shit about me, so I shoot her. Maxine starts crying. I tell her to shut up or I'll shoot her too. She shuts up really quick. I spot Gihad hiding under a corner desk in the back. He used to beat me up mercilessly in Grade Two, so I shoot him in the leg to watch him squirm. He's crying. I shoot him in the arm. He's screaming now. Tears mixed with blood running down his cheeks. It's hilarious. I shoot him once more to put him out of his misery then head back out into the corridor. I enter another classroom. It's Mrs Martin's English class. She was nice to me so I decide to shoot her in the leg instead of the face. I then shoot at students indiscriminately. I let fate sort out the dead from the living. Back in the corridor my gym teacher Mr Davidson is trying to get students outside to safety. When he sees the gun in my hand, he turns the other way and runs. I aim and shoot. Once. Twice. The third time I get him. I run over to his wounded body; students are now running in all directions to save themselves. Their screams echo off the walls. I stare down at Mr Davidson. He pleads with me to save his life. 'I have children,' he says. I batter his head with the butt of the gun. An unfamiliar feeling of joy runs through my body. I feel light. That's when I see Afet. She is standing three feet away from me naked. She doesn't look scared. She says that she has always had a crush on me but was too shy to tell me. She knows I will shoot myself in the end and wants me to fuck her. She walks up to me slowly and takes my hand in hers. Then leads me into a classroom. It's empty. She unzips my pants and tells me every guy in school has tried to fuck her, but she's been waiting for me. She gets down on her knees and says she loves me before inserting my enormous cock into her mouth.

I wake up with an erection.

Hitomi: Sorry I didn't meet u at McDonald's. I can't explain. Maybe i was testing u and feel bad...i just sometimes don't trust guys. That's why I couldn't meet you yet. Sorry I have been hurt many times by bad guys. I realise I need more time.

Daniel: I would never hurt you.

Hitomi: i know how u feel about me, and i know i love you too !! I just act funny sometime,..u know the whole female thing i guess, hehe, i know u can understand. -^ wink !!

Daniel: I'm always here for you. You know that right?

Hitomi: Thanx. You're so nice. I want to tell u something. i woke up from a dream this morning, not exactly a dream but feeling ur warmth in my bed, i was so warm in my futon today,..i felt i was with u in the my futon, missin u cray,..wishing to give u a kiss, and get a kiss back..made me feel really good, just happy.

Daniel: I love u.

Hitomi: I love u 2.

Luca: When I went to kindergarten I was always afraid my mother would leave me there. Or maybe she would die, and I'd be waiting there but she'd never turn up.

Kamahl: Was your father in the picture?

Luca: No. I think I thought my mother killed him. Or he ran away. I can't remember.

Kamahl: You feel abandoned?

Luca: Well, yeah, I was abandoned. They shouldn't let some people have kids. You should have to take a test or something.

Kamahl: Well, that's a slippery slope, on human rights-wise.

Luca: Human rights are a construct. I mean, where are my rights? Why do I have to come here?

Kamahl: How is your grandmother?

Luca: She's dying.

Kamahl: How does that make you feel?

Luca: How do you think it makes me feel?

Kamahl: I don't want to assume. It can be helpful to verbalise how you're feeling.

Luca: It makes me feel lonely, well... more lonely. She never judges me.

Kamahl: You feel judged?

Luca: Is that a trick question?

Kamahl: Fair enough. How do you feel you are being judged?

Luca: I don't *feel* I'm being judged. I *know* I'm being judged. We *all* are. That's why you get to sit here and ask me questions and I have to sit here and answer them.

Kamahl: You think society totally dictates our positions in life? You don't have any say in your future?

Luca: Well, you had to do an interview to get this job, right?

Kamahl: But I made the choice to study psychology at university. I made the choice to apply for this position.

Luca: Your dream was to talk to unemployed losers like me?

Kamahl: I wanted to help people.

Luca: You didn't directly answer my question. I asked you if you dreamed of working for Centrelink?

Kamahl: I'm happy here.

Luca: Again, you're avoiding my question.

Kamahl: Okay. I didn't dream of working here, but I'm content and find satisfaction with my job because it allows me to make a difference in people's lives.

Luca: That sounds like something people say when they're embarrassed by what they do.

Kamahl: We were talking about your grandmother.

Luca: I don't want to talk about my grandmother anymore.

Kamahl: Okay, that's fine.

/b / I R L: It's been three hundred and twelve days since I last masturbated. Catherine is already in the kitchen when I walk in to make some baked beans on toast. We both eat late at night to avoid everyone else.

She greets me with a smile and says, 'More baked beans?'

I shrug.

'I have some vegetarian lasagne. Give me your plate.'

'No. It's fine. I like baked beans.'

She takes a plate out and cuts me a generous slice.

'You need to eat some decent food once in a while.'

She then serves herself and we sit on the large table together in the middle of the kitchen.

'So, what have you been doing,' I ask.

She smiles to herself. 'Well, I have a date tonight.'

'Where are you going?'

'To a club. We're going dancing.'

'Why?'

'Because it's fun. What have you got planned this evening?'

'Nothing.'

We eat the rest the meal in silence.

She packs up what's left of the lasagne and washes her plate.

'See you 'round,' she says.

'Yeah,' I mumble.

Then just as she's leaving, I call out her name.

She turns around. 'Yes. Luca?'

I stand up and pull down my pants.

I have a raging erection.

'Have a nice night, Luca.'

Then she's gone.

Instant Justice Compilation: A compilation of idiots facing instant karma/justice. In a world where so much evil goes unpunished and so much wrong is rewarded, enjoy a few minutes of people getting exactly what they deserve. Enjoy drunks, jerks, criminals, bullies, and punks all. 8,193,941 views. [sic]

/ b / I R L: It's been three hundred and twenty-one days since I last masturbated. The Cultural-Marxist-half-breed-noodle-whore that I re-appropriated into Hitomi is all over the fucking lamestream media! She assaulted a moid at a protest and is being hailed as a 'hero'. To make things worse she goes on Scott Colt Tonight for an interview. Her name is Rose Hong-Robson and she's ruined everything! She will be punished! To begin her destruction, I create a petition tilted: *Department of Immigration and Border Protection to revoke Rose Hong-Robson's Australian citizenship for her public support of the terrorist organisation Antifa*. This is only the beginning. We will destroy her. Once again, a nice guy finishes last.

Hitomi: I've been really busy. I haven't been online but I then I missed you 2 much. but you're not online!! What's up with that!??

Daniel: Fuck off whoever u r.

Hitomi: Oh, u think I am that stupid bitch whore terrorist who attacked that poor man that was only standing up for free speech? That was my twin sister. We hate each other. I wish she was dead.

Daniel: What ur doing is sick.

Accused of 'Ethnic Fraud,' Rachel Dolezal Says Being Black Wasn't 'Something That I Faked': Former Spokane NAACP Chapter President Rachel Dolezal has faced controversy since being identified a biologically white in 2015, but the civil rights advocate claims she's identified as Black since age 4. The author of *In Full Color: Finding My...* 1,279,451 views. [sic]

/ b / I R L: It's been three hundred and thirty-five days since I last masturbated. Daniel appears around 10 am at Seddon station. I've been waiting for two-and-a-half hours. Normies have no idea how easy it is for us to stalk them through their social media output. They're so fucking stupid. It's all about patterns. Each time Daniel posts on his timeline I can locate him. Over time I see a routine. He has habits.

We take the train into the city. I generally keep a distance of at least ten metres. Our first stop is *Minotaur* on Elizabeth Street. He buys *Old Boy Volume. 4*, a masterpiece written by Garon Tsuchiya and illustrated by Nobuaki Minegishi; later adapted into a Korean film directed by Park Chan-Wook which is on my top ten list of favourite movies of all time. Unfortunately, the Americans did a remake, which I refuse to acknowledge. I buy a soft cover reissue *Black Hole*, written and illustrated by Charles Burns. Today is a good day.

For lunch we go to a Vietnamese restaurant on Swanston Street and order pho. I order chicken. He orders beef. He likes to eat his noodles with lots of chilli. I don't because I have a sensitive stomach.

Later we look at shoes in *Hype DC*, *Sneakerboy* and *Platypus Shoes* then head into *Melbourne Central* and look at clothes. He does this every Saturday. Always alone. Although he's better looking than me, and attempts to fit in by wearing *Supreme* and *Nike* shoes – we are not so dissimilar. The difference is that he believes he can ascend by conforming to normie social codes and I don't.

In Hosier Lane Daniel takes some selfies with the street art in the background. It's pretty embarrassing and Hitomi would think he's being cringey. I hang back, out of sight, on the corner. I momentarily lose him when he turns the corner down Flinders Lane. I start running to catch up to him. When I get to the corner I'm thrown to the ground.

'WHO THE FUCK ARE YOU?' yells, Daniel.

'What?' I gasp, feigning ignorance.

'You've been following me!'

'I... don't know what you're talking ab—'

‘You think I haven't noticed, you fucking psycho! I've seen you following me before. Who are you?’

‘Hitomi,’ I blurt out to my own surprise.

He stared back in horror. ‘No... No–no–no... Fuck... Noooo. This can't be happening. You... You're... oh my God...’

He wants to hit me but notices we have an audience.

We lock eyes.

He is in pain. The truth is like a knife to the heart. Slowly twisting further into his organ. He is alone again. He's always been alone. The truth is, a foie like Hitomi being in love with him is an illusion. It never begun. He thinks wearing *Supreme* will enable him to ascend. This will never happen. Why? Because Daniel and me are the same. He just doesn't know it yet.

Tears run down his cheek. Looking away, ashamed, he runs off down the street.

Our audience follow him with their phones. A spectacle of shame and humiliation.

I pick myself up and run in the opposite direction.

Ch. 23

His apology was lacking in authenticity,
regardless...

nickcannon (verified) . Follow

nickcannon (Verified) #TBT After much self reflection and meditation, I have to be one of the first to admit that in my past I've DEFINITELY turned a blind eye to a lot of darkness in this industry. Let's stop beating around the bush and call it what it is. This entire industry was established and built by evil and predatorily spirits and male chauvinistic behavior. And since the recent media outrage pertaining to @RKELLY I have realized that the REAL issue at hand is the ultimate lack of care and disrespect for our QUEENS. For far too long we have treated women like second class citizens, when in actuality they are the source, our core, and the Superior beings. But our insecurities, Egos, and lack of love has tried to prove otherwise. Therefore we have SEVERAL cases where we allow entertainers, executives, and every day individuals abuse and mistreat our life bearers and beautiful equals. It is no secret how men have misused their power to manipulate young emerging pop stars to seasoned hollywood actresses and everyone in between. I have personally witnessed it and will no longer be silent about it. It's not dry snitching, it's a paradigm shift. I'm not judging ANY man for his past or his private actions because I too am a guilty sinner of the blatant disrespect even in some of the statements in the song above. But From Individuals like Les Moonves, Harvey Weinstein, Elvis and others, I must say we have to deal with this sickness head on. The real leaders and Bosses must step up and be MEN! And I will be one of the first to say on behalf of all men, I am Sorry. Please consider an advocate, ally and student that needs guidance in an industry that was designed to take advantage of women. Let's change it ALL immediately. And call it all to the table for our ignorance, wrong doings and disrespect. I apologize my Queens. [sic]

169,787 likes

JANUARY 11, 2019

brianmayforreal (verified) . Follow

brianmayforreal (verified) Dear Folks - I was shocked and saddened to realise what I had done by my hasty and inconsiderate IG reply to this lady yesterday. I've posted an apology to her in the 'reply' box, but it seems to have disappeared - so I'm going to try to repeat it here, to be clear. — — —

Dear Sue, I'm so sorry that I responded to your post so snappily and inconsiderately. My response was a result of my perception that someone was telling me what to do. I now realise that I was completely wrong in thinking that. You were actually just trying to protect me, for which I thank you. I am mortified to discover the effect my words produced. I had no idea that saying someone was innocent until proven guilty could be interpreted as "defending" Bryan Singer. I had absolutely no intention of doing that. I guess I must be naive, because also it had never occurred to me that 'following' a person on Instagram could be interpreted as approving of that person. The only reason I followed Bryan Singer was that we were working with him on a project. That situation came to an end when Mr Singer was removed during the shooting of the film, but I suppose unfollowing him never occurred to me as a necessity. Now, because of this misunderstanding, I have unfollowed. I'm so sorry. This must have caused you a lot of upset. I wish I could take the comment back, but all I can do is apologise, and hope that my apology will begin to make amends. Sadly, this is all very public, but since I snapped at you in public, it's only fitting that I should apologise in public. I'm going to try to follow you so we can communicate privately if you want. With love - Bri. — — I should add that this is also a sincere apology to anyone else out there that I inadvertently offended. No such offence was intended and I will be more careful in future. Bri [sic]

123,845 likes

JANUARY 25, 2019

Moby (verified) . Follow

I'm going to go away for awhile.

But before I do I want to apologize again, and to say clearly that all of this has been my own fault.

I am the one who released the book without showing it to the people I wrote about. I'm the one who posted defensively and arrogantly. I'm the one who behaved inconsiderately and disrespectfully, both in 2019 and in 1999.

There is obviously no one else to blame but me.

Thank you, and I'm sorry.

Moby [sic]

12,854 likes

MAY 29, 2019

Maria Bamford

@mariabamfoo

I want to apologize for ignorantly saying, "we're all immigrants". And thank you to people who pointed out my white lady bullshit. I am an idiot. Helpful article given to me in case anyone else is an idiot: [sic]

Aug 22, 2019

Lady Gaga
@ladygaga

I stand behind these women 1000% believe them, know they are suffering pain and feel strongly that their voices should be heard and taken seriously. What I am hearing about the allegations against R Kelly is absolutely horrifying and indefensible. As a victim of sexual assault myself, I made both the song and the video at a dark time in my life, my intention was to create something extremely defiant and provocative because I was angry and still hadn't processed the trauma that had occurred in my own life. The song is called "Do What U Want (With My Body)", I think it is clear how explicitly twisted my thinking was at the time. If I could go back and talk to my younger self I would tell her to go through the therapy I have since then, so that I could understand the confused post-traumatic state I was in - or if therapy was not available to me or anyone in my situation - to seek help, and speak as openly and honestly as possible about what we've been through. I can't go back, but I can go forward and support women, men and people of all sexual identities, and of all races who are victims of sexual assault. I have demonstrated my stance on this issue and others many times throughout my career. I share this not to make excuses for myself, but to explain. Til it happens to you, you don't know how it feels. But I do know how it feels now. I intend to remove this song off iTunes and other streaming platforms and will be not working with him again. I'm sorry, for my poor judgement when I was young, and for not speaking out sooner. I love you. [sic]

Jan 10 2019

Chance The Rapper
@chancetherapper

The quote was taken out of context, But the truth is any of us who ever ingnored the R Kelly stories, or ever believed he was being setup/attacked by the system (as black men often are) were doing so at the detriment of black women and girls. I apologise to all of his survivors for working with him and for taking this long to speak out. [sic]

5:20 PM - 5 Jan 2019

Wendy Williams @WendyWilliams Jan 16 2020

@Bighill44We're thinking about Beau today as he is in surgery. I want to apologize to the cleft community and in Beau's honor, our show is donating to @operationsmile and @AmerCleftPalete and encourage our Wendy Watchers to learn more and help support the cleft community. [sic]

terry crews (verified) @terrycrews Feb 1

@itsgabrielleu, I want you to know it was never my intention to invalidate your experience— but that is what I did. I apologize. You have been through a lot in this business, and with that I empathize with the struggle toward fairness and equality in the workplace. [sic]

madison beer @madisonbeer

i love u guys & i'm sorry. i misspoke and would never condone innaproprate relationships of any kind. i'm sincerely sorry for it seeming like i do. let me make it clear - i do not. have a good night [sic]

2:36 PM · Jun 16, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

1.3K Retweets

24.7K Likes

Alia Shawkat . @ShawkatAlia . June 9 2020

I am writing to address a video that was posted of me quoting a song with the n-word in it as part of an interview from 4 years ago. I am deeply sorry and I take full responsibility. It was a careless moment, one I'm ashamed and embarrassed by, but vow to continue to learn from. I regret using a word that carries so much pain and history to black people, as it is never a word to be used by somebody that is not black. I have been learning so much of what it means to be an ally. The voices of black people must be amplified and heard clearly. As an Arabic woman, who can pass for white, I'm working hard to process the nuanced access I've been afforded, and I realize how important it is to be hyper vigilant in the spaces I exist in. I have been trying to understand the real definition of the word ally. It is more than simply believing in equality but to be willing to act with and for the black community. I aim to fight against these injustices and remind myself that this isn't about the title but an action to work against these systems that have protected me but not others. I am sorry that my ignorance has led to this moment. I will continue to support the black community as best I can and learn from this. We as non black people must all take responsibility for the inactivity we've been comfortable to sit with for so long - that has gotten us here. Silence is violence, and so are the words we irresponsibly throw out. I plan to stay engaged and learn from my friends who are helping me understand. And to take on this fight for justice with an active mind and open heart. I thank you for reading. [sic]

1:02 PM . Jun 9, 2020 . Twitter Web App

59 Retweets **445** Likes

Josh Thomas @JoshThomas87. 15 June 2020 at 12:27 pm

There is a clip circulating on Twitter of me on a panel a few years ago talking about diversity casting, and in it I am being a really dumb, illogical, insensitive idiot and it's gross. I'm super ashamed of the comments made, and I would like to apologise.

Authentic diversity in casting (and behind the scenes) is something that is really important to me, and that has been important to me for a long time. When making Please Like Me I always went into the casting process with it as a top priority and then fell short, many times. The conversation about why the casting process in Australia is structured to keep out people that aren't white and strait., with symmetrical faces and no body fat percentage - is an important one to have, but the answers I offered in this clip are in no way constructive or correct.

I am committed to doing better. [sic]

Ch. 24

Insanely hot thick pikachu girl fucks horny virgin.

Kamahl: How is your relationship with your girlfriend going?

Luca: We broke up.

Kamahl: When did this happen if you don't mind me asking?

Luca: Recently. She was getting on my nerves. She was trying to change me. She wanted me to be somebody else. Statistically, a significant percentage of women are like that.

Kamahl: I'm sorry to hear that.

Luca: It doesn't matter. I don't care.

Kamahl: It's normal to feel upset or sad about a relationship that breaks down.

Luca: Whatever. I don't care. She was a dumb bitch.

The Darkcel Podcast | Episode #94: Why Boomers Are Cancer & Totally Out of Touch with Reality! : This video is about why boomers are full of cancer and are totally out of touch with reality, and I mean BIG TIME! They're the reason for all that's happening in the last 50-60 years, they're the catalyst of the incel dilemma in the first place and hell, they're the only reason I have to make this podcast in the grand scheme of it all. 748 views. [sic]

/ b / I R L: It's been three hundred and fifty-nine days since I last masturbated. The receptionist is new. Another immigrant. Like all the others she looks up and says, 'Hello,'

'I'm here to see Gia Moretti.'

Her smile evaporates. 'Are you a relation?'

'She's my *grandmother!*'

'I'm sorry to have to tell you this, but... she died last night. I'm very sorry for your loss.'

'Why are you sorry?'

'It's terrible to lose a loved one.'

'Did she die alone?'

'No. Her daughter was with her while she passed.'

'How did my mother know she was dying?'

'We called her. She was listed as next of kin. Your grandmother was deteriorating very quickly.'

'WHY DIDN'T YOU FUCKING CALL ME!'

'I... I'm sorry... we didn't have your contact details... we assumed your mother would call other relatives. Would you like to sit down?'

On the train I imagine shooting everybody. One-by-one. Watching them run away screaming. But instead, I scream. And they all stare.

The Caretaker - Everywhere At The End Of Time (Stage 6)

By Luca Romano [SELECT](#) [\[Follow\]](#)

Mixcloud

00:00 ----- 1:25:58

1. O1 - Stage 6 A confusion so thick you forget forgetting
2. P1 - Stage 6 A brutal bliss beyond this empty defeat
3. Q1 - Stage 6 Long decline is over
4. R1 - Stage 6 Place in the World fades away [sic]

/ b / I R L: It's been three hundred and sixty-one days since I last masturbated. Catherine looks into my eyes and asks if everything is okay. I burst out crying. It's embarrassing and I despise myself for being weak. She puts her arms around me and holds me. It's been a long time since anybody has done that.

Couple Still Learning To Fuck Properly / homemoviestube.com [sic]

/ b / I R L: It's been three hundred and sixty-five days since I last masturbated. I lay on bed naked. Hitomi stares back at me tenderly before hungrily glancing down at my massive erection. She asks me if I love her. I respond I do. And I mean it. She tells me her heart beats only be for me before putting my gigantic phallus into her mouth while her agile fingers massage my balls. This is the first time for both of us. Our virginity a gift to express the love we feel for one another. She glances up as her tongue saturates my shaft with energetic enthusiasm before pushing it down her throat, sucking and slurping, her saliva creating less resistance as she finds her rhythm. I stop her before I'm about to explode. I guide her on her back before I kiss her small full breasts and thin hips, working my way down to her perfect bald pussy. I taste her delicious juices gently, making her shiver. Her fingers run through my hair, guiding my movements as she moans with pleasure. Unable to take any more she rolls off her back and crawls on top of me like a wild animal, pushing me inside her. She fucks me slow at first, but quickly gains momentum, harder and harder, faster and faster. I put my finger inside her anus, using her juices as lubricant, digging deeper each time, inch by inch, until my whole finger is enveloped. Then another finger goes in. She squeals with pleasure. Dismounting my engorged cock, she quickly pushes it into her anus, sighing with pleasure. Slow and steady, deeper and deeper, faster and faster until her whole body convulses as she orgasms loudly. I orgasm at the same time. She is mine and I am hers. We are complete. When I open my eyes, semen is all over the sheets.

I am alone again.

True Love Will Find You in the End

Daniel Johnston
(1961 – 2019)

(Verse 1)

True love will find you in the end
You'll find out just who was your friend
Don't be sad, I know you will
But don't give up until
True love will find you in the end

(Verse 2)

This is a promise with a catch
Only if you're looking can it find you
'Cause true love is searching too
But how can it recognise you
If you don't step out into the light, the light
Don't be sad I know you will
Don't give up until
True love will find you in the end

Anonymous

- >Friday night
- >go on San Andreas multiplayer server
- >it's a free roam do-whatever-the-fuck server
- >create a character called "Peaceful Bike Man"
- >decide I will not harm anyone. just ride around peacefully on my bike
- >people hit me with their cars or shoot at me
- >feels bad
- >one guy hits me with a car. I fall off my bike and get back on [sic]
- >he sees I won't harm him
- >I ride away
- >I suddenly realise he is now following me peacefully on a bike
- >suddenly another guy sees us and joins
- >the 3 of us are just riding through San Andreas
- >3 bike bros just chilling
- >through streets and hills and mountains
- >realise this is the most social and happy I've been in a while [sic]

part / **five** // rose

Ch. 25

World populace actually fine with climate change denial. YOLO!

Outside the car window a blanket of white snow covers fields of grass and dirt. The trees are bare, the sky a light smoggy grey, and the city buildings stretch across the horizon. Lǎo lao glances over and smiles. I force a smile back. She insists on me accompanying her everywhere she goes since I arrived back. My personal space is currently non-existent. She is omnipresent. Today, I'm being dragged to her fucking cousin's house.

We turn down a corner and drive into a dirt road. The houses are big here, surrounded by high fences made from raw concrete and precariously layered red bricks. The countryside 'mansions' obviously compensating for the financial disparity between their city cousins. Rusty motorbikes and trucks are randomly parked outside the properties and packs of dogs wonder around aimlessly. The locals, clothed in heavy jackets, beanies and gumboots, all eerily glance back as we drive by, their faces tanned and prematurely lined, giving off Euro horror movie vibes.

Lǎo lao's cousin and husband greets us once we arrive. They appear much older than Lǎo lao although I know they're close in age. Their house has a large muddy yard. A few cows are locked up in pens. The goats roam free. Chickens clamour around us with curiosity and a mangy dog appears growling at us threateningly. The husband yelled at the dog furiously then threatened with a stick. The dog quickly retreats with its tail between its legs. Literally. The whole scene is intense and uncomfortable.

Through a window on the bottom floor, I notice a little girl staring at me. I can see her parents watching television. She presses her face up to the window, wide-eyed by the presence of my foreign face. I smile and wave. She cries. Everybody finds this hilarious.

We're guided through the house. The interior is sparsely furnished, and the few things they do have look old and cheap, mass produced during the cultural revolution. The floor is made from unpolished concrete, the walls covered with fading white paint. We're led to a sofa. Lǎo lao's cousin politely offers us sunflower seeds from a bowl on the coffee table as her husband shuffles off to the kitchen to make tea.

I'm asked the usual questions. How long have I been here? How long will I stay? Do I like China? What is my favourite food? My answers are all politely banal. When the tea arrives, they catch up on family events that I have no interest in, so I excuse myself to go to the toilet.

In the bathroom I have to squat to use the toilet. Since I moved to Australia this has become a challenge. The pipes are shitty, and it stinks. Once I'm done, I roam through the house being the nosey bitch that I am.

In one of the rooms is a geriatric. Most likely the husband's mother. Her face is haggard and sunken, clearly at death's door. I walk in without making a noise. She's oblivious to my existence, staring into the void. At the end of her bed is a baby goat wrapped up in a blanket. It's shivering. It looks up at me in desperation. I caress its fur comfortingly. The whole scenario feels fucked up in so many ways. This is not my world.

I head outside and explore the neighbourhood. I peek inside the gates of other properties. They're all similar, a double story house made of raw concrete with a yard full of dirt where animals mope around or lay in their own shit.

I take pictures of the locals and shoot some video of a flock of birds flying in the sky above. Small sparrows perch themselves on the rooftops of the animal enclosures and peck at the left-overs. A dog scavenging for food close to its owner who is digging dirt. He glances over when he notices me filming. After about twenty minutes Lǎo lao calls and asks me to return.

As we head back to the car Lǎo lao hands her cousin a red envelope with money inside. Her cousin refuses to take it. Arguing now, Lǎo lao pushes the envelope back onto her cousin hands more forcefully. It goes back and forth. We get into the car and Lǎo lao throws the envelope out from the window as we drive off. When I get home, I edit the footage and upload it onto Youtube.

Black ink bleeds into raw paper creating mountain peaks. Lǎo ye's brushstrokes are confident and soon trees and a flowing river appear. He paints a small figure, standing alone, taking in the mountains. Lǎo ye glances over at me watching, then hands me a brush and takes a fresh piece of paper from a pile. He places it in front of me. I dip the brush in ink and make a mark. The outcome is clumsy and lacks control. He sternly corrects my posture and the way I hold the brush before fishing out a book from his bookshelf. Flipping through it, he finds the page he's looking for and places it in front of me. It's a poem, *Lántíngjí Xù* [Orchid Pavilion Preface] by Wang Yi Zhi. He tells me to copy it out. My brush marks the paper once again. He looks over and nods in approval, then continues with his painting. Finishing the poem, I take another piece of paper from the pile and repeat the process. Hours later we're called for dinner.

Kanye West
@kanyewest

Sometimes I get emotional over fonts. [sic]

10:55 PM 17 Aug 2010

3,247 Retweets 27,162 Likes

In the car park the community is out socialising. It's a Friday night so the *nóng mǐn* have come down with kid's entertainment for the residents. They charge a few yuan to play. The whole area is crowded with sandpits, small inflatable swimming pools full of magnetic fish, tables of imitation Lego blocks and Play-doh, amongst a whole plethora of other cheap shit that the kids seem to love. Fairy lights are scattered around illuminating the vendors' carts, which sell local snacks and drinks. Gangs of kids run around, their parents close by, lacking the anxiety of the helicopter parents back home.

Nostalgic music blares through cheap speakers. The residents dance together. Young and old. I bring out my phone and film *Lǎo lao* and *Lǎo ye* dancing side by side, in unison with the rest of the group. They look happy together. It's beautiful. I want to be loved like that. *Lǎo lao* glances over and waves me over to join her. I shake my head and walk off on my own.

My anxiety's gone down. I feel safe here. Nobody wants to hurt me. Instead of abuse, or entitled expectations for a selfie, I get shy smiles and friendly curiosity. Most of the locals recognise me from when I was a child. I would come down from *Běijīng* regularly with Mum on school holidays. I was born in the local hospital, so they consider me *Gāoqīng rén*. Life feels much more simple and contained here. People are generally warm. Over here I'm finally able to process how fucked up things actually got.

I take a picture of a young mum holding her baby as she talks with her friends. They're about my age. I used to think about having children one day. I think I'd be a good mum. But I can't do it. Not with how fucked up this world is. Besides the sociopathic clowns that govern with no accountability for their actions it's clear humanity is doomed. By 2050, the global population is projected to be around 9.7 billion. Currently, global heating is accelerating towards 3 degrees Celsius, possibly even 4 by the end of the century and rising temperatures will raise sea levels that will consequently create floods and famine. The ferocity of storms has already increased. Forest and bush fires are more frequent. Coastlines are disappearing. Reefs are bleached. As the climate heats, various parts of the world will be uninhabitable. Natural disasters will become a common occurrence. Land will become less fertile. Clean water will become a commodity.

Food scarcity and mass migration will cause wars and famines. The majority will be disposable. The wealthy elites will create more borders, fences, and gates to protect themselves. Societies will collapse. The young mum notices me staring and gives me a friendly smile. I smile back.

How China Lifted 850 Million People Out of Extreme Poverty, w/ Tings Chak: In February, the Chinese government celebrated the eradication of extreme poverty within its borders. This would be a massive achievement for any country, but for China it's even more so as it is home to some 1.4 billion people and is considered a developing country. China is credited with lifting over 800 million people out of poverty, which accounts for 70 percent of the world's total poverty reduction. This is an incredible feat and it's worth understanding how China did it. 42,523 views.
[sic]

Fei Fei is having a tantrum because she wants a fake My Little Pony. We're surrounded by bright sparkly plastic 'things', all encased in plastic boxes that are wrapped tightly in yet more fucking plastic. I try to calm Fei Fei down, attempting to convince her consumerism will not make her happy.

'But I want it,' she says. 'It's beautiful.'

'You have lots of beautiful things,' I tell her. 'And it's made from plastic. This stuff is really bad for the environment. It makes the Earth very sick.'

'No, it doesn't,' she replies.

'It does,' I say.

"No!" she shouts back, defiantly.

We go back and forth on the issue until my cousin Nan nan yields to her daughter and buys her the fucking thing.

When we get to the counter the shop assistant attempts to put the toy pony in a plastic bag.

'We don't need that,' I snap, snatching the toxic pony from her hand.

Bemused, Nan nan pays by WeChat.

In the children's clothing section Nan nan buys a pale pink duffel coat patterned with light blue snowflakes for Fei Fei. Submitting to the pull of Capitalism and feeling a slight pang of guilt I get Fei Fei a woollen hat to go with the jacket and some shoes that look like rabbits. Fei Fei loves the shoes and I'm forgiven. On the way out she clasps her little fingers in mine.

While Nan nan and Fei Fei get some food I head up to the area that sells traditional Chinese art and materials. The small galleries are crowded with traditional ink paintings and calligraphy, elegant wooden carvings and beautiful porcelain tea sets and vases, all for sale at reasonable prices.

I walk into a dusty little shop and browse. It's a chaotic mess as shelves from floor to ceiling are stacked with paper, brushes and inks. An old man sitting behind a massive wooden desk

glances up bored. He takes a long drag of his cigarette as he stares at me, then finishes off the rest of his tea before continuing with his painting of a mountainscape in deep blacks.

‘Lǎobǎn, do you have any xuānzhǐ paper?’

He grunts in response before slowly shuffling over to a shelf of paper rolls.

I meet Nan Nan and Fei Fei in a clothing shop down owned by her high school friend on the first floor. When I enter Nan Nan introduces me to her Hua Hua. She's beautiful and flashy, dressed in a fake velour Gucci tracksuit. She layers on heavy foundation and splashes on a deep black eyeshadow which matches her long jet black hair. Her lips are blood red which gives her look an intensity. She compliments me on my beauty and tells me she'll give me a discount on anything in the store because Nan nan is like family to her.

While Nan Nan and Hua Hua catch up on local gossip Fei Fei and I look around. I'm in an ethical conundrum. All this shit is like fast fashion. Eventually it'll end up as landfill. Me buying this clothing is tantamount to Fei Fei's unnecessary purchase of that fucking My Little Pony. but I counter argue that the act of buying this stuff is also a form of civil disobedience to the global Elites as they won't profit from my purchase. Then again, wearing any of these brands does encourage European corporate cultural imperialism and exacerbates the class war. It's fucking complicated!

Fei Fei points to a cute fake Miu Miu jacket in a pile so I try it on. Immediately I feel a taller than when I walked in. One thing leads to another and I'm also the proud owner of a fake Prada dress, a fake Dolce&Gabbana T-shirt and a pair of fake Gucci slides. Walking out of the shop I feel the existential dread of late-capitalist consumerism and self-disgust.

Rose Hong-Robson
@rosehongrobson

My nanna in China asked me when I'm going to get married and have kids. I told her I won't be having kids or getting married because I don't believe in a future... 1/2

1 hour ago

178 Retweets **19** Favourites

Rose Hong-Robson

@rosehongrobson

... she replied, "Try living through the Japanese occupation, starvation, and the cultural revolution you selfish little bitch..." but, like, in an affectionate way. 2/2

1 hour ago

178 Retweets **19** Favourites

Kneeling, we pray for you. We're burning ghost money for your happiness in the afterlife. Lǎo lao and Lǎo ye wail in grief. It's loud and dramatic and appears performative. I despise myself for thinking that. A small photograph of you is on your gravestone. I'm glad to see you again because my memories are fading. I was only six when you died. You're buried in Gāoqīng because you were born here like me. You departed this world unexpectedly, sudden, it just happened.

I was jealous of you from the day you were born. You took mum away from me and I hated you for that. I was relegated to another bedroom with Mark, who I called dad back then, and *you* got to sleep with mum. Realising I'd been abandoned because of you I made the most of it. Eventually we became close. I'd call for him when I had nightmares and run to him when I was in distress. He was full of love back then and inside his arms I felt completely safe. He used to make me laugh all the time.

People would often stare at us. They would touch our hair and would comment on our “beautiful eyes”. We were beloved curiosities. Mark was just a curiosity. As you grew older, I hated you less. It was clear it was going to be the four of us. That wasn't going to change. So, I had to accept it. But then you died, and everything changed. Again.

Your presence has never left us. Like a ghost, you've been hovering around, never to be forgotten. Something died in mum after you were gone. We left Běijīng for Melbourne a year later. That's when everything fell apart.

I sometimes wonder what our lives would have been like if you hadn't been born. I'm sorry to think that. But other times I think about what you would have been like if you hadn't died. What music would you listen to? What movies would you watch? What books would you read? Who would you be friends with? Would you get married and have the children Mum craves? I like to think we'd be close. I know we'd fight every now and then, but I'm sure we'd always make up in the end. I like to think that you would look up to me? And I would have guided you. Although we'd have different friends, I believe we would have a strong bond. We'd give each other space but always be in each other's lives. And we would have stayed in Běijīng where we were happy.

Staring at your photo it's clear you would have grown up to be a beautiful woman. Now I'm crying. Silent tears that won't stop. I hate myself for feeling the way I did when you were alive. I wish we'd spend more time together. I'm sorry I never told you I loved you. All this pain because of you. But it's a good pain because it means I love you.

Charles Deschamps 1 year ago

Those who wish to never depart this world are the most foolish of all, because they forget that the only thing that makes life worth living is the experiences you share with the people you love. They will not realize this until one by one, they see their friends, family, their love, slip away to a place far beyond our sight. They will know then, and only then, that without love, there is no life. No scientist on all the earth could ever synthesize a friend, a family member, a love. So let the fools and hypocrites worry about wealth and power, for when we enter our heaven, the only riches one can possess is the love they have for other people. The day when they finally slip away, they will be less than the commoner they strangled with their golden chain. Then, the last will be first, the weak made strong, the tired made rested. Then we shall have our vengeance, not of violence or spite, but of compassion and love, for the coldest place of all is a place without you. [sic]

Ch. 26

What do you do? I'm working on my dream.

On the fast train to Běijīng, I gaze outside the window as we pass through towns and small cities. Residential developments replacing farmland. According to Mum, this is another great leap forward to rectify the 'century of humiliation' we suffered from the West. Although Mum self-exiled herself from China when I was seven, her love for her country has never wavered. If anything, it's increased. She experienced none of the cultural shame or desire to belong that I did, because she had no interest in being Australian. Her faith in the Party's goal to rectify China's place in the world is unquestioned. We talked about this often. As a teenager, I called her a Fascist and she would respond that I know nothing about my own history and culture, then go on rants about how the British stole Hong Kong and how the West manipulates us through Taiwan. I'd remind her that it's the twenty-first century. In a rage she once slapped me. Since then, we've agreed to disagree. But as I decolonise my own understanding of the world, and witness China bring 850 million people out of poverty whilst the West exacerbates inequality, my relationship to these issues has become less binary. I don't think there is one way to do anything anymore. As I've gotten older, I believe it's culture that dictates social change, not politics. Nobody gives a fuck about political policies anymore, it's all about perceived values, or lack of them. But Neoliberalism has destroyed the ability for any political system to function outside of short-term economic gains. And there is no alternative. We're fucking doomed!

In Wéifāng, a bookish woman wearing large glasses takes her seat next to me. She uses English to politely ask me if she has the right seat number. Five minutes later she shyly asks where I'm from.

‘Australia,’ I reply.

Her eyes light up. ‘Australia is so beautiful,’ she says. ‘I wish one day I can visit.’

‘I hope you can,’ I reply in Chinese. ‘I think you'd really like it.’

‘Oh, your Chinese is very good,’ she says reverting back to Chinese. ‘Are you going to Běijīng?’

‘Yeah, I lived there as a child.’

‘Which part?’

‘Wàngjīng. Near the Central Academy of Fine Art. My mum studied there.’

‘She must be very talented. Are you an artist too?’

‘I studied painting at university in Australia, but I'm taking some time off to live here.’

‘Welcome back.’

‘Thanks.’

‘What kind of painting do you do?’

‘It depends on the idea. My last work was in oil paint, but I also use acrylic. I guess you would describe my work as conceptual art.’

‘Conceptual art?’

‘Yeah, like, the idea is more important than the aesthetic. But sometimes I feel what I do is pointless, like, am I just created wallpaper for the elites? Or, participating in what is essentially a massive tax evasion scheme? Who is contemporary art for anyway?’

She responds by blankly staring back.

‘Anyway, umm... what do you do?’

‘I work in education.’

‘You're a teacher?’

‘No. I work for the Department of Education. I help create curricula for schools.’

‘Do you like your job?’

‘It's okay...’ she replies in English. ‘I would like to get my PhD and work in a university.’

‘Why don't you?’

‘It's not possible. My husband and me bought an apartment in Běijīng. We give all our money and the mortgage is very high. She sighs in frustration. Most of our money goes to our apartment. It feels like it will never end. We have a son. His education is very expensive. But if you don't pay, he will be left behind and resent us. China is very competitive. Extra activities cost more. I also live with my husband's parents. My mother-in-law has a blood disease. If she bleeds it won't stop.’

‘That means she's a haemophiliac.’

‘Yes. She always complains. She is very fragile. And sometimes they gang up on me. My husband and his family. Sometimes I feel life asks too much of me.’

‘I’m sorry...’

She forces a smile. ‘You’re lucky,’ she says. ‘You’re free.’

From Běijīngnán Zhàn (Běijīng South railway station) I get the subway and feel a wave of nostalgia once I emerge from the subway steps of Sānyuánqiáo station. I head into the Phoenix City Galleria shopping centre to get some food. I eventually find a Sichuanese restaurant and order spicy beef noodles. After that I walk to the Airbnb I booked. It’s a long walk but I enjoy myself, reacquainting myself with the city. My choice to stay in an Airbnb was a little ‘controversial’ amongst the family as my cousin lives in Běijīng but eventually accepted. I’ve always considered this city my home.

When I get to the apartment, I make some flower tea and sit on the balcony. The neighbourhood is old. Nobody is in a hurry. Běijīng has a particular atmosphere in winter. The air is crisp. Everybody is rugged up. The city itself has not discarded its cultural heritage as it’s embraced its future. Although a huge city, each area feels like a village. I have fond memories of hanging outside our apartment building with Mum after dinner while she talked with other residents. I never felt unsafe there.

I call Mum to let her know I’ve arrived.

‘Have you eaten?’ she asks.

‘Yeah, I had some noodles.’

‘Are you wearing enough clothes?’

‘Yes, Mum. I’m warm enough.’

‘It’s colder in Běijīng.’

‘I know.’

‘Have you called Song Hong?’

‘Not yet. I just got here.’

‘You should.’

‘I just want some alone-time before I call her. Lǎo lao hasn’t left me alone since I got here.’

‘She cares about you.’

‘I know, but, personal space, you know?’

‘I’m tired of hearing this stupid word.’

‘Okay, Mum, I’ll make sure I call Song Hong while I’m here. Is everything okay back in Melbourne?’

‘It’s the same. Nothing changed. Look after yourself. I don’t want you to get sick.’

‘I will. I’ll talk to you later.’

She hangs up on me.

I text Song Hong to let her know I’ve arrived.

洪雨菲 (Rose): 我在北京待一周。

I'm in Běijīng for a week.

宋洪 (Song Hong): 你怎么没来和我们一起住呢?

Why aren't you staying with us?

洪雨菲 (Rose): 我想自己待一段时间。

I just want some time to myself.

宋洪 (Song Hong): 为什么啊?

Why?

洪雨菲 (Rose): 我的另一半。Lol。

My Western half. Lol.

宋洪 (Song Hong): 我带你出去吃东西吧。

Let me take you out for food.

洪雨菲 (Rose): 你想去哪里见面?

Where do you want to meet?

宋洪 (Song Hong): 南锣鼓巷。

Nanluoguxiang.

洪雨菲 (Rose): 明天吧?

Tomorrow?

宋洪 (Song Hong): Y (^ _ ^) Y

Nánluógǔxiàng is gentrified now, the laneways that were previously made from compacted dirt are paved with smooth concrete, and the small businesses and micro-restaurants have been replaced by souvenir shops and fashionable boutiques. I still have memories of the hutongs from when I was a child. We were a spectacle back then. Mark, the wài guó rén, and me, the hùnxuè'ér. Two outsiders who shared an experience in which my mother was excluded from. The locals all stared, sitting on their portable stools catching up on local gossip while their kids ran wild in the street.

One particular memory stays with me. Mark took me into a shop that sold memories. Inside was an old man that surrounded himself with objects from his past. Porcelain statues of Mao sat next to opium bottles. Propaganda kitchenware and vases were lined up on shelves and posters of Chinese beauties selling cigarettes or alcohol hung on the walls. Mysterious dusty books were piled in corners, filled with Chinese characters I couldn't read. Mark was fascinated by everything. So was I. That's all gone now. In its place is the new revolution.

On that day, I remember we went to Hòuhǎi for lunch. We sat on the second floor of a restaurant looking out over the lake. I had orange juice and chǎo miàn. Mark had a beer. Then another. Hours later, we were clubbing in some dark room illuminated by flashing disco balls. Beautiful women were gushing over us as Mark twirled me around in his arms on the dance floor as Chinese pop blasted into my ears. I felt drunk from his love, laughing. We both sang along to the music as the entire club gave my father the attention he craved.

When we finally left the club, it was in the early hours of the morning. Kids surrounded us begging for money, their parents lurking in the shadows nearby watching over them. There was this one boy I've never forgotten. He was about my age. He stared up at Mark with puppy dog eyes. Mark handed him some yuan then carried me off on his shoulders. I briefly looked back at the boy. He stared back, envious.

Mum was still up, waiting for us when we got home. I clearly remember the sound of her open hand slapping Mark's face. It echoed throughout the room. He ran into the bathroom and locked the door as my mother screamed at him in Chinese, then English, then Chinese again, her rage unabated until I started crying. She came over, tears streaked all down her face, and

scooped me into her arms and carried me into our bedroom, slamming the door behind her. Laying on the bed together, she held me so tight I feared I would suffocate from her love.

I'm in a store called *Plastered* by the time Song Hong texts me that she's close. I text her back and we agree to meet inside the *Sanbu Tiandian* dessert shop. She eventually arrives dressed in fashionable loose-fitting clothes. Her jet black hair is long, and her lips are a deep shade of red. We actually look quite similar and I wonder if I'd look like her if we stayed. She smiles when she sees me and takes a seat. We order sesame seed balls and turnip cake. Song Hong fills me in on the recent details of her life. She has a new boyfriend. He's from Hangzhou and works in finance. She asks if I'm seeing anybody. I tell her I'm not. She looks back sympathetically and says she can introduce me to somebody. I pass on that.

Later, we go to Guǐjiē to eat. Neon signs promote seafood, chilli hotpot, hot sauce noodles and bbq skewers, as we walk through Guǐjiē to find a málàtàng restaurant Song Hong is determined to find. My mouth waters from the aroma of the secret spices that drift into my nostrils. We have to navigate through crowds of people that spill out from restaurants onto the footpaths, sitting on fold-out chairs and tables, eating, drinking and smoking. I love this energy and I'm starving.

We finally find the restaurant. It's homely inside, with low chairs and cheap fold-out tables scattered around, the atmosphere loud and noisy. We head to the food selection – mushrooms, vegetables, meat, tofu, quail eggs, and a variety of leaves and cabbages. By the time we return to our table our hotpot's been set up on a portable burner with two small bowls waiting for us with the restaurant's special mix of chilli and spices. I fetch two bottles of Tsingtao beer from the fridge.

With my first bite I moan with pleasure, eyes closed, the combination of flavours all complementing each other – the chilli fresh but not overpowering, no one flavour dominating the complex mix of spices.

Food is happiness.

MIXTAPE 45

By Rose Hong-Robson [SELECT](#) [\[Follow\]](#)

Mixcloud

00:00 ----- 1:22:23

1. Frontline - Kelela
2. Basically - Tei Shi [sic]
3. Maps - Yeah Yeah Yeahs
4. Minyo Medley - Ssingssing
5. Ur - SZA
6. Honey - Raveena
7. 100% - Sonic Youth
8. Disco//Very - Warpaint
9. Comic Sans - Audrey ft Jack Harlow
10. Jewelry - Blood Orange
11. Amenamy - Purity Ring
12. Fuck The Pain Away - Peaches
13. Off You - The Breeders
14. When I Think Of Her - Park Jiha
15. Paper Planes - M.I.A
16. Mr Sun (miss da sun) - Greentea Peng
17. Tennis Court - Lorde
18. Put Your Lighters Up - Lil Kim
19. Lost Ones - Lauryn Hill
20. O Superman (For Massenet) - Laurie Anderson

A woman lays on the floor of her rundown apartment. She holds a cigarette in one hand and an ashtray in the other. She gazes lazily past the camera. The man beside her has red welts scratched into his back. The photograph is both erotic and banal. In another photograph, two women are bathed in sunlight and shadow. One has her breasts exposed, while the other wears a white singlet and red underwear. Obviously, lovers, both stare back unapologetically. Along the walls are more photographs, raw and intimate, Chinese women like me, their bodies exposed – pubic hair, pimples, scars and bruises – their lives on display, moments lifted from everyday life.

I like the trains in Běijīng. The subway system branches out across the whole city. You can pretty much go anywhere. There are twenty-five lines and four-hundred and fifty-nine stations. When my father first arrived in Běijīng there were two. I've spent my whole life using public transport as Mum never got her driver's license. I still haven't got mine either. I don't know if I want to. When I get off at Taiyanggong station the platform is clinically clean with English and Chinese signage. It's busy but nobody notices me here. I blend into the city masse. You only realised true freedom is anonymity when it's taken away from you.

Outside the air is crisp. Taxis linger outside the exits. I knock on the window of one.

The driver looks up sleepily.

'*Fangzhaoyuan, zhe dao, ma?*' I ask.

He nods in recognition then glances over at the back seat.

I get in.

As we're driving, he looks at me curiously from the front mirror.

'Where are you from?' he asks in a heavy Běijīng accent.

'Here,' I reply. 'But I grew up in Australia.'

'Oh, Australia', he says nodding his head and grinning. 'It's a very beautiful country. Blue skies and clean air, huh? I'd love to go there one day. My son—' Suddenly *Zhi Mi Bu Hui* by Wang Fei suddenly blasts from his phone. He his phone on speaker. 'Wèi?'

I stare outside the window as he gets into an in-depth conversation with his wife about the cost of a new refrigerator. Wangjing still looks familiar. The primary school I went to is still there. There's a lot more cafes and restaurants where students from the Central Academy of Fine Art hang out. Mum met Mark just a few years after she graduated. This place used to be my whole world when I was seven. I thought we'd live here forever.

The massive blue Ikea building comes into view as we arrive at Fangzhaoyuan, the apartment complex where I used to live. On the weekends, when I was a child, we'd all go to

Ikea to buy ice cream or meatballs for lunch. The finishes the conversation he's having with his wife and parks in front of the entrance. I pay through WeChat before getting out.

Fangzhaoyuan is much greener than it used to be, but the narrow pathways are the same, still cracked and broken. A new shopping centre has been erected behind Building 10, where we lived. Our apartment was on the twenty-third floor. Our lounge room had a big window that was bathed in morning light at breakfast time and after dinner we'd all go outside so Eileen and I could play with the other kids.

I linger outside until a resident buzzes themselves in with a security card. I follow, and head into the lift with them, pressing the twenty-third floor when they swipe their card. The lift stops on my old floor and the doors open. I get out and walk up to my old front door unsure why I'm here. I stare outside the foyer.

A resident comes out of the lift and looks over at me suspiciously.

I smile back then quickly run into the lift. You don't need to swipe your security card to go down.

Each building has a basement. When I was young, they used one of the rooms in the basement of our building to practice dancing. Mum used to take me with her when she would dance with her friends. It was our special time. Before Eileen was born. When I eventually find the basement door, I push it open and walk inside. It's dark, populated by bikes that are shoved in whatever space will have them, rusted and forgotten. I use my phone to illuminate a pathway through the catacomb of corridors. In one of the rooms is a family. They sit together watching television. This must be where the cleaner lives. We stare at one another. It's awkward for everybody.

I eventually find a corridor that feels familiar. Locating the light switch, the fluorescent tube blinks a few times before saturating the room in unforgiving whiteness. I know this is the right place because the poster etched in my memory is still stuck on the wall – an image of an islet surrounded by beautiful blue clear water, the puffy white clouds defining the horizon line of an equally blue sky. I walk over and look closely at the poster. Up close its colour's drained, and the edges are torn and tea stained with age.

Memories come back of Mum dancing. I was enamoured by her. I wanted to be just like her. I remember desperately trying to follow the dance steps of the group and getting frustrated. One time, she leaned down as if telling me a secret, and whispered in my ear, 'Relax. Close your eyes. Let the music guide you.' And I did. Soon I felt music take me somewhere beautiful.

We Found Love by Rihanna featuring Calvin Harris reverberates throughout the room. Light flickers through my eyelids as I give myself over to the music. This was our song. Linh and me. I miss her. Everyday. She hasn't contacted me for months. She messaged me about getting an acting job on a film. She got a main role. I told her I was happy for her. That was the last time we communicated. When she gives you her love it feels like you're wrapped in a blanket, and you're the only person that matters to her. But nothing lasts forever. Not with her. Drenched in sweat I open my eyes, two boys are kissing, their tongues entwined, hands caressing each other's bodies. The track hits a crescendo and everybody erupts on the dance floor. I push past the boys and head to the bar.

A femboy adorned with a cute mix of homemade tattoos and short purple hair comes over and says I look lonely. He tells me to call him Dà jiě. He adopts me for the night and drags me over to meet his friends, a big *masc* guy from Shenyang he calls Dà gē and Sergei, a tall but shy Russian guy whose Chinese is rudimentary and heavily accented. Dà jiě is clearly infatuated with him. An hour later we're family.

The streets soaked in neon lights, we head through a maze of laneways until we arrive at a small bar. Inside it's a small room lit up with an abundance of small vintage lamps, a kaleidoscope of colours illuminating the tables and chairs, which are placed haphazardly around the edges of the room. On a tiny stage, a *Queen* – dressed in a long red *qipao* with severe make-up – mimes to *WAP* by Cardi B featuring Megan Thee Stallion to the packed room. We go on the dance floor and time becomes a blur and soon I'm drunk, dancing to Katy Perry as everybody around me performs their best selves.

A girl holds my hair and rubs my back as I throw up in the toilet. Her hair's short and dyed blonde, clothes boyish and too big for her small frame. Her name's Ying Ying and when she smiles her teeth scatter in all directions. Her phone pings. Her friends are in another club nearby. She asks me to come. Somewhat sobered up I'm now embarrassed I mumble I should probably

go home. She looks sad so I agree to go for a little while. She brightens up and takes my hand as we head out.

Chéngdū Hip Hop is blaring out of the speakers as we arrive. Her friend Jing Shu runs over excitedly. I smile and am introduced by my Chinese name and instantly treated like a sister. I'm offered a cigarette. Unused to the nicotine I enjoy the buzz. We push through to meet up with her other friends' Li Rong and Cherry. They're with some boys. All wài guó rén. Cherry laughs at their childish pronunciation as they try to impress.

Outside I ring Linh. She doesn't pick up. I hate her for abandoning me. If she loved me, she would want to be here with me. On Facebook she's still living her best life. She always does. There's a McDonald's close by. I order a cheeseburger, small fries and a coke.

I sit with Ying Ying in a dark corner, her head on my shoulder, morning light beginning to seep through the windows. Underneath the table I put my hand in hers. She squeezes tenderly then leans in and asks, 'You want stay me tonight?' I smile and nod, caressing her wrist under the table.

LOVE FEELS LIKE / a tiny dilapidated apartment / decorated with love and attention / her personality touching all corners of each room / patterned silk made into curtains / a gas stove and a bucket near a tap / little personal treasures / peppered throughout / her bed on creates / bodies entwined / soft skin / tender kisses / breasts like mine / gentle hands / I've missed / being touched / loved / desired

desired / loved / being touched / I've missed / gentle hands / breasts like mine / tender kisses / soft skin / bodies entwined / her bed on creates / peppered throughout / little personal treasures / a gas stove and a bucket near a tap / patterned silk made into curtains / her personality touching all corners of each room / decorated with love and attention / a tiny dilapidated apartment / LOVE FEELS LIKE

this.

Mark Robson's last comedy gig before his death (audience footage): I started recording the gig on my phone about 35 mins in. Earlier parts were collected from footage that was leaked online. Epic meltdown. Sad way to go. R.I.P Mark Robson. 34,076 views.

Mark Robson

@Markrobson

Google humour. Then get back to me.

Feb 9 2017

29 Retweets **122** Favorites

Mum: I like the photos you've been sending me. It looks like you're having fun.

Rose: Yeah, I like it here. How's everything in Melbourne?

Mum: No different. I think you should come home soon.

Rose: I'm not coming back.

Mum: You need to finish your degree.

Rose: I was thinking of finishing my degree at the Central Academy of Fine Art, where you went. Maybe study traditional painting? I can get a job teaching English. The money's really good.

Mum: [Sighs].

Rose: Why don't you come live here too? Běijīng's changed.

Mum: I have responsibilities here.

Rose: You manage an Asian supermarket. They can get somebody else.

Mum: I can't leave.

Rose: Why not?

Mum: I just can't. We have a life here.

Rose: I'm sorry... about everything. Things got pretty shit between us before I left, and I messed things up. I just want you to know I love you. You've always been there for me. I want to be there for you too.

Mum: [Smiles]. You are. You're always with me.

Rose: Hey, mum...

Mum: Yes.

Rose: I... umm... went to Eileen's grave. I told her we missed her.

Mum: That's good...

Rose: Hey... I don't want you to cry.

Mum: I'm okay. I'm just happy you visited her.

Rose: Do you miss Mark?

Mum: No.

Rose: Before he died, he told me he never stopped loving you.

Mum: I know. I stopped loving him, though. I had nothing left for him after Eileen left us. I felt all my love and attention needed to be on you. I needed to protect you. But I'm sad that he's gone from your life. He was like a homeless dog. Always running away. But he loved you.

Rose: Did he?

Mum: Yes. Very much. But he was just a very stupid man.

Rose: I've been thinking about him lately.

Mum: That's good. Your memories will keep him alive.

Britney Spears
@britneyspears

#FreeBritney movement ... I have no words...
because of you guys and your constant resilience in
freeing me from my conservatorship... my life is now
in that direction !!!!! I cried last night for two hours
cause my fans are the best and I know it ... [sic]

6 minutes ago

48.3k Retweets **13.4k** Favourites

Ch. 27

Instagram vs reality.

The sun glows through an orange haze. Kids are running after one another, their grandparents watching on the sidelines as they talk amongst themselves. Young parents hang out in groups dotting over their babies. When I arrive to the car-park Leslie Cheung is singing a love song through cheap portable speakers. The group have already started, gently moving their bodies in unison. When I stand next to a local older woman she glances over and smiles. Taking my time, I follow the steps. Once I've got it down, I close my eyes and let the music guide me.

part / **six** // mark

Ch. 28

OLD MAN YELLS AT CLOUD!

“There can be no spectacle without an element of cruelty as the basis of every show.”

— Antonin Artaud

“People laugh with him just so long as he amuses them; but if he attempts to be serious, they must have their laugh at him.”

— Oliver Wendell (Atlantic Monthly)

"The run I was on made Sinatra, Flynn, Jagger, Richards, all of them look like droopy-eyed armless children."

— Charlie Sheen

Mark, 57

0.5 miles away Active 30 seconds ago

About Mark

Middle aged, lonely, with lots of baggage.
Suffers from bouts of depression. Tell jokes for a living. Will make you laugh.

Looking for caring woman. Also open to gender-neutral, bi-gendered, intersex, non-binary, agender and pan-gendered persons with good hearts.

18 - 75 years.

Will fuck anything.

ACT I

Exposition

At the door I hear sounds of fucking. Not the sweet sounds of lovemaking but animalistic grunting. My life is a collection of one humiliation after another.

I knock lightly, conscious not to come across as too aggressive.

The grunting continues.

I knock again, this time a little harder.

The grunting stops.

Moments later the door is yanked open and standing before me is Narelle, a woman fourteen years older than her son. She runs her fingers through her sweat drenched hair and takes me in. 'Well, hello, Mark,' she says, produces a self-satisfied smile. 'Look who's back.'

'Hey, Narelle,' I reply pathetically. 'I'm here to see Jamie. I called earlier.' I find my eyes drifting down to her breasts, exposed through the translucent silk robe she's wearing. Life has clearly beaten her down but she's still a beautiful woman. 'You look ravishing by the way,' I add.

'Jamie's with some other people at the moment,' she replies. 'Come on in and I'll make you a cuppa while you wait,' she says somewhat softened by my compliment. She moves aside.

Following Narelle down the hallway, I am entranced. She has the movements of a woman who spent her youth commodifying that intense sexual energy of hers. Her arse like a peach – I'm mesmerised. She leads me through the lounge room which is decorated with a vast collection of porcelain animals and frilly dolls. When we get to the kitchen she tells me to sit down.

I take a seat at a small round Laminex dining table while Narelle puts the kettle on.

I hear the front bedroom door squeak open and see two boys, no more than thirteen or fourteen, peek outside. When they see me staring, they disappear back into her room.

As the kettle boils, Narelle walks over to the fridge.

'Milk?' she asks, in a way that gives me a soft on.

'Yeah, thanks,' I say casually, staring anywhere but at her.

I text Jamie: *I'm here.*

‘Sugar?’

‘Six, please,’ I reply, not looking up.

Narelle places the tea in front of me and takes a seat.

She sips her tea then stares into my eyes, waiting for me to reciprocate.

I bring the mug to my lips and swallow.

She relaxes.

‘So, you still doing comedy?’

‘Uh–huh, still in the game.’

‘I always thought you were funny. Nobody can take a joke these days.’

I force a smile. ‘Well, let's just say my audience is shrinking.’

Narelle’s fluffy white dog appears, drooling with absolute devotion at her feet.

‘Hello, Buttercup,’ she coos in a baby voice. ‘Looks who’s come to visit. Say hello to Uncle Mark. C’mon, say hello.’

Buttercup jumps onto my lap without consent.

‘Look, he likes you!’ she continues, high pitched like a child.

I now have a full erection.

‘Can you burp for mummy?’ she says, looking down at Buttercup. ‘Can you burp for mummy? Baby, burp for mommy,’ she continues, encouragingly. ‘Burp for mommy, baby.’

Suddenly I belch.

Buttercup leaps off my lap and stands at the feet of his master.

Narelle looks down at Buttercup with pride. ‘Come ‘ere, baby,’ she says.

The dog jumps up on her lap and stares back at me with a superior attitude.

She gives him an affectionate kiss. ‘Aren’t *you* my beautiful boy. You are, aren't you, baby.’

My erection has gone.

Finally, Jamie strolls into the kitchen and grins when he sees me. “Hey, funny guy.”

A young couple trail behind him. The boy in his early twenties, sickly pale, translucent. The girl is around the same age, still young and beautiful, although the drugs are starting to show. They glance over but fail to recognise me, an indication my comedy is presently for the over 40s crowd. They both mumble something that resembles a goodbye and see themselves out.

‘Let's go,’ says Jamie, ignoring his mother.

‘Thanks for the tea, Narelle,’ I say getting up. ‘It's nice seeing you.’

‘Don't be a stranger,’ she calls out as I obediently follow Jamie into his room.

All anxiety disappears once my lips are around a glass cylinder pipe, the flame evaporating the shards of methamphetamine into vapour that I greedily inhale into my lungs.

Giving up drugs. What *the fuck* was I thinking?

I close my eyes to savour the moment.

Now I'm the person I want to be. A fucking comedy legend who's clawing his way back from obscurity to regain his rightful place as the godfather of Australian stand-up. I am the chosen one that the world needs right now. My mission, to take humour back from the fun police and emancipate the younger generation from corporate cuckery.

I open my eyes and exhale.

Jamie looks more depressed than usual.

‘What's up, buggerlugs?’

‘Tanya and me are taking a break at the moment,’ he says drearily.

‘What happened?’

‘She felt we're moving in different directions in life.’

‘How so?’

‘She went to rehab. I didn't.’

‘You know what? I wasn't going to say anything, but I think she was punching above her weight when you two hooked up. You're a good-looking guy who sells drugs. There's an abundance of girls that would find that *very* attractive. You don't even need to go to clubs anymore. Just get on Tinder and let the algorithms make it happen.’

‘I don't want another girl.’

‘You feel that way now, but trust me, once you get your end in with some fresh vagina, you'll forget all about Tanya.’

‘That's not cool, Mark.’

‘What?’

‘Tanya's not just some vagina to fuck. No woman is. That's messed up.’

‘I was just trying to make you feel better.’

‘By degrading women? You have a daughter. You want men having that attitude about her?’

‘Okay, point taken.’

I hand him the pipe and watch him go through the ritual.

‘You got have any Xanax? I need something to bring me down after my gig tonight.’

‘No Xannies,’ he replies exhaling.

He goes through some draws and takes out a little deal bag. Inside are two small rocks wrapped in foil.

‘I have some smack left if you're up for it.’

‘I don't know... it's been a while.’

‘Up to you.’

Moments later, I tell him I'll take both rocks.

‘You need a syringe?’

‘Uh-huh.’

He rummages through the bottom draw and pulls out an unused syringe and disposable spoon. ‘Don't say I don't look after you,’ he grins.

I hand over some money. He hands me the drugs.

My phone rings.

It's Pete.

I answer.

‘Hey, Pete, I say. Yeah. I'll be there soon.’

‘I’m waiting for you out the front.’

‘Yeah, umm, I’m not at home right now.’

‘I know. You’re at Jamie’s.’

‘No, I’m not.’

‘Yes you fucking are! Now come outside and get in the fucking car. You're gonna be late!’

He hangs up.

I pocket my phone.

‘It’s always a pleasure, mate, but I gotta go. My manager Pete’s waiting out the front.’

‘You told Pete you were here?’

‘No.’

‘Then how the fuck did he know you were here?’

‘Lucky guess?’

‘How many other people know you’re here?’

‘Only Pete. And the lizard people.’

‘You think you’re fucking funny, don’t you?’

‘Well, I am a comedian.’

‘You need to respect my autonomy, Mark.’

‘I do.’

‘Then why is your fucking manager waiting for you out the front of my mum’s house!’

‘Because I have a gig tonight.’

‘I heard you the first time.’

‘Then why did you ask?’

Jamie is visibly trying to contain his rage but fails. ‘TELL PETE TO KEEP HIS FUCKING MOUTH SHUT,’ he yells.

‘Will do,’ I whimper.

I get up and quickly make my way out of his bedroom.

We head down the corridor to his front door, both ignoring what's happening in his mother's bedroom.

Jamie leans in close, his rank breathe assaulting my senses. 'With your platform you have a responsibility to inform the people about what's *really* going on!'

'Look mate, you need to think about getting your teeth fixed. I'm not saying it to hurt your feelings. I'm saying it because I care about you.'

'Just tell them the truth,' he says, opening the door.

'I will. Take care, man.'

He slams the door behind me.

When I get to the car Pete glares at me from the driver's seat.

'Get in, fuck-face,' he orders, then takes one last drag before throwing his cigarette out the window.

'That's bad for the environment,' I inform him, as I get in.

He's not amused.

'We've got twenty minutes before the gig,' he grunts.

'We'll be right. It's always good to be a little late to build anticipation.'

'Anticipation? What decade do you think we're in?'

'Can we just drive?'

'Put your seat belt on.'

I do as I'm told.

Pete turns the ignition. The shit-box splutters into life, then conks out. He tries again. Another failure. He curses the car. Third time lucky and were off.

There's a full ten minutes of silence before Pete raises the issue of me setting up a fucking TikTok account?

'I prefer the tell jokes on stage,' I reply. 'You know, in front of *real* people.'

'You need to increase your reach, to build your audience.'

'Reach? What are you, a fucking *suit*, now? Are we going to have a conversation about my personal brand next?'

‘Yes. Stop tweeting when you're smoking meth and binge-watching Infowars. You need to strategise your online content.’

‘Content?’

‘Look, all comedians use multi-platforms these days. You need to remain relevant to stay in the game.’

‘Oh, for fuck sake. Funny is funny.’

‘I watched an eleven-year-old interview Christian Slater on YouTube the other day. The world has changed.’

‘Can you hear yourself? Multi-platforms? Personal brand? Eleven-year-old's interviewing Christian Slater? What happened to just getting on a fucking stage and telling jokes?’

‘You either move with the times or get left behind.’

ACT II

Rising Action

The familiar feeling of anticipation hits me as I step out onto the stage. The drugs have well and truly kicked in. I take in the crowd. It's a decent turn-out. An after-work party, some random millennials here to be ironic, and the over-40s fans out on a nostalgic trip. My bread and butter. Then there's a few people scattered around that clearly have walked in and have no idea what they're in for. That's going to be fun. I wipe sweat from my brow and grab the mic.

'Helloooo, ev-er-y-bo-dy,' I say, giving off a jovial vibe. *'Are you all well?'*

A few unenthusiastic "yeahs" and mild applause.

'That was pathetic.'

A few more sympathetic "yeahs."

'That's better! Any of you in this room a product of a divorce?'

A few raise their hands.

'Fucked, isn't it? My parents left each other soon after I was born. Over fifty years later they still can't stand to hear each other's name. I'm literally the product of a hate-fuck.'

'THAT'S WHY YOU'RE SO FUCKING UGLY!' yells out a heckler.

Everybody laughs.

'Really?' I reply, shaking my head irritably. *'I've barely started, and I'm already being rudely interrupted.'*

I ignore the smirk coming from the offender. I want to destroy him for the disrespect, but it's too early in the night so choose to amuse instead.

'C'mon, we've all had those at some point in our lives? You're drunk and lonely, so you text an ex you despise then go over and fuck them.'

I let that thought penetrate their imaginations for a moment before moving on.

'My father was a lawyer. A purveyor of 'alternative facts' and disingenuous accusations. I was the only kid in school who thought the earth was flat and that lizard people had taken over the world.'

The rooms warming up to me. They're tuning in.

I'm starting to feel more at ease. More myself.

'In public he fought for the rights of the vulnerable and disenfranchised. In private he divided his children's welfare like any good neo-liberal. So it was my mother that raised me. A total fucking mental case. Bipolar. Manic depression. Who knows what else? A real fucking downer. So, as a kid, I was emotional insecure and desperate for friends. While Mum was dealing with "the voices in her head", my father regularly assessed if I was an asset or a liability.'

I get some sympathy laughs.

'I know, I know... you're all thinking I'm just some privileged white cis-gendered male blaming all my problems on my parents. And it's true. But getting raped by a family friend at the age of five didn't help!'

Confusion is written all over their faces. The arse-wipe that heckled me now feels bad. They're all waiting. They need a gag to release them from the horrible image I've just planted in their heads.

'Actually, that part about getting raped didn't happen,' I reveal, grinning sheepishly. 'But I almost had your sympathy there for a second, didn't I?'

'You're all disappointed. You won't admit it, but the idea of an adult sexually abusing me gave us a connection. You felt sympathetic. You were reminded *you* were a good person for feeling bad about *my* pain. It made you feel superior.

'It also categorically changed your perspective on me from a white privileged cis-gendered male to a white privileged cis-gendered male who was also oppressed by the patriarchy.'

That fucked with their head. Ha-ha. I move on.

'As you all may be aware from looking at me, I'm single at the moment. Any other lonely-hearts in the audience?'

A few raise their hand.

'If any of you would like to fuck me at the end of the show, feel free to approach. At this point in my life, I will fuck *anything*. I'm not joking!'

Nobody volunteers.

‘I’ve decided to break ranks with my fellow white heterosexual cis-gendered males and become non-binary. And I’m not going to put boundaries on who I fall in love—or limit my identity to the draconian social constructs of the past.’

Some groans from people who have obviously come here to hate-watch me.

‘Oh, are you offended? Let me finish the fucking gag before you get all “judgy” on me!’ I dramatically roll my eyes. ‘Fuck me! People are so sensitive at the moment. Everybody gets offended very fucking easily.’

‘These days if you ask someone to use an unfamiliar pronoun, *nek-minute*, they're heading to their local supermarket to shoot anything that moves.’

I glance over at a table of humourless trolls in the front.

‘See how I inverted the woke trope back onto the angry nerds?’

They collectively grease me off.

‘What? Why are you looking at me like that?’

‘You know, I'm over these *labels* people project onto me. Loser. Drug addict. Creep. Unfuck-able mess who needs to get his life together. Why can't I just be seen as a *human being*? If we didn't see race or define people by their sexuality or follow gender constructs, we might all actually learn to love one other. You know what I mean?’

I glance back down at the trolls.

‘Happy now?’

I focus back onto the room.

‘So, as I was saying, whatever you identify with, please don’t hesitate to introduce yourself. I'm lonely and *will* fuck you.’

Laughter spills from the back.

A cheer from a guy sitting at a table from the middle.

I can’t help but smirk.

He smiles back.

We have connected through comedy.

That’s what this is about.

‘It may surprise many of you but was actually married once,’ I continue. ‘My ex-wife is Chinese. We fell in love in China. Then we moved back to Australia, and I proceeded to ruin her life. My nickname for her is Chairman Cow. Her nickname for me is, *Get the fuck out of my life you stupid man!*’

Some groans from the young people.

‘If you think my Chinese accent was racist, you should hear some of the shit that came out of *her* mouth.’

They're still unamused.

‘When you get married with someone who is not of your own race some people can get weird about it. It's true. Like, if you're with an Asian woman people automatically assume she's either a mail order bride, needs a visa, or you can't get a *white chick*. And once you have kids, well, that really infuriates them. People give you this particular condescending smile and say things like, *Oh, look at her. Isn't she adorable*. In fact, what they're really saying is *I HOPE YOUR KIDS DIE YOU FUCKING RACE TRAITOR!*’

They're all taken aback by the outburst.

Except for one lone guy in the back who cracks up laughing hysterically.

With me or at me, I'm not sure?

‘The grand achievement out of *that* marriage was that we produced a daughter. She refers to our relationship as toxic and refuses to speak to me. So, I stalk her on social media. In the twenty-first century that's called love.’

‘NO, THAT'S CALLED CREEPY,’ calls out another heckler.

‘GO HOME MUM, YOU'RE DRUNK!’ I yell back.

The room erupts into laughter.

‘When I got divorced, I was concerned for my daughter's wellbeing. I was worried our broken marriage would lead her to drug addiction, much like it did for myself. But as time went by, I realised kids don't take drugs. They become *vegans*.’

Silence.

‘What, we don't make fun of vegans anymore?’

Silence.

‘Jesus, tough crowd,’ I mutter.

‘Some people think Australia is racist. It's not. We're actually a very tolerant multi-cultural society. But I did notice some “friends” and “family” of mine blatantly ignored her for some reason. It was like she was *invisible*? They just had no interest in getting to know her as a human being. The accent was just too much work.

‘I know what you're thinking. Don't be so sensitive. And you're right. You're not racist just because you don't feel like talking to somebody. People see racism everywhere. All this fucking “wokeness”. Just because you dress up in blackface at Halloween does not make you racist! It's an ‘edgy’ homage. Get over it!

‘And have you noticed how racists get really offended when you call them racists? They say things like, *how the fuck was I supposed to know she spoke fucking English!* Or... *I just think cross breeding with other races is wrong. It's just a fucking opinion!*’

I'm getting some filthy looks from the audience.

‘Chill out! I haven't finished the joke yet!

‘And if you call a racist, a racist, that *really* infuriates them? Racists have become very self-righteous these days. One minute they're screaming at some poor elderly woman from Cambodia to go back to where she came from, the *nek-minute* they're in tears telling you about the struggle their grandparents had when they immigrated to Australia.’

That gag landed like a pile of shit.

‘Look, nobody wants to be the villain in their own story. We're all superheroes in our own personal *Marvel* movies.’

Cheers come from some corporate cucks in the back of the room.

‘Here we go. Some *Marvel* fans!’

More self-congratulating.

‘I'm in the minority here, but I think these emotionally reductive propaganda films that project American exceptionalism are being made to escape a dystopian reality.’

‘FUCK OFF SCORSESE,’ yells out some nerd in the back.

‘Oh look, another guy sticking up for the big guys.’ I roll my eyes. ‘I mean, what the fuck has MARTIN FUCKING SCORSESE ever done for cinema?’

‘Oh, that’s right, he’s made some of the greatest American films of the late twentieth century.’

Some cheers from the humourless trolls.

‘Can you imagine if Australia had superheroes? CAPTAIN AUSTRALIA!!! He’d wear a wife-beater singlet and footy shorts with the Southern Cross tattooed across his forehead. His cape would be the Aussie flag and he’d have a belt of V.B tinnies to give him courage when he goes into battle. It’d be Australia Day every day, and his special power would be spewing on his enemies and screaming *Aussie Aussie Aussie, Oi Oi Oi!* Basically, a Collingwood troglodyte after a game.’

Everybody over the age of forty likes that one. The young ones not so much.

‘GO PIES!’ yells out a Collingwood troglodyte.

‘I’m not going to say anything because you’ve already humiliated yourself and your missus enough.’

The room applauds.

The Collingwood troglodyte shuts up. His missus puts her head down.

‘Superhero movies for Americans are like Bollywood films for Indians. Both genres allow its citizens to go into a fantasy world and escape the dismal reality they live in for a couple of hours. The Indians like singing and dancing. The Americans like flattening cities and murdering people.’

I make a face.

‘Fucking weirdoes! I’m talking about the Indian singing and dancing. There’s nothing weird about a bunch of terrorists dressed in rainbow coloured leotards and capes flattening cities and murdering people.’

That gag kills it.

‘While we’re on the subject of the LGBTQ+—and whatever new gender variation comes along that fits into *that* community, how many of you read about the recent mass-shooting at a gay club in America?’

Silence.

‘The culture wars are becoming very dark. The young man who murdered all those people referred to himself as an Incel. To the oldies in the room, that’s short for *involuntarily celibate*. My daughter refers to them as bitter virgins.

‘Back in the nineties, taking heroin was nihilistic. These days it’s Fascism. I hate to say it, but I find that offensive.’

Some applause.

‘Seriously. Have you noticed how Fascism has become mainstream? It’s being sold by the establishment as ‘anti-establishment?’ Trust me, there’s going to be a whole lot of people reflecting on their flirtation with fascism a little like my generation looks back at the nineties.

‘Like, what *the fuck* was I thinking wearing those oversized fluoro happy pants? Why do I have a baby’s pacifier in my mouth? What am I doing waving those glow sticks in the air on the dance floor? Who is *that* guy?’

‘Except instead of embarrassing photos at a bush doof, it’ll be YouTube clips of yourself screaming racial abuse at an Indigenous kid on a school excursion to the museum. Trust me, it’s going to be an awkward conversation with the grandkids.’

Some laughs.

‘Heroin is a little like 4chan. It’s a safe space that feels comforting, but the reality is loneliness, isolation and misery. When using drugs, you’ll be constantly surrounded by parasites and rarely shower, which leads to self-disgust, resentment and anger. Much like the experience of an Incel on a month-long online rant about the Hannah Gatsby’s Comedy Special.’

That hit the spot. The room echoes with laughter. Music to my ears.

‘You know, you might find this hard to believe, but in high school I wasn’t very popular. It’s true. As a kid, I was isolated, miserable, and not popular with the girls. And this was pre-Internet. I didn’t have *Slutty Whore Enjoys Fifteen Guys Ass To Mouth* at my fingertips to alleviate my sexual frustrations.’

I’ve lost the humourless trolls again.

‘When I read about that Incel that shot up the gay club, I wished I could’ve sat him down for five minutes. I would’ve told him to go inside that club and get on the dance floor and mingle. Feel the vibes. I know a lot of gay guys and they’re really friendly. If he was prepared to

socialise, I guarantee that within the space of five minutes he would have had fifteen lovely men putting their cocks in his arse and shoving them down his throat. And I'm sure they'd finished him off with a *bukake* session if he didn't use too much teeth!

It's a mixed reaction from the crowd.

'Sorry, did that last part fall into the category of *cultural appropriation*?'

A collective eye-roll from the millennials.

'Oh, fucking relax, kids. I have gay friends... well, acquaintances to be honest. I don't have any friends. They're all tired of my bullshit. But the gay dudes I do know are fucking hilarious. The stories I've been told have been *enlightening*. The only thing stopping me from jumping into a fuck fest at the local public toilets in St Kilda is that I've already died from the gay death. Old age.'

Silence.

'What? I'm an ally! There is *one thing* about the queer community that confuses me. Activism.

'The lesbians are very committed to everything. I've seen them chain themselves to trees, picket outside corporate businesses and talk passionately about the environment. Many are vegan. They're really dedicated to the causes they believe in.

'Their male gay brethren... well, that's a whole different approach isn't it, boys? Protest? Technically, yes. The gay boys do get out in the streets on occasion, but they'll be in G-strings and lotioned up with an international DJ flown in ready to party. Once the drugs come out, you'll see them voguing in the face of authority and the boys in blue getting sucked off at the back of the nearby toilet block. Fucking authority in the arse –“literally!”

'Look, I'm not saying the boys aren't as committed as the girls. It's just a different “approach”.

'Oh, c'mon. That was funny!’

'NO, IT WASN'T,' shouts out someone up in the back.

I let it slide.

'The last time I spoke to my daughter she said telling jokes about gay people just wasn't cool. My reply was that lesbians trying to fuck other people's girlfriends in front of them isn't cool “either”.

‘Then she said, sure, but *that* lesbian got punched in the face while Netflix paid a comedian, she refused to name 24.1 million dollars to mock the existence of gay and trans people. “That’s the world we live in!” she informed me.

‘I had to add, “Well, we know who won that round.”

None of the young ones laugh.

I smile at one of them. ‘Yeah, she didn’t find it funny, either.’

She doesn’t smile back.

‘Look, since then, I have reflected on what she said because my daughter is a shit-load smarter than me. And she has a good point. Comedy can be used as a weapon. Once you make a person’s existence a joke, they then become less human. Ridicule the existence of people and their abuse becomes the punchline. Their lives cease to matter. In defence of comedians, sometimes we don’t mean to do it – but yeah, sometimes we do.’

I have their full attention now.

‘I get very lonely, I tell them. Last night I tried to alleviate my loneliness by masturbating to porn. I began with the standard stuff, a man and a woman copulating in some motel room, five hours later I’m on some porn site called *efukt* witnessing a man’s testicles get punctured by a shiny black studded high heel. Blood was pissing everywhere.’

The memory makes me laugh.

‘I’d like to say that it made me feel uncomfortable but the clip I viewed beforehand was a geriatrics hairless pussy menstruating into a man’s mouth.’

This gag was for my own amusement. Not theirs.

‘Oh, stop pretending you’re all shocked. Most of you in this room were watching gangbangs online before you had your first kiss. You have no idea what it was like before the Internet.

‘The Internet. Jesus! *That* was a game-changer! Any of you in the audience remember back when if you wanted to get laid, you’d have to go to a place that sold alcohol, get shit-faced, then actually have a face-to-face conversation with someone you found somewhat “desirable?”

‘Oh God. I think I saw three hands go up. That makes me feel fucking old. Romance is dead. The innocent days of courting are long gone. With all these apps and fucking dating websites the whole landscape has changed. Now everybody is on Tinder with a witty profile description

and a heavily filtered portrait from ten years ago. Send enough dick pics and eventually someone as desperate as yourself will respond.'

The Collingwood troglodyte and his missus loves that one.

One of the humourless trolls is staring down at his phone.

I look down at the guy. 'For fucks sake, would you put down the phone! Do you have to record everything and whore it out to the nerds? Can we have an intimate moment without the self-surveillance? Fuck man. Be in the moment!'

Embarrassed, he puts it away.

I shake my head in disapproval. 'Don't think I haven't noticed you other fuckers filming the gig with your phones. Don't any of you realise our lives are being commodified and spat back out to us as fucking memes, our experiences re-contextulised and redistributed as indecipherable in-jokes on Weird Twitter?'

Some laughs from the millennials.

'My daughter has great Twitter game. She's really funny. I'd like to think she gets that from me – the best part of me, "anyway".'

'These days though, everybody has an opinion! Everybody wants to be heard. You like to shoot the shit with your buddy, why not record it, right? And the Internet has democratised media from the global elites. You have the right to be heard. I. Get. It. The problem I have is that once you hate-watch one of their videos, suddenly your algorithm has been infected. It's like fucking living with HIV. You can't get rid of it. It just has to be managed.'

The sound of no laughter.

'I'm fucking tired of people's *opinions*, I don't want more fucking *opinions*. Shut the fuck up. Go away. Stop commodifying the insanity, you fucking grifters! Yeah, yeah, I get it. Freedom of speech and all that – the mantra of every fuckhead that feels the need to share *their* world so I don't have to feel so alone. I appreciate your concern for my wellbeing. Now please, *fuck off!* It's fucking madness. I blame the Americans!'

'FUCK YOU, ASSHOLE,' yells out a walk-in.

'OH, FUCK,' I yell back, with mock-petrification. 'THERE'S ONE HERE!'

He laughs gregariously in his crisp polo shirt and chinos. Next to him is his wife, hot in a Nazi-republican kind of way. On the surface she's clean cut, but you know she actually wants

you to shit on her stomach in the bedroom. Their names could be Jennifer and Brad. How the fuck they walked into my gig, I have no idea?

‘No, I’m joking. We’re happy to have you here,’ I announce. ‘Give them a round of applause.’

Nobody claps.

‘Wow. That was harsh,’ I say empathetically. ‘Are you two on holiday or do you live here?’

‘Holiday,’ says Brad.

‘Having fun?’

‘We love it here,’ chimes in, Jennifer.

‘Which part of America are you from?’

‘Portland!’ They say in unison. Then laugh.

I glance over at the rest of the audience. ‘Aren’t they adorable?’

Everybody laughs.

I bring my attention back to my American friends.

‘I think I can speak for my fellow citizens and say we’re happy to have you as our guests in this beloved country of ours. And as I was saying earlier, we’re a very tolerant multi-cultural society, so, if you see anybody wearing the Australian flag as a cape shouting *Go fucking home! We’re full!* don’t worry about it, they’re not talking to you.’

The Americans have a giggle.

‘I toured the States a while back. When I was somewhat famous back in the day. America is an interesting place. Hanging out with *you guys* is a little like socialising in a nightclub. At first, meeting people is exciting. Everybody is really cool and friendly. But as the night wears on, and the sun starts to come up, you realise you’re having a deep and meaningful with some random about how the chemicals in the water are turning people gay.’

The room cracks up laughing.

Except the Americans.

‘According to *you guys*, everything you do is good and anyone that challenges that notion is evil.’

I give the rest of the room my attention.

‘If you don’t play along with their delusional reality, they can get aggressive,’ I add. ‘As an Australian you have to play the loveable dickhead. Just ask Hugh Jackman.’

Some smirks from the humourless trolls.

‘Think I’m joking? I’m not. Hugh’s a triple threat. He can sing, dance and act. That’s going to make a lot of Americans insecure. So, he’s perfected the art of being the loveable Aussie dickhead. And they love him for it.’

I look down at the American couple.

‘Now don’t take this the wrong way, but you’re taught from birth to believe everybody wants to know your opinion. Guess what? We don’t! We actually want you to just shut the fuck up, and let someone else have a say.

‘It’s not your fault, though. You’re just completely ignorant about the rest of the world. I know Mummy told you you’re exceptional. But she lied. You don’t actually live in the best country in the world. It’s a fucking septic tank! You’re ruled by greedy sociopaths and your democracy is an illusion. You’re all enslaved by a corporate oligarchy. I mean, you don’t even have public healthcare, for fucks sake!’

‘Hey, man, that’s not funny,’ warns Brad.

‘Oh, look, another American person telling me what to do,’ I reply smugly.

The audience have gone quiet but I’m enjoying myself.

It’s clear Brad’s feelings are hurt. And Jennifer is confused. Why am I doing this to them?

‘Why is this comedian picking on us, you’re thinking? We’re the good guys!’

‘Well, the nightmare that we refer to as our contemporary reality is all because of *you!* That’s fucking why!’

‘But here’s some food for thought, buddy! If the police can kick down your door and shoot you as you watch television. That’s *not* freedom! When your country is run by a corrupt oligarchy that controls the people by force and destroys all who resist? That’s *not* freedom! Do you know that ten percent of Americans own ninety percent of the fucking wealth in your country? *That’s* a fucking dystopia, man! War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength. Sound fucking familiar?’

People bring out their phones to record.

‘Your country is like a crackhead that was formally rich and famous,’ I continue to the delight of the rest of the audience. ‘There’s an existential crisis happening over where you’re from. In your mind you’re an exceptional *Empire*, the greatest civilisation in the history of humanity. What *we* see, is a pathetic delusional husk of what you formally “were”.

‘We still care about you. We’re trying to talk sense into you, but all we get back is meth-logic and vile abuse. So, we’re done with the drama. You do you!’

The audience is complicit in their humiliation.

It’s time to deliver.

‘I have a prediction,’ I tell them. ‘Once you see what we see – *the reality* – it’s going to be a fucking massacre. The ninety percent who are getting fucked over are eventually going to figure it out and go on a fucking “rampage”.

‘And what you’re going to see at first won’t be a typical *Us* against *Them* scenario. No–no–no. It will start with “micro-tribes” inflicted multiple domestic terrorist attacks, many with similar agendas, and other times opposing agendas. Sometimes they will collaborate with one another, other times against each other. Mass shootings. Bomb attacks. Stabbings. Gang fights. Harassment. Mob rule type shit! This will escalate until they all collectively figure it out and bust down the gated communities of the Elites. They *will* shoot everyone regardless of what side they “apparently” belong to, or what gender identity they subscribe to, or even what race or sexuality they are, because the masses will come for the oligarchy. With their guns. And they will shoot them dead. With their families. And pets. Nobody will be spared.’

The Americans stare back at me like I’m crazy.

‘You think this shit hasn’t happened before?’

‘Russia. France. China. And you know what binds their revolutions together? Inequality! Shit gets so bad that people can’t take it anymore and... BOOM! Everything explodes.

‘So, tell me, which side are *you* going to be on?’

You can hear a pin drop.

Brad and Jen’s mouths are agape.

It’s golden.

I produce a shit-eating grin. 'I'm only joking. That's what comedians do. We tell jokes.' I take in the rest of the audience who are pretending they aren't riveted. 'Oh, for fuck's sake, don't all look at me like that. Unlike Kanye, I'm not going to apologise for the realness—'

Suddenly, I'm on the floor.

Brad is punching me in the face.

I'm screaming like a little girl.

It's humiliating and I'm helpless to stop it.

I give up struggling and take the beating.

I deserve it... kind of.

At some point Brad is tackled to the ground by George (who owns the place).

I scramble to my feet and leg it out of there, bloody and beaten.

In the life of a comedian the stage is not a safe space.

But it's the only place I can be me.

ACT III

Turning point

Pete looks bemused when I stagger into the greenroom. ‘It’s a *fucking* sign,’ I declare. ‘I’m done!’

‘Oh, shut up, princess,’ chides Pete.

‘I’m serious,’ I reply, crumbling onto the septic germ-sponge this place refers to as “the couch”. ‘It’s a hostile environment out there. I’m redundant. Unwanted. I’ve been excommunicated. Thrown out. Cancelled. Fired. I’m an irrelevant has-been. They just don’t like me anymore. What part of ‘please go home’ do I not understand? Why am I still here? I’m the stain they can’t wash off. I *get* the message. I’m *that* fucking guy. I’ve worn out my welcome. I have been told to leave the room. It’s fucking over. I’m like a silent but violent fart that they’re waiting to waft away.’

‘Look, it’s a tough time for comedy,’ he says. ‘Everybody is a little sensitive at the moment. You just need to read the room a little better. And making jokes about Americans? Not a good idea.’

‘How the fuck was I to know one would be in the room?’

‘It doesn’t matter. If that shit goes viral, you’re done!’

‘Are you trying to censor me?’

‘The Americans own the international comedy stage, mate. Piss off corporate America and you’ll be cancelled.’

‘I will *not* be silenced.’

‘Oh, shut up and stop being so dramatic.’

‘Dramatic? Can you see my face? I just got attacked by some inbred from Portland who married his cousin, but is having an affair with his sister, who is pregnant, but has no idea if it’s his or their dad’s, but fuck it, she’s gonna keep the little fucker anyway.’

Pete is laughing now.

‘Fucking Seppos. They’re all savages!’

‘That’s racist!’

‘I’m not talking about race, you fucking imbecile. Anyway, comedy is about challenging power – not bending to it.’

‘You’re not bending to power by choosing *not* to make jokes about American imperialism, it’s just reading the room and being smart. You’re not going to get a Netflix Special with *that* fucking attitude.’

‘Netflix special. The last gig we did was a fucking hen’s night. You know what fucking happened.’

‘You do what you gotta do, but it doesn’t have to be like this forever.’

‘I’M NOT GOING ON FUCKING TIKTOK!’

‘Okay—okay, that’s not your demographic, anyway. But there’s a comedy revolution happening online, and you need to get on board or become irrelevant.’

‘I *am* irrelevant. That’s the problem.’

‘I disagree. You just need to reinvent yourself. You’re the godfather of Australian comedy. You *were* a somebody. Your fanbase is still out there. You just need to reconnect.’

‘And what would this “reinvented” Mark Robson look like?’

‘First, you go to rehab. Clean up. Become drug free. Then we do a podcast about your recovery. Then write a memoir. Then a stand-up tour. I pitch the Netflix Special and hook you up with a publishing deal writing children’s books. You could be the fucked-up loveable uncle who couldn’t quite get his shit together until his fifties, but found redemption through your inner-child.’

‘You’re basically asking me to *bend the knee* to the establishment?’

‘Look, can we just accept the world as it really is? It’s not the nineteen-sixties anymore, and guess what? You’re not Lennie Bruce! Why the constant self-sabotage? It’s seriously getting fucking tiresome. You’re always the victim of the establishment, right? You want to keep your comedy pure. Your insistence on being the outsider is just a pathetic excuse not to go to fucking rehab. Look, mate, if you want a relationship with Rose, you’re gonna need to make some changes.’

‘Fuck you, man!’

I pull my useless carcass off the couch.

‘It's the truth...’ he shouts back.

I storm off into the bathroom, slamming the door behind me for dramatic effect.

In the mirror I survey the damage. My face has exploded, and I'm covered in my own blood. It's clearly over for me. I cannot do this anymore. That's when the fear takes over. Without comedy I am useless. Literally. I'm over fifty and have no other skills. I'm a parasitic virus that infects everything it comes in contact with. I'm Ebola in human form.

Moments later, I'm bawling my fucking eyes out. And I'm well aware that there's nothing more pathetic than a grown man crying. It's my dirty little secret.

The number of times I've overdosed and lived is some sort of sick cosmic joke. Some would say I'm invincible. For a moment I believed it too. I thought the reason I was put on this earth was to make people laugh and change the world. I believed I had a divine purpose. But the consequences of my actions have only caused pain. I've now come to the realisation that my survival is not divine purpose but punishment for my sins in a past life. Basically, I know I'm a flawed individual. But who fucking knows? Maybe I'm the reincarnation of Hitler's dog Blondi, enduring pain and humiliation for my past life's sins.

I locate the heroin in my jacket pocket, then fish out the syringe and spoon.

I've missed this ritual.

My relationship with drugs coincided with my first love. She was a beautiful broken kleptomaniac. I wasn't the most attractive guy, but I made her laugh. Her passion for drugs became my passion. We'd go to raves on ecstasy, dancing all night and fuck all morning. On acid, we'd go down the rabbit holes laughing hysterically. On amphetamines, we'd stay up all night philosophising about dark matter and the benefits of watching Monkey Magic. But heroin quickly consumed us. On smack, we'd lay down together and hold one another, feeling loved and protected inside a warm opaque cocoon. I've been seeking that kind of love ever since.

I stretch out my arm and try to locate a vein.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

‘OPEN UP,’ shouts Pete from behind the door.

‘EAT SHIT AND DIE,’ I yell back.

‘SHUT THE FUCK UP AND LISTEN!’

Eventually I find a vein and push the needle in.

‘THEY’RE CALLING YOUR NAME!’

I hesitate momentarily...

‘CAN YOU HEAR THEM?’

I can.

They *are* calling my name.

‘We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...’

I pull the needle out without injecting and reapply the cap. Then hide it behind the toilet, binning the rest of the stuff before opening the door.

‘You hear that?’ Pete asks, grinning like the Cheshire Cat.

‘We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...’

‘Yeah. But I’m going to need a pick-me-up before I go out there.’

‘We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...’

I walk over to the coffee table made from an old doors and bricks. A lighter lays there waiting for me.

‘We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...’

Taking a seat, I bring out my trust old friend. Black residue is caked on the inside of the glass pipe. Evidence of our relationship.

‘We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...’

I carefully place the meth in the at the end of the pipe.

‘We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...’

Then put flame to glass.

‘We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...’

Inhale.

‘We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...’

Exhale.

‘We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...’

I let the buzz settle in.

'We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...'

Opening my eyes, I hand Pete the pipe.

'We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...'

Then hand him the little bag of goodness.

'We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...'

He goes through the ritual.

'We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...'

Inhale.

'We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...'

Exhale.

'We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...'

I get back on my feet.

'We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...'

'Hey cunt face,' he says, affectionately.

'We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...'

'Yes, shit for brains?'

'We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...'

'Repeat after me. I'm going to go out there and make those fuckers pour tears of laughter because I am a hilarious son of a bitch!'

'We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...'

'I'm going to go out there and make those fuckers pour tears of laughter because I am a hilarious son of a bitch!'

'We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...'

Pete smiles.

'We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...'

I smile back.

'We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...'

We have a connection.

'Thanks for sticking around,' I say.

'It's been an honour,' he replies.

'We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...'

God bless the fucker.

'We want Mark!... We want Mark!... We want Mark!...'

I walk out the door and down the hallway.

'WE WANT MARK!... WE WANT MARK!... WE WANT MARK!...'

It gets louder.

'WE WANT MARK!... WE WANT MARK!... WE WANT MARK!...'

That's the sound of love.

ACT VI

Falling Action

The sound of applause echoes throughout the room as I step back on stage. The atmosphere has changed. I have their undivided attention. I lean into the mic.

‘Comedy. Is. Tough.’

More applause bounces across the walls. It's fucking glorious.

‘Seriously,’ I tell them, ‘It’s a hazardous fucking occupation.’

I shake my head laughing.

‘You don't see Cate Blanchett deal with that kind of shit when she's reciting Shakespeare!’

They laugh. I laugh. We're all laughing together. It’s beautiful.

‘I’m serious! Comedians are at the bottom of the totem pole when it comes to the 'arts'. But it's the fucking comedian who takes the beating from the masses when *we* speak truth to power! We live in a zero-tolerance society these days. It’s a fucking bloodbath.

‘I'll let you in on a little secret. Woke culture fucking petrifies me. Angry mobs scare me. Nuance is not their thing. You fuck up? *Cancelled!* Fired. Deregistered. Told to leave. Redemption is not possible via a personal apology. You need to say sorry to fucking everybody because pain isn't inflicted on an individual anymore, it's on the collective. You've all found your tribes and now it's war.

‘I've been *cancelled* numerous times. For going through people's wallets in the cloakroom. Turning up three hours late to gigs. Being erratic and unintelligible due to drug use. But the rich and famous? I'll admit that I'm partial to watching the chosen few squirm.

‘With all the noise these days it's only natural that we want a clear delineation between right and wrong. The thing is, though, the complexities of being a human being are being dismissed or shouted down in favour of ‘clear messaging’. You're expected to be either *for* us or *against* us, right? Or, you're fucking crazy and need help like Britney Spears.

I get a few funny looks.

‘What? My daughter’s a fan and turned me onto her!’

‘Blondie embraced her weird and then they locked her up. *They* control her now. But she's

not alone because *they* control us too. Corporations have cucked us into the collective hive mind where context gets lost, and retribution feels like love.

‘But then, let's get real for a moment. As an individual how much power do *you* think you actually have? We've all acknowledged that we have a one-percent ruling oligarchy. That power is concentrated on a select few. *They* rule the world. And we know they're corrupt. The Panama Papers exposed them! Other scandals have come to light. Mysterious tax havens where they keep their money. But what has been done about it? *Nothing*. You know why? Because we can't do shit. They run the game. They're laughing at us. We're their fucking slaves.

‘Or so I thought?’

‘The kids, man. They’re actually changing shit! I'm watching my daughter find her power, and it's beautiful. She's not accepting the world they want to force upon her. The kids are making massive corporations bend to their will. I mean, I fucking saw a billionaire in tears the other day. Now that shit *was* funny.

‘I'm just kinda sad because in this new revolution I've discovered I'm now the bad guy. I'm apparently an ‘oppressive person’. Some side-show freak on an aging circus parade that's a clear example of why the show must *not* go on!’

‘FUCK THE PATRIARCHY,’ yells some girl up in the back.

‘There you go. A perfect example. I’m terrible! But if you can’t empathise with me, why should I empathise with you, huh?’

‘Oppression has become a competitive sport. You got *mercilessly* bullied at school? So what! I was hospitalised by my father who regularly beat the shit out of me! Oh, big fucking deal, cry baby. My uncle raped me! You think *that’s* bad. I was ganged-raped by my whole family! Well, at least you *have* a family; mine were murdered in a civil war. Lucky you, I was a sex slave for ten years and gave birth to twenty babies who also became sex slaves! And so it goes...

‘We all carry pain. We all have anger. We all want the heads of our oppressors to roll. All revolutions shed blood.

‘But I hope there's a place for kindness and forgiveness too. Our faults make us human. With heartbreak, we realise of the importance of love. None of us are fully formed when we come out of the womb. Mistakes make wisdom.

‘It’s like, this whole fucking revolution is dictated by people who grew up in safe spaces. And those of us who didn’t, who were led astray, or made bad choices, well, we’re just waiting to get crucified for our past sins.

‘These days you’re judged on your worst moment. Lives are being ruined by a drunken Facebook post or a text sent on a bad day. The human condition is now reduced to a tweet. Legacies are dictated by fucking Instagram. Being good is not as easy as it fucking seems. One day you’re going to look back and wonder why you destroyed some poor girl’s life for wearing a kimono to her high school graduation ceremony... because she wasn’t Japanese!

‘I grew up with a lot of shame and humiliation. It’s the bread and butter of comedy. But now *everybody* is in on the fucking act. And things are getting ugly out there. It’s become a currency. You’re either the *victim* or the *perpetrator*, sometimes both. The spectacle of humiliation has become mainstream and there’s an insatiable appetite for it.

‘You people have no idea what it’s like trying to make a living in comedy these days. It’s fucking brutal. Not fun. This shit ain’t easy. All of a sudden there are these rules being dictated. What you can say, what you can’t say, who gets to say it. Fuck rules!

‘I know you want accountability.

‘I recently said something that offended a person. He punched me in the face. I’ve accepted the feedback and have moved on. I’d like *you* to do the same!’”

That cracks up the room.

‘As a comedian you need to *own* your shit. If you put something out there that people don’t vibe with, you have to fucking deal with it! Comedy is not a safe space. It’s not for everyone. I’ve seen it all. Some nights can be a fucking horror show. People get destroyed.

‘But here’s the thing most people don’t understand. To be an artist you need to have your own particular way of seeing things. An individual voice. *My* voice enables *me* to make a living. That’s the same for all artists. Your voice is the thing that you have that gives you value.

‘So, when you start saying *this* group of people get to do this, and *that* group of people don’t get to do that, you’re not judging the work. You’re judging what fucking group they belong to. When you strip artists of their individuality, you strip us of our individual voice. If we as artists have no voice, we have no value. *My* voice is *my* worth. It’s why I’m here. That’s why *your* here. Because I do what I do, and nobody does it like me.

‘And I hear the word authenticity a lot these days. But here’s the thing. As a comedian, authentically 'being yourself' is not enough. This fucking stage is not an Instagram profile. To earn your place up here you have to make people laugh. Sounds simple, right?

‘It's not! Not everybody can do it. Comedy is not a democracy, and all jokes are not equal. Some people will never be funny. They don't have a funny bone in their body. Good intentions don't make you funny. Being socially ethical doesn't make you funny. Telling your authentic story doesn't make you funny. You're not entitled to this microphone just because you feel you need to share your authentic self. You've gotta put in the time and *earn* the audience’s attention. You don't deserve to be up on this stage simply for being *you!*

‘An audience’s attention is earned through talent. Life isn't always fair. Not everybody has it. You can encourage talent, but you can't teach it. There are no twelve rules to being funny. You gotta figure that shit out for yourself. You gotta find what you have that nobody else has and make the world want it. I can't explain what it is. You put a joke out in the world and people laugh. It touches them. That's what comedy is. It's a connection. It's our souls speaking to one another. Through jokes. And that shit *matters!*

‘A work of art shines because of how an artist sees the world. Or the angle they see it from. Art is an adaptation of life. Real life doesn't have a fucking punchline. It doesn't fit into three acts. You can't hang it on a wall. Authenticity is in the execution. And that shit *is* hard. Some people can talk for hours about their experience and that shit is never going to be interesting, funny or profound.

‘I'm still doing this because if I can't make people laugh, I will drown in the misery of my pathetic existence. I've given everything to this stage. Everything! It's the only thing I know how to do. It's the only way I know how to see the world. I don't give a fuck what the establishment say, comedy *is* fucking art! We tell jokes to humour you fuckers so you can deal with the collective ever-present state of collective despair.’

‘OLD MAN YELLS AT CLOUD,’ yells a woman in the front.

‘YOUNG WOMAN YELLS AT COMEDIAN,’ I yell back.

Everybody laughs.

We've made a connection.

‘I always wanted to be an artist ever since I was a kid. For a lot of people that word conjures up many images: Unemployed wanker who refuses to get a real job; middle-class tossers who

lives on their parents' money; the homeless drug addict asking you for spare change. Me? I saw people that lived outside the mainstream and viewed the world differently.

'I know, I know... I'm embarrassingly old fashioned. William Burrows, Kurt Cobain, Marlene Duras, Lenny Bruce, Richard Pryor, Ian MacKaye, James Baldwin, J. G Ballard, Gus Van Sant, Patty Smith. All fucking outsiders, man! Fucking misfits whose unique way of seeing the world changed the way we see the world!

'True art lies in living your life outside the mainstream. That's how you see the world from a different perspective. Art is supposed to transform you, not fucking make you *fit in* with the status quo. Art is *not* discussed on a TED Talk! It's thrown out into the world unapologetically. Once an artist is accepted in the *system*, they cease to speak truth to power. It's fucking over. They don't want to tarnish their fucking brand!

'I can see all your eyes rolling. What *is* this dickhead talking about? Yes, I am aware I'm now a curiosity from a bygone era. And I'm always surprised that anyone turns up to my gigs. I'm a cis-gendered white male lamenting how unfair the world is. Statistically, my demographic lives in a three-bedroom house in a middle-income suburb, owns two cars, and is married to a woman five years younger than me, with two children that are both being privately educated.

'Actually, I made that up. It's easy. You just say stuff and put the word *statistically* before anything and people believe you.'

I laugh.

So does the Collingwood troglodyte.

That's about it.

'When I started doing comedy, I thought making people laugh could change the world.'

That literally cracks up the room.

'That wasn't a joke. I'm being serious.'

More laughter at my expense.

'Growing up I was never into team sports. I preferred to walk my own path. I was a lone wolf. That's what drew me to comedy. I was attracted to the rebellious nature of stand-up and felt a kinship to the outsider status that comedians have—*had!* That's right! Those fucking days have gone. Comedians now want to *fit in*.

‘Back when I started, everybody who did comedy was on Centrelink. Losing in life was a badge of honour. It was 'material'. Stand-up was about ridiculing the powerful and fucking the establishment in the arse—but not in a good way.’

I get a dirty look from a humourless troll.

‘What fucking *now!* I’m offending you with anal jokes? Really? C’mon! How many of you in the room have not tried anal? It’s the twenty-first century people!’

The table of humourless trolls all get up and leave.

‘Oh God. *This* is what I am talking about!’

They have officially left the room.

‘Now all the people that I started with in comedy *are* the establishment. I feel like I passed out and woke up to find everybody has sold out. The world as I knew it has gone. You can’t take a shit without having to post it for comments. You can’t succeed in anything without going through our corporate overlords. There is no alternative. This is the new reality.

‘And those that don’t comply? You’ll turn out like me. Doing stand-up gigs in this shithole for small change. I have no value in this new world order. I’ve been told to leave the building. They’ve called security. Don’t make a scene. It’s fucking over. You’re all just here for the cheap beer. I’m the pathetic has-been who still believes that to make great art you have to go against the grain.’

Laughter fills the room once more.

But it’s at me. Not with me.

‘But I can’t stop. I love the intimacy of the stage. Every time you’re up here you don’t know what’s going to happen. You don’t get that watching a fucking Netflix Special! You have to be here in the room. And before the fucking Internet was invented you would be the only one who experienced *that* particular show. Maybe some crazy shit happened? Then you regale your co-workers with it the next day. It’s a great story and they laugh. But they won’t truly *get it*. Because you had to be there. And you *were* there. So, it becomes *our* moment. That’s the intimacy I’m talking about!’

I’m looking at the kids in the room and they have *no* idea what the fuck I’m talking about.

I’m genuinely sad for them.

I prowl the stage drenched in sweat.

Up and down. Up and down.

This gig will definitely go viral.

I'm having a moment.

This moment is what I'm talking about!

I stop.

Then take in the audience.

I have them in the palm of my hand.

'Shit, man,' I say, wiping the sweat from my forehead. 'I saw this one comedian on YouTube the other day. An American. Always angry about something. That's his *thing*. Anyway, he was being interviewed on his mates' podcast, and he was upset about the idea of taxing the one-percent to fund climate change action.

'Fuck me! Corporations taking responsibility for the consequences of what they produce? What *are* these crazy Libtards thinking? Can you imagine what would happen to the tech industry? There would be no incentive for progress! Absolute madness!

'As a comedian it was humiliating to watch. The corporate cuckery was a disgrace to comedy and everything we are supposed to *stand* for! Correction. *Stood* for. But the fact that theirs was *zero* reaction from the comedy community reminded me that I am a dinosaur. There is no place for me in this brave new world of comedy. The fucked up outsider who belongs nowhere but on a stage in front of a microphone telling jokes in a dark and dingy club is now redundant.

'The moral of this fucking story is that you need to stick up for the big guy if you want to get ahead in life. That's the way life works, kids. That's how you get that *fuck you* Netflix cheque! You've got to be their little corporate whore.'

'DAVE CHAPELLE SAYS, HI!' yells out some troll.

The audience burst into laughter.

At me.

But I let him off the hook because it was funny.

‘Dave escaped. But they lured him back in. Or maybe he’s still in South Africa and the Dave doing those Netflix Specials is actually an imposter whose real name is Chuck from Alpha Delta? Or Sergei? Who the fuck knows?’

Now they're laughing *with* me.

‘Those Netflix checks, *Shiiiiit*. They threw down twenty mil' for Dave and magically everybody else lined up to sell their arse.

‘Then they got Seinfeld on board for a *hundred mil'* for *two* Specials. That's fifty-million-a-piece. *Fuck me!* All that money and the fucker is *still* complaining.’

They like that one.

‘And once *that* happened, every comedian did what Jon Snow refers to as *bending the knee*. And when they are down there fifteen lovely Netflix executives all take turns pummelling their arses before shoving their cocks in their mouth then finishing them off with a group bukake session!’

I take a moment to let *that* sink in.

Disgust is on ninety percent of the audience members faces, the rest look disappointed.

Except for the Collingwood troglodyte, who finds it hilarious, his laughter echoing through the room.

‘Did you notice how I cleverly re-contextualised that punchline from the earlier Incel joke?’

They clearly don't care.

Moving on.

‘Anyway, I get it! It's called having a career! You do what you gotta to do. I'm no exception. I got spit-roasted by a twink and his daddy to get this fucking gig. That's how show business works!’

A few people get up and walk out. Cowards!

‘You think I'm crazy, don't you? Netflix is *great* for comedy, right?’

Wrong!

‘They fucking colonised comedy. It's fucking over.’

‘Now every aspiring comedian is doing stand-up gigs as an audition for Netflix. They're audience isn't you. It's *them*. Our corporate overlords hand you your dream but take your soul.’

You're cucked. You think any comedian making *fuck you* Netflix cheques wants to stick it to *The Man*? Fuck no! You don't want to bite the hand that feeds you. And if you do? They don't call it being *cancelled*. You're just not being on the same page.

'If you want to 'make it' you need to get with the program. Don't offend anyone with money or power! Ridicule those who oppose it. Get dental surgery. Create a brand. Become the CEO of a corporation called YOU! You're not selling out. You're collaborating. Go to Davos. Befriend Elon Musk. Embrace friendly Fascism. Support a dictatorship. Move to an island. Laugh as the rest of us as we turn to cannibalism to survive – streamed for your entertainment – for the *lulz!*'

I pace up and down for a bit to gather my thoughts. It's fucking hot in here... Fuck... What am I doing? I've lost my train of thought... Internet... That's right.

'I can't compete with the Internet. It's fucking *savage*. The kids have reinvented comedy. It's *infuriating*. But that's what they should be doing. Me? I'm fucking old. I mean, look at dank memes, that shit is like a sledgehammer to the face.

'I don't know where I fit in anymore, or if I fit in? But that's the deal, isn't it? The kids inherit the earth and change shit. It's their turn now.

'My time has come. I'm just not funny anymore. *I'm* the joke. You're not laughing *with* me, you're laughing *at* me, or worse... you don't care. There doesn't seem to be a place for me in this new world of comedy.

'I tried to kill myself a month ago. I even fucked that up. My life is one big humiliation after another.'

I force a stupid grin onto my face.

'Don't worry, I'm not going to go over the whole embarrassing experience. Long story short. I lived!'

They're not sure what's a joke and what's not.

'But Pete, my manager, he still believes in me. He wants me to do a podcast. Apparently, all the comedians are doing them now. I don't know, though, there's a lot of noise on the Internet. I know it's a – my fingers come up into inverted commas – way to share your world with others and help people feel less alone. Or a tool to propagate right-wing ideas to enslave the masses and retain total control for the one-percent. Same, same, but different.'

They find that funny.

I wasn't joking.

‘Trolling is officially an occupation, I tell them. Outrage is audience engagement. Appeal to the loneliness, anger and pain of others. Trigger them and they will follow. That's what feeds the attention economy. The destruction of civil discourse is the Neoliberal agenda. Truth is subjective. Facts redundant. All that matters is the messaging. If enough people believe the bullshit, it becomes truth. It's all very *witches and goblins!* We're deep in the cauldron. A dark place full of alternative facts, multiple realities and outright fucking lies.’

‘The Internet is a battle between love and hate. Love brings people together but so does hate. Hate feels great. It's uplifting to look down on others. A sense of community is found when you find other people who hate the same people as you. It creates a connection. Something in common. It feels nice to disrespect, shame and humiliate others because it compensates the doubts you have about yourself. And the hate you feel for people other than yourself is contagious. Get a big enough audience and you can create a movement.

‘To me, man, the podcasting business model is just a gift for the oligarchy. Groom the masses like they're a preteen from a broken home in need of some love. All you need to do is give the echo chamber what they wanna hear and all those subscribers can be yours. Look at *little big man* – he gets a hundred million dollars to do what? – make you angry? Confuse and divide you? Distract you from what's really going on?

‘And what is *really* going on? Well, let's see? Artificial Intelligence will destroy forty percent of the workforce within the next decade. Billionaires are all pushing for cryptocurrencies so you buy things that don't exist. People who actually *know* what they're talking about are getting attacked and discredited by people who have *no fucking clue!* And we're now all recording every aspect of our lives for the chance to become an “Influencer!”

‘I know what you're all thinking, that I'm just an angry old guy because the world's changing. I'm crazy. Delusional, right?

‘Have you ever wondered how corporations seem to be able to pay celebrities hundreds of millions of dollars yet don't have enough money to raise the minimum wage? Are Dave Chappelle, Jerry Seinfeld and Hannah Gadsby in on it too?

‘I'll let you in on a little secret. The famous people you live vicariously through, they don't actually care about you. I know many of you think they do, but it's make-believe. Once you sell your soul for all that money, you can never go back. You can't be one of us anymore.

‘Fame is being in the VIP room instead of the mosh pit. Fame is hanging out with other famous and rich people because ‘civilians’ get weird around you. Fame brings in the money too and money changes everything. Because when you start making more money than your friends, it gets awkward. So you make *new* friends. And once you do that you have no friends, because all your relationships are conditional. That's when the loneliness kicks in. Isolation. Paranoia. Suspicion. Your financial earnings have become your identity. You're now mean and bitter. You lose empathy and pride yourself on being a dick.

‘The next thing you know you're in rehab with Johnnie Depp getting a shiatsu massage and talking about your childhood traumas. You're doing deep sessions with your personal therapist, life coach *and* personal trainer to rediscover your humanity. You're staying in a “safe space” that costs \$10,000 a day, but fuck it, you fucking deserve it because you worked hard. You just need to focus on your own needs instead of giving so much to everyone else. You need some *me* time. But then you'll relapse. And when you go back for round two you eventually wake up in rehab once again as a recovering crackhead living with HIV who hangs out with your imaginary friends on a private island.’

Nobody laughs except for the Collingwood troglodyte.

He finds it hilarious.

I warming up to the ugly fucker.

‘To become successful as any kind of artist you need to tap into what's going on. What's happening on the streets. That's how you connect with the people. Your audience. Once you get fame and money, you're not on the streets anymore. So instead of creating great art that resonates with the people, you have to become a person that they can aspire to be. That's when you become a brand and lose your humanity. Because you're not connected.

‘But some of them care. In the way you care when you see a YouTube video about a six-year-old Bangladeshi orphan who lives in a rubbish dump. It makes you feel bad for about ten seconds, and then you click onto a hilarious cat video. You post both clips on Facebook, so people know you're a good person who also has a sense of humour.

‘And when you graduate to the top you may not share the same opinions as your community, but you can all agree that you all want to keep your money and not insult anybody who's giving it to you. All these public disagreements the rich and famous have are a performance.

‘And the mainstream media's in on it too! Because they get broken off a piece of the loot. Everybody wins except *us*. Because we're distracted watching our favourite celebrities living their best lives. Or maybe we're getting triggered by a troll. We lose again. Because they get paid and we don't. They feed off our pain. They direct our anger and fear onto each other. The Elites have a giggle while we're fighting it out in the Hunger Games. That's the fucking business model!

‘That's why I self-sabotage. It's got nothing to do with how dysfunctional I am as a human being. It's deliberate. I like to keep it real.

‘But I'd like your opinions. Should I do a podcast and sell my soul to a benevolent master, or stay free in a hostile world? What do you think?’

‘FUCK YOU, MARK!’ yells Pete from the side of the stage. ‘I'M OVER IT!’

‘This is Pete,’ I inform the crowd pointing him out as he walks on stage, ‘My Manager.’

‘WE'RE DONE, YOU SHIT-BAG!’

‘Look, Pete, I refuse to be a propagandist for the oligarchy and procure data for the beta revolution.’”

He storms off towards the exit.

‘He does this at least once a year. But he's as much of a drug pig as I am so I'm his only client.’

Pete's gone.

‘He'll be back,’ I tell them

That makes them laugh.

At him.

Not me.

‘There was a time I had fame and success. I was a *somebody*. Regularly toured internationally. The whole *sha-bang*. Being drug-fucked and nihilistic was an acceptable form of protest back then. I lived like a rockstar for a minute. Now the fuckers judge reality shows and stream their private gigs for the Tech Elite at Burning Man. And they're proud of it!

‘My daughter thinks all celebrities are cringey. She tells me I’m childish, demanding and prone to tantrums due to my impenetrable belief in my God-given talent. There may be some truth to that. That's what fame does. Even when it gets taken away.

‘When it's officially confirmed that you’re extra-ordinary, you need confirmation of that fact every day, and when somebody doesn't play along, they need to be removed from your life to extinguish their negative influence on your creative energy.

‘It's very easy to get lost in your own delusions. Take Michael Jackson for example: a boy genius who grew up to be both Santa Claus *and* the Boogieman.’

The Millennials are not pleased.

‘Why are you looking at me like that? He's not the only one. You think the Rolling Stones or Beatles were asking for ID’s when they were fucking groupies? Elvis married Pricilla when she was fourteen.’

More displeasure from the kids.

‘Look, when you're an artist and you put something into the world it's not yours anymore. I think it’s possible to still love what Michael Jackson created but also face the reality of who he was in private. I mean, with all the shit he did to his face and the amount of drugs he was taking, it's clear he was hiding from himself.

‘It's rare that any celebrity lives up to the standards of those who worship them. I actually met a hero of mine once. I went backstage to make the connection I always knew we would have. He ignored me and ended up fucking my then girlfriend at the time in the next room. It was humiliating. But I got over it. And she ended up with an STD.’

The audience are becoming bored.

‘Well, I thought it was funny...’

Silence.

‘I once had a “boy lover” stalk me. I was twelve. Actually, it wasn’t the first time. When I was a kid I had a number of run-ins with ‘boy lovers’, but I’ll focus on *this* particular guy. He was his seventies and wore dark glasses. I know. Creepy, right? I should have known better. Silly me. He innocently started a conversation with me at a train station. He was old. I was a nice kid. So, we continued talking as we boarded the train. Big fucking mistake!

‘The next morning, coincidentally, I see him again at the train station on my way to school. He walks over with a big smile and starts chatting, acting like some sweet old man in need of company. This happened every day after that. He’d always be there waiting for me.

‘Now, you’re all thinking, why didn’t I just stop talking to him? I guess I felt like I couldn’t because he always found a way to make out there was nothing out of the ordinary going on. They make the inappropriate appropriate.

‘One time we were standing in a crowded train carriage, and I could feel his erection rubbing up against me. I’m thinking, hang on a fucking minute, is this really happening? Umm... *Yes it was!*

‘I ignored it, as you do, because it’s horrifying to admit that it’s actually happening to you. I knew it felt wrong, but I had no way of articulating it. Even to myself. After a few too many coincidences of him getting in my personal space, I started using a different, much longer route to school, which took me twice as fucking long. After a couple of weeks, I thought I’d gotten rid of the filthy old bastard. Then one day I see him waiting on the corner of my street. He knew where I lived!

‘He comes over to me as if we were long lost friends. It was at this moment I finally told him to fuck off!

‘Or did I?’

I leave *that* sentence hanging.

Now they’re all fucking horrified.

Even the Collingwood troglodyte.

Ha-ha.

‘Sorry,’ I tell them. ‘I don’t have a punchline for that one. It kind of just happened. I was *in the moment.*’

I give them a goofy smile.

‘Now let’s get back to Michael. Now imagine you’re eight years old and Michael Jackson asks for a snuggle. Are you going to be that ungrateful little bastard who makes Michael cry? Are you going to be the brat who causes the King of Pop to feel bad? Or are you going to make Mike happy? Because that’s what people do, right? They make Mister Jackson happy. That’s how power works.

‘But there is an alternative point-of-view to the whole 'situation'. And that is that Michael Jackson didn't fall in love with children. He just *loved* children. Mike didn't build Neverland to groom children. He just *liked* theme parks. When Mike had sleepovers with children and shared his bed with them, it was completely natural and innocent, *and* anyone that says different is ignorant. When Mike revealed he was sexually abused by his father, he just said that for attention. He's not a product of a vicious cycle of sexual abuse, he's just a misunderstood genius who gets taken advantage of by opportunistic children who want attention by declaring to the world Michael Jackson raped them. From this alternative point-of-view, it's absurd that *anyone* would even contemplate that he was a paedophile. And when enough people hold to this alternative point-of-view it becomes a reality.

‘But, you know what really baffles me about the whole Neverland situation? It's that in all the time Michael Jackson was alive; why did nobody question the lack of pussy he got? I mean, what the fuck! Come on!

‘You know, if something terrible *was* happening between any children and Michael at the Neverland Ranch, well, I believe that the people around him would have done the right thing. They *are* human after all. If they did catch him in the act, then I believe they would have done what was needed to be done, and then made Michael a vanilla milkshake before he started to cry.’

The humourless trolls collectively get up absolutely disgusted.

‘What? I can't tell jokes about paedophilia anymore?’

They're gone.

I take in the rest of what's left of the audience.

‘What's the punchline? Because humour is about context, right? It's absurd to not engage with context. And the context of *that* particular joke was not about laughing at a child getting raped by an adult. It was about the denial and lies adults tell themselves when they come across a situation that troubles them. The context of *my* joke is the power of denial. And denial is a powerful thing. I should know. I lie to myself all the time.

‘Yep, I'm the hero of my own story. It's everybody else's fault. I'm a victim of my circumstances. I don't hurt the one's I love; I make mistakes. I'm not selfish; I'm an extraordinary person who is driven by my art. I'm a rebel with a cause. I don't fit into the mainstream.

I'm a good guy in a corrupt world. I'm too sensitive and *feel* too much. I have hundreds of excuses, but the truth is I failed everyone who has given me love. Especially my daughter—'

'WE DON'T FUCKING CARE,' yells out the Collingwood troglodyte. 'AND YOUR DAUGHTER SOUNDS LIKE A CUNT!'

'YOU SHUT THE FUCK UP ABOUT MY DAUGHTER OR I'LL FACE FUCK YOU UNTIL YOU CHOKE ON YOUR OWN VOMIT THEN FIST FUCK YOUR ASSHOLE UNTIL MY FIST IS COVERED IN YOUR BLOOD AND FAECES THEN FIST FUCK YOUR LADY FRIEND NEXT TO YOU UNTIL SHE GETS IMPREGNATED WITH YOUR SHIT SO SHE PRODUCES SHIT BABIES YOU HUMAN EQUIVALENT OF EBOLA!'

'FUCK YOU! YOU'RE NOT EVEN FUNNY!' yells his missus.

They get up and leave.

'ANOTHER FUCKING OPINION I GIVE ZERO FUCKS ABOUT! YEP. GO HOME! FUCK OFF,' I yell back.

At the door his missus turns around and gives me the finger.

'I HOPE YOU DIE ON YOUR WAY BACK TO MORDOR YOU FILTHY UGLY TROLL!' I add.

They've left the building.

Mission accomplished.

But now another table of people get up.

'Oh, we're all offended, are we?'

Groupthink takes over and what's left of the room exit. Except for one person. She walks up to the stage. Years of watching her through a screen hasn't prepared me for the reality.

'Hey, Mark.' says Rose.

'Hey...' I say back, stunned.

We're strangers.

You don't realise how much you need your children until they disappear from your life. Gone is the girl. She's now the same age as her mother when we first met.

ACT V

Denouement

In the greenroom, Rose takes in her surroundings, mildly disgusted. I see a sanctuary for creativity and laughter. She sees the backroom of a comedy club that hasn't been cleaned in a decade.

'Wanna sit down?' I ask with trepidation.

She inspects the couches before sitting down, careful to avoid the stained from fuck knows what?

Sitting across from her, I momentarily fixate on the rug before facing her.

'I wish I'd known you were coming. I—I would have—I mean—I'm really glad you came.' I smile back idiotically. 'So, umm... did you like the show?'

'Nope,' she replies, matter-a-fact. 'It was a self-indulgent hypocritical pity-party full of unfunny anecdotes about your life and reductive gay jokes peppered in with random abusive outbursts of viciousness that became *really fucking tiresome* pretty quickly. But they *just kept coming*, didn't they? And well, we know how *that* ended.'

'Okay. Gay jokes uncool. Got it.'

'No,' she declares. '*Your* gay jokes are uncool.'

'Fine,' I say somewhat resentfully. 'I know how you feel about them, but I didn't know you'd be in the audience.'

'Your point being?'

'Alright, I'll stop doing gay jokes.'

Nobody will admit they care about reviews, but we all do. To be an artist is a humiliation. And getting a review like *that* from your own daughter makes me want to slit my wrists. Again.

'Well, I'm really glad you came, anyway,' I add.

She stares back, unconvinced.

'You're writing some funny shit on Twitter,' I say encouragingly.

She shrugs unfazed. 'It's just Twitter.'

‘You ever thought about getting on stage? Have a crack at stand-up, like your old man?’

‘Why would I want to do that?’

That’s me getting punched in the face once more.

‘Well, for one thing, on a stage you can *actually* hear the laughter from your jokes.’

‘I don't tell jokes, they're...’ She pauses to find the right word. ‘...brain vomit.’

Brain vomit. I like that. I’ll store that away for a future gag.

There's an awkward silence.

It feels like a lifetime.

‘Why don’t you ever talk about Eileen?’ she enquires, with less attitude.

‘Because what happened to Eileen isn’t funny,’ I reply quietly. Little Eileen. I miss her every day. ‘Before Eileen came along you only wanted to be with your mother. Your English was shit and my Chinese was worse. I was left out of all these interesting conversations everybody was having. Then Eileen arrived and you weren't allowed to sleep with your mother, so you slept with me. That’s when we became close.’ I smile to myself feeling the warm glow of nostalgia. ‘Five kisses, three stories and a song. Remember?’

‘That was a long time ago.’

‘I miss you, Rose.’

‘Really?’ she asks, curtly.

‘Of course I do. You’re my best friend.’

She glares back, looking just like her mother. ‘Then why’d you try to kill yourself?’

‘I’m sorry...’

‘You’re always *fucking* sorry.’

‘I’m sorry I’m always *fucking* sorry. I was having a bad day.’

‘You *really* don’t give a fuck about anybody but yourself, do you?’

‘Hey, I’m the one who tried to kill myself. Remember? I’m the victim here.’

‘Victim? You're so full of shit! You talk about being an *artist* and “challenging” power, but all you ever do is use people. How are you any different from the establishment? The world is fucked because of people like *you*. You go on and on about your fucked up your childhood but

how are you any different from *your* dad? He's was a hypocrite and so are you! It's all just an act. Your whole life is one long excruciating performance!

'That's a shitty thing to say,' I say, genuinely hurt.

'It's true,' she replies, coldly.

More truth bombs.

She's so like her mother.

'You don't understand what it's like. Addiction is a disease.'

'Oh, fuck off. You didn't catch it. You chose drugs over us.'

'Life isn't always about choices. Shit happens. I didn't choose drugs over you. I lost control over my life.'

'Oh, poor baby.'

'You're mean.'

'And you're careless. You were never there for me. You always seem to be conveniently *unavailable* when things aren't good, and miraculously appear when things are.'

'I've booked myself into rehab,' I tell her.

'Again.'

'This time will be different. I promise. I want a relationship with you.'

'Let's try that again. It *lacked* authenticity.'

'Oh, fucking hell. I just can't do *anything* right, can I? I never have. Nothing I do is good enough for you. I don't know what you want from me? What the fuck do you want from me?'

'To give a fuck!'

'I *do*.'

'No, you don't. *You* left us. *You* just fucked off because it was all too hard. That's what *you* do!'

'It's not like that. Your mum and me tried to stay together. That's why we moved to Australia. It was supposed to be a new beginning. But it didn't change things. When you lose a child, a part of your soul goes with it and in its place is pain, and *that* pain never goes away. *Ever*. You won't understand until you have kids. Every fucking day, I wake up, for a second,

Eileen is alive. But then I realise she's not. And I relive the pain. Again and again. Every year when it's her birthday I wonder what she'd look like? What kind of person she would have been? Eileen will always be with me and your mum. It'll never stop hurting. When she died, it broke us. Your mum didn't want me anymore.'

'Bullshit.'

'I just... couldn't cope. I—I never meant to hurt you.'

'But you did,' she spits back. 'And you keep doing it. On stage you tell everybody how much you *miss* me, how much you *care*, yet all I remember is waiting for a dad that never came. You know I'd wait hours. Fucking *hours*! I'd refuse to go to bed because I believed you were coming because *you* told me you would. But you never did. And all you had to do was call. You couldn't even be fucked doing that!'

She's right. I was never there for her. Promises were never kept. And my absences became more frequent due to her unwavering loyalty to me. Her boundless love. It's painful to be adored by the ones you hurt. The shame is unbearable. So, I stopped turning up.

But here she is. Back again.

'I've done terrible things in my life,' I confess. 'I own that.'

'More lies!'

'Okay—okay, maybe I haven't owned it, *yet*, but my indiscretions are not the sum total of who I am, they're just a consequence of my weaknesses. Don't let my character flaws muddy the good times we had, because I hold onto those moments. They keep me alive. Life's fucking complicated. So are relationships. We all hurt people along the way, but I've never stopped loving you. You're my daughter—my only daughter. I just... haven't been the father I imagined myself to be. And from this point forward I can try. I want my best friend back. And I'll do whatever it takes.'

She softens, digesting my words.

It feels like a lifetime.

'When you were little... I'll never forget this... you once told me, I have a big heart for a small body.' I smile fondly from the memory. 'Then you said, I love you more than you love me.' I wipe away the tears from my face. My sleeve becomes saturated in my own blood. 'I'll always remember that.'

‘I... don't want you to die, Dad,’ she murmurs minutes later, a little girl once again.

She hasn't called me Dad since she was eleven.

‘I don't want to either,’ I say. ‘Could we, maybe, like, get out of here and get some food somewhere?’

‘You should probably get to a hospital,’ she says, a smile creeping across her face.

‘Can we at least share a taxi?’ I ask, hopefully. ‘I'll drop you home first.’

‘Alright,’ she says, tentatively.

‘I was thinking, after rehab, we could do a father-daughter podcast together? You could give your perspective on my unfunny gay jokes. I would give my perspective on your funny Twitter posts. A father-daughter thing. What do you think?’

‘You want me to be a propagandist for the oligarchy and procure data for the beta revolution?’

‘You're totally right, *fuck that!*’ I reply unconvincingly. ‘I don't know what I was thinking.’

‘I'm just fucking with you, Mark.’

‘Oh, cool—umm—so, is that a yes?’

‘I don't know... maybe.’

That wasn't a fucking no! I. Have. Purpose. Now. A will to fucking live!

‘Can you give me a sec? I just want to clean up this ugly knob of mine before we go. I don't want to scare any dogs or young children.’

Dad joke.

She smiles.

I smile back.

We have a connection.

In the bathroom mirror I once again face my reflection. Staring back at me is a monstrosity. I can't fuck this up. This time *will* be different. I *am* going to rehab and I *will* clean myself up. I *want* to share my life with her. Catch her when she falls. Hold her when she cries. Love her back. But first I need to bring myself down.

Reaching behind the toilet, I'm relieved to locate my trusty old friend. I sit on the toilet lid, pull up my sleeve and I survey the possibilities. It's a little bleak, but after poking around for a bit I find what I'm looking for.

The comforting prick of the needle enters my vein. In a moment, all the madness in my head will evaporate. I will be calm and at peace. In a good place to reconnect. This is it. The last time. The end of an era and a new beginning. I push the plunger down and instantly feel a rush of euphoria.

It's going to be okay. It will.

[This page is left intentionally blank]

Exegesis / The theoretical component which informs the novel

Introduction: *Creating a novel that reflects contemporary life*

Although the first books known to have been printed in metallic type set were published in the Goryeo Dynasty of Korea in 1234, it was the introduction of the printing press with movable type by Johannes Gutenberg in Mainz Germany c.1439 that began the printing revolution in Europe. By the early 18th Century, with the ability to mass circulate texts, the 'modern novel was born' (Watt,1957). With the introduction of the Internet, the circulation of knowledge to the masses has again been redefined, and for the novel to survive, the literary form of the novel itself needs to be re-examined and reinterpreted to represent contemporary life.

This thesis, comprising an exegesis and a creative component that is in the form of a novel entitled *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will*, argues that due to the introduction of the Internet, particularly social media, virtuality has inter-penetrated reality for its users. Hiranya Nath (2017) proposes that the integration of digital communication technologies into user's daily lives has created a social paradigm shift that he terms a new social order. This thesis asserts that virtual and real worlds have become intertwined, and proposes that for the novel as a literary form to remain relevant to digital natives who encompasses both these realms, novelists need to experiment with aesthetics, structure and tones to better represent and interpret their virtual-real experience of what it means to be human in the 21st century. In response to this challenge, the novel reflects the virtual-real lived experience of the new social order, and thereby explores the potential, and potential limitations, of narrative fiction to perform the task of representation.

In order to respond to the thesis's proposition, the exegesis' first three chapters, it surveys current theories regarding the impact of the Internet revolution on identity-construction, belonging, and the creation of Internet literature, in its fourth chapter it discusses how the creation of *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* was informed by that research. This is indicated in the title of the exegesis: The theoretical component which informs the novel. The creative component of the thesis in the form of a novel is titled: A literary reflection of the new social order. This clearly articulates the premise. The architecture of *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* comprises three first-person narratives that sit within modernist literary conventions, as well as postmodern fragmented and non-linear narration in the form of digital communications or online artefacts, in order to better reflect a lived experience that is both virtual and real. By experimenting with this literary structure, *the novel's* central thematic question asks, how do we understand ourselves, and locate ourselves, in the Internet age?

Since the inception of the Internet, novelists have been creating works that find ways 'to speak back to and against it' (McGurl 2017, n.p.), so as to examine their own conditions of existence within it. Alexandra Schwartz (2021) proposes that the question of how to represent the digital world in language has become only more interesting, and more urgent, as it has become clearer that the Internet is not just a device but an atmosphere, a state of being. She elaborates on this proposition by musing that 'we're always online, even when we're off, our profiles standing sentry for us at all hours, our minds helplessly tuned to the ironic, mocking register of well defended Internet speak.' (n.p.)

Emily Temple (2021) points out that relative to the amount of space the Internet takes up in the collective and Capitalist imagination, it has had less of an impact on contemporary fiction than one might expect. She states that the Internet is increasingly acknowledged in novels, but seems oddly difficult to represent well. Imogen West-Knight (2021) elaborates on Temple's point by stating that writers depicting the Internet face a formal challenge in depicting the sprawling, chaotic lattice of the online world into a broadly linear, tightly structured form.

The challenges of writing narrative fiction that reflects the virtual existence of the Internet is that online narratives tend to be fragmentary unruly multi-semiotic linguistic/textual, visual and/or auditory forms that can mutate and change due to appropriation and re-contextualisation. The digital communications landscape is a network of user-generated narratives that are constantly shape-shifting through rescription, which means that the context of narratives is in constant flux. Alex Preston (2015) proposes that contemporary life is too fragmented, too multifarious to be narrowed down into a single narrative, but that doesn't mean it can't be captured in all its heartbreaking variety, in the pages of a novel. Kyle Chayka (2021) states that 'the writers who have so far come closest to capturing the feel of the internet in their books have channelled its chaos and incoherence' (n.p.). Christian Lorentzen (2021) proposes that: one of the new tasks of a novelist portraying the present is managing just how much of the novel's world will be mediated by devices, how many of its characters and voices will be ones we meet in the flesh (n.p.). He observes that in much contemporary narrative fiction, authors are creating narrators for whom online life is at least as real for them as what we used to call real life, which he aptly describes as 'virtual realism' (n.p.), and argues that:

if there is going to be an avant-garde revolution in literature in the coming years, there are a few things we can say about it, speculatively: it will be conducted by the most diverse generation of writers in... history; those writers will bring with them a new set of political values and taboos; and one of their main tasks will be chronicling the effects of technology on our minds and turning that into art. (n.p.)

Making a similar argument, Shya Scanlon (2021) refers to fiction that explores Internet culture as 'Internet literature'. He believes that:

the way Internet literature treats its relationship to the world—and the anxiety of that treatment—is what distinguishes it as a form, and that goes straight to the heart of what distinguishes the Internet itself as a technology: the link. Internet literature links out to the world, and from those links draws power and meaning. (n.p.)

Scanlon points out that a realist novel will artfully construct a town as a setting in order to create a picture in the reader's mind, but a work of Internet literature will expect you to Google the town, and will either lampoon, refute, or embellish the facts contained by those external sources. He proposes that reading Internet literature involves multiple screens, with the reader expected to move between the novel and the Internet reference it contains. Scanlon acknowledges that there have:

always been writers on the fringes who make generous use of referentiality both obvious and obscure: the late writing of David Markson, for example, whose work reached its apotheosis in a form characterized by quotes, anecdotes and scholarly observations that he pointedly did not support with citation. But nowhere is this practice so widespread or consistently deployed as it is in Internet literature. And despite a different set of referents, nowhere does it seem so central to the basic project of the work. (n.p.)

Scanlon proposes that Internet literature delights in the play of reference, the participation in a network in which meaning is actively being made, a network in which only those who participate 'get it.' Adam Phillips (2012), a psychoanalyst, states that groups of people tend to be defined, or to define themselves, by the things they all 'get'. Scanlon highlights that in relation to the references within the novels that fit into the category of Internet literature, there seems to be a spectrum of what 'getting it' means. He elaborates on this by stating that on one side is an active critique of both those who are not 'getting it' and the need to 'get it' generally, and on the other side is the free-wheeling abandonment of the need for explanation (n.p.).

Merve Emre (2021) believes that if narrative fiction is to reflect the human lived experience in the age of the Internet, then it needs to offer more than enough resistance, on the level of plot or character, structure or tone, to the very media forms it wants to represent. She proposes that a good novel would not speak in the voice of the Internet; it would speak over it, and the clamour it made would allow its critics to hazard a stronger claim for the value of the novel to our virtual lives.

In Chapter One of the exegesis, narrative theory, also referred to as narrativity, is introduced which argues that narratives are the basic cognitive strategy human's use to make sense of their experiences (Gibson, 1996). As such, the exegesis contends that status updates/posts can be a form of micro-narratives that accord with Alexandra Georgalopoulou's (2007) 'small stories'

paradigm – a subgenre of storytelling that generally reports ‘mundane, ordinary and in some cases, trivial events from the teller’s everyday life, rather than big complications or disruptions (Georgalopoulou 2015, p. 65). This chapter then discusses the multiple digital communication platforms and variations of narrative dissemination that is possible due to the social media revolution, and argues that these online narratives can influence, inform and change the worldviews of individuals and/or large groups of people due to the Internet’s global reach.

This chapter asserts that the social media revolution has created a ‘media-laden society’, also referred to as an ‘information society’ (Nath 2017, p. 26), and that, according to Nath, a social paradigm shift has occurred which is referred to as a ‘new social order’ (p. 24). This new social order is discussed in relation to users of social media who have immersed their daily lives in the platforms, resulting in virtuality inter-penetrating reality.

Chapter Two of the exegesis examines the convergence between technology and people, and discusses notions relating to social relations and identity, which is today understood by many as fluid and multiple. This chapter identifies how communication and self-expression through digital technology allows for various iterations of an individuals’ ‘multiple, composite self’ (van Dijcks, 2013) to be portrayed without having to be evidenced through normal physical constraints. As social media becomes more entrenched in everyday lived experience, online identity-construction will play a larger part in our overall creation of selfhood and our understanding of it, and there will be less discrepancy between our virtual and real selves. This exegesis proposes that social media is not merely just a space to broadcast identities, but also plays a vital part in their construction.

Erving Goffman’s (1959) theories in relation to presentation of the self, and a range of studies that build on his these, are applied in order to better understand the effects that social media use has on self-presentation. Also discussed is the way users are structurally encouraged to monetise and market their social media expressions of self, through the use of the ‘like’ buttons and the rolling tally of ‘subscribers’, ‘friends’ and/or ‘followers’ that register a user’s potential influence. This then becomes ‘online social capital’, which can be exchanged for services or money through the endorsement of products. This has enabled the commodification of the act of performing selfhood.

Chapter Three of the exegesis examines how digital communication technology is influencing people’s sense of belonging as social media has enabled users to connect with like-minded others regardless of the geographical borders that may separate them. These online communities are discussed and referred to as digital tribes. Information shared amongst these digital tribes often can create echo chambers, which are virtual space in which the repeated sharing of the

same or similar narratives work to reinforce a particular worldview, effectively blocking users from exposure to rival perspectives. This chapter goes on to investigate how such echo chambers exacerbate the 'culture wars' and explains the notion of 'articulating agents' (Mouffe, 2000), who are users that have acquired a large influence over individuals and the digital tribes they identify with to harness their collective power in order to unite or protest on particular issues.

This exegesis contends that in the era of the Internet, information is a key currency, and that those who can control or dominate its digital circulation via social media have the ability to influence a vast amount of people's; understanding of identity, sense of belonging with others, and social and political worldviews. This exegesis states that due to the abundance of narratives that currently circulate via social media, people are becoming attracted to more simplistic narratives that confirm to their worldviews. Over time, this has led to more legitimacy to the variety of conspiracy theories that are circulating on the Internet. This statement will be explained through the discussion of the QAnon movement, an example of a grand unified conspiracy theory that constructs a separate reality for its followers.

Chapter Four of the exegesis traces the ways in which the creative component of the thesis, the novel entitled *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* draws on, and gives fictional expression to, the research outlined in the previous three chapters. In order to contextualise the creative work, this chapter affirms Scanlon's definition of 'Internet literature' (Scanlon, 2021), as works of fiction that use references within the text that exist beyond the text, and engages with the notion of 'virtual realism' (Lorentzen, 2021), which is when the narrator experiences online life in the same capacity as 'real life'.

The most critically acclaimed Internet novels tend to fit into the genre of autofiction. Two such recently published novels, *No One Is Talking About This* (2021) by Patricia Lockwood and Lauren Oyler's *Fake Accounts* (2021), will be discussed, as they both share the ambition of *I'm Going To Be Okay. I Will* to repurpose the conventions of the literary novel in ways that engage with a lived experience that is virtual and real. Although the genre of autofiction seems a good fit for Internet novels, as social media encourages the posting of autobiographical reflections of self, this chapter will discuss my decision to create a multi-protagonist novel instead.

The architecture of the novel is analysed to contextualise how I have applied the 'small stories' paradigm as a literary device in the form of interspersed digital narratives termed 'online artefacts', which are online texts quoted from the Internet and re-contextualised for my purposes. Mikhail Bakhtin's notions of heteroglossia, carnival and grotesque realism are also discussed to highlight how these terms relate to online spaces, interactions and identities, and how they informed the narrative structure, themes and tone of the novel. Each narrative arc

within the novel resists, and ultimately subverts, a neat and conventional beginning, middle, and end structure, and instead narratively drops in and picks up on the characters at particular times of their lives. The challenges and benefits of this literary structure are discussed to show how *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* contributes to the ways in which novels can represent contemporary life as lived in both reality and virtuality.

Chapter One: Narrative theory, the small stories paradigm, and the new social order

In this chapter, the exegesis will examine narrative theory in order to argue that social media posts often constitute narratives within the 'small stories' paradigm, which Alexandra Georgakopoulou (2015) proposes are categorised by 'fragmentation and open-endedness of tellings, exceeding the confines of a single speech event and resisting a neat categorisation of beginning-middle-end' (p. 65). This narrativising aspect of social media is placed within the broader context of the digital media revolution, which, it will be argued, has generated a social paradigm shift termed a 'new social order' (Nath, 2017). Before analysing how social media posts have adopted/adapted and transformed narratives, this chapter will first discuss the central role that narrative forms have traditionally played in forming and articulating knowledge and framing human experience.

1.1 - Digital narratives and the 'small stories' paradigm

Miranda Holmstrom (2016) states that narratives provide explanations and '[describe] the past, justify the present, and [present] a vision of the future' (p. 119). She further argues that they offer a framework for the plot and the setting of a story and provide context for raw information and facts, thereby shaping how we perceive ourselves and the world in which we live. Jennifer Edson Escalas (1997) proposes that narratives are applied to the social relations of societies, and function to legitimise their existing power relations and customs. It is through narratives that people are able to negotiate and find their role in society. Walter R. Fisher (1984) believes that human beings are 'homo-narrans' (p. 6), meaning that storytelling is an essential part of human nature. In line with Fisher's belief, human beings use narratives as a way to process life experiences and information to construct meaning.

Narrative theory, also referred to as narrativity, argues that human beings use narratives as a basic cognitive strategy for making sense of various aspects of human experience such as time and change (Gibson, 1996). Margaret R. Somers (1994) states that narrativity examines 'concepts of social epistemology and social ontology'. It is 'through narrativity that we come to know, understand, and make sense of the social world... [and] constitute our social identities' (p. 606). Anthony P. Kerby (1991) argues that identity is conceptualised through the narration about one's own life—as narrative identity. The identity researcher Heiner Keupp (2001) proposes that we are not only authors of our narrations but, we come across cultural texts or manuscripts of life into which we transcribe in our personal narratives. Jaber F. Gubrium & James A. Holstein (1998) bluntly state that 'stories are the foundation of human identity'. Somers elaborates on the concept of narrative identities by stating that they are

constituted by a person's temporally and spatially variable place in culturally constructed stories composed of (break-able) rules, (variable) practices, binding (and unbinding) institutions, and the multiple plots of family, nation, or economic life (p. 625).

They propose that narratives are not incorporated into the self in any direct way; rather they are mediated through the enormous spectrum of social and political institutions and practices that constitute our social world. They contend that the narrative self, just like all narrative creations, presents an interpretation of the experiences encountered and 'locates the actors in their societal context' (p. 625). These theoretical positions argue the importance of narratives in the construction of identity through life experiences as mediated through the narratives we continuously create for ourselves and others—explicitly as well as implicitly.

In narrative theory, 'the process of canonisation is largely traceable to William Labov, a linguist that is widely regarded as the founder of the discipline of variationist socio-linguistics' (Georgakopoulou, 2016a). The whole premise of a 'canon' is that one 'category of narrative is more available and recognisable than others' (Shuman 2005, p. 18). According to Labov (1972), narration tends to develop as a well-structured activity with a beginning, middle and end, and unfolds in that order. Hence it moves from the reported events and the complications within them to the most significant event(s), as in the high point, peak and climax, to show or tell their significance, and then resolves them. Michael Bamberg (1997) states that Labov's narrative pattern has been seen as the end-point of narrative development and the ideal form in which to cast the richness, depth and profundity of human experience. Elinor Ochs & Lisa Capps (2001) highlight that conventional narrative analysis has consistently privileged one end of that continuum, in particular:

one active teller as opposed to multiple co-tellers; high tellability instead of low tellability; detachment from the surrounding activity at the expense of embeddedness in the local context; a certain and constant moral stance over an uncertain, fluid and dynamic one; a closed temporal and causal order over open-endedness and/or spatial organisation. (Georgakopoulou 2015, p. 34)

With the introduction of digital communication technology, the nature of how people consume and produce narratives has shifted due to the way digital communication provides a vast range of alternative story-like forms. This has forced theorists to rework key concepts within narrative theory, including debates about what constitutes narrative itself. Ruth Page (2010) proposes that in relation to the introduction of digital communication technology, the idea of a narrative structure building to a climactic point of one or a series of most reportable events becomes immediately questionable.

Nick Srnicek (2017) states that social media can be characterised as 'providing the infrastructure to intermediate between different user groups, by displaying monopoly tendencies

driven by network effects, by employing cross-subsidization to draw in different user groups, and by having a designed core architecture that governs the interaction possibilities' (n.p.). Joy Kim & Andrés Monroy-Hernandez (2016) frame social media content as the product of people attempting to understand experiences with others. When a social media user creates and distributes content, they are acting as a narrator conveying an experience to an audience. Users communicate on social media using multi-semiotic linguistic/textual, visual, and/or auditory forms, such as status updates, posts, tweets, to narrate everyday experiences using the variety of genres in social media (selfies, retweets, spoof videos and remixes) which communicate specific experiences, incidents and issues.

Mikhail Bakhtin's (1935/1981) notion of heteroglossia provides a useful theoretical framework to articulate how users of social media use a variety of multi-semiotic forms, as a cohesive whole when communicating to one another. In the view of Renate Lachmann, Raoul Eshelman, & Marc Davis (1988), heteroglossia allows for endless recombinations of linguistic material according to a 'joyous grammar' (p. 144). Ronald Carter (2004) proposes that heteroglossic practices occur in all genres, but are most pronounced in everyday, informal contexts where playful creativity is encouraged and the norms of the 'monolithic standard' are relaxed, or even suspended.

Existing sociolinguistic work has pointed to the significance of spatio-temporal immediacy, the here and now, in the deictic make up of digital communication (Georgakopoulou, 2013; Myers, 2006; Page, 2012). Users of social media are encouraged to make frequent declarative statements via status updates, posts, and tweets, which produce the content that is essential to the social media platforms. The 'content' produced on an individual's users' profile, over time, becomes part of their ongoing life narrative. These status update, posts, tweets, knit together into 'the life documentation of the individual with their position in the social network, forming a point of intersection between the writer's profile and its distribution across the online context of the 'friend' community' (Page 2010, p. 436).

A digital narrative can take the form of a micro-narrative, like those common on Twitter, or a sequence of status updates, posts, tweets, etc., that meet the minimal requirements for a narrative if the status updates, posts, tweets, etc., are marked by temporal order and are consistently referenced to the same writer (Page, 2010). The perceived sequential randomness of digital narratives may not resemble Labov's (1972) canonical narrative, but they do share certain characteristics with other story forms, particularly the chronicle. Charlotte Linde (1993) states that the chronicle is usually distinguished from other narrative sub-genres, even in some cases excluded from the category of narrative altogether, because while the chronicle contains reported events connected by chronological sequence, they are not organised around a unifying

theme or single evaluative focus. An individual's social media newsfeed 'is like a personalised chronicle, where the events are unified by their concentrated focus on the life experiences of the individual writer' (Page 2010, p 440). In order to perceive the sequence of a digital narrative as a coherent whole, 'one must adjust perspective away from seeking linear connections between individual entries in isolation and 'fill in the gaps' between status updates, online and offline experience to assume an evolving version of the writer's account of their life' (Page 2010, p. 440). Page (2013) proposes that the process of narrative production entails a part-whole relationship between smaller units that incrementally constitute a larger narrative, such as episodes contributing to a single story line or a more complex expansion of a recognised larger ongoing narrative.

Georgakopoulo's notion of the 'small stories' (2007) paradigm argues that social media status updates, posts, tweets, can be regarded as narratives in their own right, as either a single post, or assembled from a collection of fragmented posts. To elaborate on this position, Georgakopoulo describes 'small stories' as a specific sub-genre of storytelling that falls outside the narrative academic enquiry canon. She contends that small stories are an antidote formulation to a longstanding tradition of big stories. She states that small stories are 'employed as an umbrella-term that covers a gamut of under-represented narrative activities, such as tellings of ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, shared (known) events, but also allusions to tellings, deferrals of tellings, and refusals to tell' (p. vii).

Georgakopoulo (2007) proposes that 'small stories on social media tend to be immediate, as they are near future events (projections), where the speaker constructs a tale world of events which have not yet happened' (p. 47), or are very recent. She terms the latter 'breaking news': a quintessential sub-genre of small stories that announce life as it happens and for capture the moment or still un-folding events as the story is still being constructed, and proposes that 'small stories establish and refer to links between the participants' previous and future interactions, including their shared stories' (p. 42).

Page (2010) highlights that many digital online narratives can be easily classified as acts of 'episodic narrativity' (p. 339), which privilege recency over retrospection, with the smaller instalments of narrative material being readily suited to distribution within a networked space. Page (2013) argues that social-media status updates, posts, tweets, construct:

modes of narrative segmentation and sequencing [that] are more or less open to variation in the forms they take, yielding a range of narrative designs. These designs suggest serial storytelling need not involve highly crafted, plot-like trajectories. Other story arcs are possible that do not imply a problem-solution pattern or place interpretive or aesthetic value on a point of closure. (p. 34)

Somers affirms Page's argument when stating that individuals construct identities – however multiple and changing – by locating themselves or being located within, a repertoire of emplotted stories, wherein human experiences (events) are translated into episodes. She states that individuals:

make sense of what has happened and is happening to them by attempting to assemble or in some way to integrate these happenings within one or more narratives; and that people are guided to act in certain ways, and not others, on the basis of the projections, expectations, and memories derived from a multiplicity but ultimately limited repertoire of available social, public, and cultural narratives (p. 606).

According to Paul Veyne (1971/1984), it is 'emplotment' (Page, 2010) that gives significance to independent instances, not their chronological or categorical order. As a mode of explanation, causal emplotment is an accounting – however fantastic or implicit – of why a narrative has the storyline it does. Individuals behave in part according to how they understand their place in any number of given situations, also referred to as episodes, however fragmented, contradictory, or partial (Somers, 1994). Taken collectively, life episodes are processed by the individual into a cohesive narrative to make sense of their self, and to locate that self within the larger social world.

Digital narratives that present real-time narration are most prominent in social-networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, which favours present-tense or non-finite verb forms, creating an ongoing sense of an ever-present 'now' that bridges the asynchronous gap between the time of narrative production and narrative reception (Page 2010; 2012). Social media that engages in real-time narration 'report events as they unfold, without a predetermined narrative outcome or resolution' (Page 2013, p 35). Often a present real-time narrative takes place

in near-concurrence with the time of events: diary writing, breaking-news reports, sports commentary, and reality television all exploit the 'nowness' of quasi-real-time narration that is emphasized in many forms of social-media storytelling. (Page 2012, pp. 190-2)

Real-time narration is not specific to digital narratives as a similar emphasis on the present moment comes in the form of news reports and sports commentary from which the term 'breaking news' originated from. Georgakopoulou (2007) proposes that digital narratives found in the timelines of social media platforms accrue to form a constellation of 'breaking news', creating an emergent digital life history for the narrators. Social media profiles have become spaces for people to record their lives for an audience. The content created on a social media profile can be viewed as a form of life writing or autobiography, each status update, post, tweet, continues the ongoing personal narrative of the person's life.

According to Paolo Virno (2006), the steady stream of content (small stories) shared on a user's social media profile can be considered a form of 'virtuosity', as the structures of social media platforms encourage users to reflect and construct their self in what Virno describes as a

'virtuosic performance', which never gives rise to a finished work. For Virno, virtuosic activity is any activity that, firstly, finds its own fulfilment and its own purpose in itself, without objectifying itself into an end product. A virtuosic performance is an activity that requires the presence of others, as it exists only in the presence of an audience. Social media users who post and share content are virtuosos because they produce and distribute content that is for an audience and is ongoing.

Today, many digital technology corporations have acknowledged and embraced the narrative potential of their platforms by creating applications that encourage narrative content creation. The social media company Snapchat pioneered a story format feature in 2013, but since then, the story format has been widely implemented across the social media ecosystem as a key way of sharing. Donna Moritz (2018) believes that social media platforms are structuring user content into 'stories' as:

stories keeps our content together in the one place. If we tried to do this on the Facebook newsfeed it would be disjointed (or perhaps we wouldn't see it at all) but with stories you can add content to the one story throughout the day, keeping it all together. (Moritz 2018, n.p.)

Moritz refers to the present desire for social media platforms to narrate online content as the 'story era', and proposes that interactive stories are the hottest opportunities for brands wishing to engage with the audience.

1.2 - Media convergence and Transmedia storytelling

The first section of this chapter has examined narrative theory and discussed how the digital communications revolution has further complicated notions of what constitutes a narrative. In this section, the notions of media convergence and transmedia storytelling will be identified to discuss how multiple 'small stories' posted on a variety of different social media platforms can converge into larger single narratives. According to Manuel Castells (1996/2010), this phenomenon has created a 'network society', otherwise referred to as 'network publics' (Boyd, 2010; Boyd & Marwick, 2011).

Prolific users of social media are inundated with narratives, in the form of their own, and the consumption of others. Due to the variety of social media available to users, many of them use different platforms simultaneously. When users create narratives, many of them recite their stories across multiple social media platforms. This phenomenon is referred to as 'media convergence' (Georgakopoulou, 2016b). Emet Gürel and Oyku Tıgılı (2014) describe media convergence as the converging of different communication technology and platforms, and making possible the use

of them simultaneously. They propose that media convergence results in the 'redesigning of social and cultural practices, media consumption habits and communication techniques' (p. 36).

Henry Jenkins (2001) argues that media convergence is 'not a result but a continuing process' (p. 93). For him convergence brings about five dimensions:

'technologic convergence' that includes digitalisation and presentation of verbal, visual, or audial contents in different media platforms; 'economic convergence' that is explained by horizontal integration, which takes place through presenting different production categories under a single roof; 'social convergence' meaning that information and communication technologies that consumers have enable them to realise more than one action at the same time; 'cultural convergence', which, with the impact of culture of contribution, finds meaning by adding a new dimension to content creation and sharing; and, 'global convergence' that is formed with the international flow of the content. (ibid)

In this sense, 'convergence does not define only a technology-based change, but a new and multidimensional cultural order that is effective at global level' (Gürel & Tiğli, 2014, p. 36).

The convergence of a user's online content production and consumption that fulfils the criteria of a narrative is referred to as Transmedia storytelling – a 'narrative technique based on telling a story across different communication platforms' (Gürel & Tiğli, 2014). Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford & Joshua Green (2013) elaborates on the concept by stating that when 'transmedia storytelling unfolds across multiple media platforms, each medium contributes in the understanding of the story as a whole' (p. 2). Transmedia storytelling is also about distribution, as 'the content expands through different media platforms and the full story is not to be found in one medium alone' (Baelo-Allue 2019, p. 123). According to Sonia Baelo-Allué (2019), the digital age has 'facilitated the creation of fluid, open stories that are subject to change as they unfold across different media platforms, each contributing to the story as a whole' (p. 113).

This communication with others that users participate in through the variety of social media platforms they use simultaneously has consequently created the notion of 'networked publics', that is, the spaces and communities created through networked connections (Boyd, 2010; Boyd & Marwick, 2011). Others refer to this new media environment as a 'network society' (Castells, 1996/2010). This means that social media platforms facilitate:

digital, many-to-many communication and the active participation of viewers, listeners or readers in exchanging knowledge, discussing the narrative world, producing new content and even influencing the original storytelling or canon. (Baelo-Allué 2019, p. 114)

Baelo-Allué proposes that in a network society and in a time of technological convergence and multimedia, it is useful to talk about 'storyworlds', a concept that Marie-Laure Ryan (2014) defines as 'the shared universe that encompasses characters, objects, settings, physical laws, social rules, values and events' (p. 31-7). Storyworlds are 'created and distributed across multiple

media forms, which makes them fluid and constantly evolving' (Baello-Allué 2019, p. 115). She further states that 'in convergence culture storyworlds are flexible and subject to sampling, mixing, and change' (Baello-Allué 2019, p. 116).

Due to the nature of convergence, digital narratives can become a 'networked web of story episodes rather than a single series of events with a defined point of inception and closure' (Page 2010, p. 441). As such, it becomes very difficult to think of an individual users' newsfeed as a

sequence of status updates constructed as a single chronological thread, with a clear starting point and unified trajectory. Instead, the position of any given status update will occur in constantly changing combinations within the multidimensional networked space of the online community. (Page 2010, p. 436)

When a status update is inserted into the abundance of newsfeeds across an online social network, this means that:

individual updates are not interpreted in relation to a fixed (and meaningful) beginning or endpoint of the text. Instead, the emphasis is thrown upon interpreting the updates as self-contained units. However, while updates can be read without reference to preceding material in the sequence, readers are remarkably adept at creating narratives from nonadjacent story-like material. Prompted by textual and contextual cues that activate narrative scripts stored in the reader's consciousness (Herman 1997), the reader may go on to infer narrative-like connections not explicitly articulated in the updates themselves. (Page 2010, p. 437)

The audience for a social media user's newsfeed are not simple spectators, they also shape, share and reframe the content/narrative they're engaging with. A variety of social actors can all 'contribute in varying degrees to different story components of a user's newsfeed, particularly plotline and evaluation' (Georgakopoulou 2007, p. 16).

Georgakopoulou (2015) refers the practice of sharing online content as 'rescripting' (p. 65), a media-enabled practice she describes as involving visually and/or verbally manipulating previously circulated stories so as to create alternative stories that are offered and taken up as humorous, satirical takes on the original story. This creative manipulation of content mainly involves changing the location of the original narrative on its own or along with other aspects of the plot, including the characters, so that a 'new' narrative emerges with 'new' characters, 'new' narrator, 'new' audiences. YouTube videos such as spoofs, memes, remixes, and mashups, are all sites for rescripting, but other (less visual) activities of social media circulation should also be recognised as part of this practice, e.g. the sharing of jokes formulated out of a specific incident on online blogs (Georgakopoulou 2015). Klaus A. Schmid, et al. (2017) states that the evolution of online content distribution in such instances represent a

unique narrative ecosystem that is facilitated by the Internet but operates at the nexus of three dimensions: the social network dimension, defined by the social networks that are

formed between individual nodes and serve as potential dissemination routes, the spatial dimension, reflecting communication in the physical world, and the contextual dimension of the particular interests and opinions of these networks on diverse topics, providing context that discerns event responses. (pp. 388-9)

As online content flows from one user to an abundance of other users who share, it may become distorted and fragmented. This intertextuality of story tellings will inevitably have implications for a story's structure.

Michael Wesch (2008) argues that there is the potential for an almost infinite audience online. When people post online content, Wesch states that,

the problem is not lack of context. It is context collapse: an infinite number of contexts collapsing upon one another into that single moment of recording. The images, actions, and words captured by the lens at any moment can be transported to anywhere on the planet and preserved (the performer must assume) for all time. The little glass lens becomes the gateway to a blackhole sucking all of time and space – virtually all possible contexts – in upon itself. (n.p)

Wesch's notion of context collapse has been used to describe the phenomenon on social network sites whereby a user's potential audience may be drawn from across the various users that make up their friends list, and where the exact composition of an audience for any one post is therefore unknowable (Boyd & Marwick, 2011). The notion of context collapse has implications for understandings of the narratives presented on social media as well as identity-construction and representation. Users of social media must negotiate ways of communicating while simultaneously presenting themselves in the same way to a variety of potential audiences (Jones & Hafner, 2012). This is often then further complicated by their awareness of the potential permanence and replicability of their message (Boyd & Marwick, 2011) – that is, the fact that a post or video can persist indefinitely online, often in copied or remixed form. The potential conflict here is between simultaneously coming across differently to different people, whilst projecting an identity [and/or narrative] that everyone can judge to be authentic (Ellison, Steinfeld & Lampe, 2011).

1.3 - Technologies of power and horizontal propaganda

With the incredible communication reach of social media, digital narratives can spread well beyond a user's own digital networks and be shared around the globe. Hence, if a user has the right storytelling competencies, the potential dissemination and reach of a digital narrative can result in them influencing millions of people. This section examines how due to the vast scale of

influence that can be achieved through social media, the Internet has become a 'battlefield of narratives' (Holmstrom 2016, p. 131).

In today's hyperconnected world, the vast amounts of information users of social media engage with on a daily basis means that 'it is easier for the human mind to remember and make decisions based on meaningful stories than to remember strings of data' (Holmstrom 2016, p. 120). A few facts can be remembered, but a constant stream of information leads to summary judgment. This has led to a more simplistic, rather than more nuanced image of the world. Cognitive psychologist Jerome Bruner (1986) suggests that people are 22 times more likely to remember a fact wrapped in a story. Holmstrom elaborates on this point by proposing that:

narratives answer the basic human need for structure and predictability. If one side fails to provide a meaningful narrative, others will fill the void. Therefore people need simple stories that provide them with relevant information, talking points, and an explanation of how the topic in question fits into their worldview (p.120).

When social media becomes a ubiquitous presence in a user's life, the narratives consumed through the multitude of social media platforms that user engages with will influence their perception. Alexander R. Galloway and Eugene Thacker (2007) have theorised that the rise of networked systems has become a weaponised feature of twenty-first century politics. Peter Pomerantsev (2019) believes that the reach available through digital communication technologies has led to a new era of propaganda that he refers to as an 'information war'. Pomerantsev elaborates on this statement by asserting that the tactics used in information warfare is to produce convincing narratives which influence or persuade the user's values or/and beliefs on a particular social/cultural/political issue. In an interview with Pomerantsev, Martin Sellner, an 'identarian leader', explains that 'our job as the avant-garde from the right is to show the people that the normality of tomorrow doesn't have to be what is considered normal today. Political normality is something very volatile, dynamic, and relative' (p. 217).

Jacques Ellul (1962) differentiates propaganda in terms of horizontal or vertical. He states that vertical propaganda comes from the top down, wherein a select group of propagandists conjure up ideas that are fed down to the masses. It is a traditional one-way communication strategy. However, horizontal propaganda is created and spread by the collective or masses. It differs as it is driven by:

the human propensity to seek contact with others, or out of the intellectual need to look for information and explanations that better fit one's personal situation... The social nature of the group motivates or empowers the individual to publicly declare their adherence to the ideals of the group with conviction. (Holmstrom 2016, p.124)

Horizontal propaganda allows for decentralisation. Steve Tatham (2015) claims that decentralising control often to the point of discomfort allows for far greater agility and speed of response. Due

to the structures of connectivity on social media, horizontal propaganda flourishes in that environment.

Holmstrom explains how a successful propaganda narrative influences people. First, she asserts that the narrative needs to be simple. She states that the most important thing to communicate is the problem. Without it there is no need for action since there is no need for a solution. She elaborates by stating that to successfully convince an individual to support a particular ideology, the narrative needs to show the present situation is in need of dire improvement due to some evil's actions. Then, to appeal to that individual, the narrative will propose that one's personal problems are part of a larger societal problem. Finally, in the resolution phase, a solution is offered. The solution to the problem is just around the corner as long as the individual takes action. Many of the 'problems' are based in reality but explained and hardened through the propagated narrative which justified the proposed action. Through this hardening process the narrative codifies standards, furnishes thought patterns, and makes ideas irrefutable and solid. Details and subtleties disappear, and the idea becomes impervious to reasoning or contrary information. In effect, the narrative has created 'truth'.

Holmstrom (2016) proposes that truth, as in a fact or piece of information, has no intrinsic value. It is up to the narrative to create that value. 'The truth in the narrative is therefore not in its verifiability, but in its verisimilitude—the appearance of it being real or true' (p. 124). With the multitudes of narratives online, an individual only needs to find a 'truth' that appeals to their worldview. She proposes that a propaganda narrative:

crystallises what were just vague inclinations into solid ideas or 'truths'. It plays on feelings and simmering passions already present, reinforcing opinions, hardening prevailing stereotypes and creating automatic reflexes. The simplification process described earlier aides to the crystallisation of an explicit public opinion. Nuances and gradations diffuse the story, and an explicit public opinion needs the 'you are either with us or against us' mentality to keep dissenting opinion at bay. (p. 122)

Holmstrom states that in a successful propaganda narrative, an individual will find a 'truth' socially acceptable through a false sense of freedom and reasoning, aided by the social actors or group that is propagating the particular narrative. 'Once [a person/user] has found the "truth" they in turn become propagandists and help others to reach the same conclusions' (p. 125). 'It is the business of the propagandists to focus on the individual as a member of a group' (p. 121). This is how horizontal propaganda is disseminated.

Holmstrom contends that 'propaganda is inherently a social phenomenon, which uses mass communications, and focuses on mass psychology and public opinion'. Even if propaganda narratives do not align with an individual's worldview, these narratives still have power. Steven

Pinker (2011) points out that studies have confirmed that even if an individual or group distrusts the source of the information at the time of intake, they will forget that distrust and remember the message, or at least the impression of the message. Holmstrom (2016) proposes that social media 'draws upon numerous social psychology or group processes that allow for a far more global version of horizontal propaganda than the world has seen before' (p. 131). She warns that 'the lack of an inspirational narrative will create despair for an individual and chaos for society' (p. 132).

The influence a user, group or organisation can have over others through digital communication networks is a function of reach, which is the degree of the user's embeddedness in the social network, and their persuasiveness regarding the relevance of the content the person creates online (Labrecque et al., 2013). Niels Frederik Lund, Scott A. Cohen & Caroline Scarles (2018) points out that it is important to 'view mobilities of information as a limited resource wherein some stories are privileged while others are subjugated, which leads to an unequal distribution of power' (p. 14). A digital narrative is not easily mobilised within the users' social circles and beyond if it is not 'liked' or 'shared'. This is not uncommon, as only 12% of Facebook posts reach their 'friends' (Constine, 2012), and 71% of tweets go unnoticed (Bosker, 2010). Lund, et al. state that social media platforms function by:

generating engagement and stimulating circulation of [personal/commercial/political status update, post, tweet, etc] by offering a conceptual framework based on the sociological concepts of storytelling, performance, performativity, and mobility These concepts are characterised as 'technologies of power', for their role in shaping the social mechanisms in social media. (p. 1)

Technologies of power are techniques used in the practical operation of power. In an information society, social actors who gain control over the flow of information obtain power within the social world they inhabit. This is because the narratives they disseminate can affect discourses, and that gives them influence over other users who engage with their narratives.

To elaborate on this notion of influence, discourses are a group of statements that constructs a topic, while discursive formations sustain 'regimes of truths' (Foucault, 1980) – which are types of discourses regarded by society as true. Michel Foucault (1980) proposes that 'the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power' (p. 52). Knowledge and power are thus inter-penetrated. It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, just as it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power. It is the production and circulation of meaning and knowledge that produces the power ingrained within digital social networks, because 'social media platforms facilitate a democratisation of

media production and communication as they afford every individual user the opportunity to produce power' (Lund, Cohen and Scarles 2018, p. 11).

Pomerantsev's (2019) proposition that an 'information war' is being fought on social media illustrates Foucault's (1977) ideas about how knowledge and power influence discourse through the fluid circulation of stories by various actors – users, media, marketers and other parties. Due to the establishment of 'regimes of truth', certain ways of interpreting the world are privileged, given credibility and the status of knowledge, while other information is discarded, subjugated and deemed untrue (Foucault, 1980; Haugaard, 2002). Due to the digital communications revolution, the people of influence that traditional media wielded is waning. It is the most influential users of social media that are attaining power and influence and establishing regimes of truth.

1.4 - The social media revolution has created a social paradigm shift

Until the late 1990's, the term 'hyper-connectivity' was mostly used in the contexts of brain research or clinical studies, but Annabel Quan-Haase and Barry Wellman (2005) use this term in a new media-related sense to describes '[t]he availability of people for communication anywhere and anytime' (p. 4). The effects of hyper-connectivity are 'the exponential growth of mobile devices, big data, and social media, which all complement each other and are fundamentally transforming society]' (World Economic Forum 2012b, p. xi). What follows discusses how the introduction of the Internet, primarily digital communication technology, has created a seamless human experience between the virtual and the real. What were previously viewed as separate entities are now bleeding into a fluid virtual-real experience.

Whilst the Internet began as an information space, and later a tool for communication, with the introduction of smart phone technology which creates an 'always on' culture, it evolved into 'a place' (Jones, 1995) to inhabit 'where many of us spend part of our lives alongside their office life, home life and community life' (Miller et al., 2016, p.7). Sociologist Ray Oldenburg (1996/1997) has lamented the disappearance of informal public gathering places – so-called 'third spaces' – in many contemporary societies. Third spaces – cafés, pubs, street corners – are neither home nor work. The Internet has become a 'third space' where people can socialise and connect to others.

As hundreds of millions of people join social media to connect with one another, the social fabric of societies are becoming further woven into these virtual social spaces. Maria Teresa Borges Tiago and Jose Maniel Cristovao Verissimo (2014) believe this represents a 'social revolution' as virtual and real worlds have become intertwined, facilitated by mobile technologies

such as tablets and smartphones. Offline and online life now oscillates and merge into one another as we rely on digital technology in everyday life situations to function. The distinction between what is virtual or real is becoming increasingly meaningless as technology further entrenches itself into the everyday act of living. Daniel Miller et al. (2016) argue that 'social media has already become such an integral part of everyday life that it makes no sense to see it as separate' (p. 7).

According to Hiranya Nath (2017), the digital communication revolution has enabled an 'extraordinary global increase [of] information in social circulation that has ushered the coming of a media-laden society' (p. 26). Theoreticians like Ulrich Beck, Antony Giddens and Manuel Castells believe that since the 1970's, a transformation from industrial society to informational society has happened on a global scale (Grinin, 2007). Castells (1996/2010) claims that

the information and communication technology revolution led in the mid-1990s to multimedia as a new system, the result of —the merger of globalised, customised mass media and computer-mediated communication...[that extended] the realm of electronic communication into the whole domain of life, from home to work, from schools to hospitals, from entertainment to travel. (p. 394)

An information society is a society that uses, creates, distributes, manipulates and integrates information in a significant way to function cohesively. Nath further elaborates by stating that 'sociologists have conceptualised the information society in terms of changes in occupational structure and consider the preponderance of information work in occupations to have created a new social order' (p. 24). Affirming Nath's statement, the social media revolution has resulted in a social paradigm shift that will henceforth be referred to as a new social order, one which has redefined human experience and the social world users inhabit.

Today, the new social order allows users to circumvent the reality of geographical boundaries and move across 'liquid borders' (Mallan, Ashford & Singh 2010, p. 270). Physical borders no longer necessarily sustain locality. The global is therefore a significant force that impacts the way many users see themselves within their local reality. The new social order is a consequence of globalisation – an international movement that interconnects the world's economies, cultures and populations.

According to David Harvey (1990), globalisation can be located in what he calls 'time-space compression', the general tendency of 'capitalist modernization to be very much about speed-up and acceleration in the pace of economic processes and, hence, social life' (p. 230). Andrea Mura (2012) argues that 'globalisation and informatisation have fostered the 'blurring of binaries' and the capacity of virtuality to overcome the modern organisation of institutionalised space' (p. 74). Mura refers to this as 'spatial displacement, by which a sort of double movement produced by globalisation and informatisation, which enacts both the dislocation and re-shaping of notions of

space and related cognitions of time' (p. 72). This 'subjective decentering' is a process Mura calls 'fragmentation'. Mura further explicates on the concept of fragmentation by arguing that while spatial displacement within virtuality dislocates established representations of space and time, a focus on fragmentation requires an examination of the particular disarticulation that modern constructions of subjectivity have undergone with the fading of modern binaries.

Alessandra Lemma (2010) purposes that when users experience virtuality through digital communication technology, 'the body can readily be transcended rather than accepted as a cornerstone of reality' (p. 691). With physical presence no longer required to initiate or sustain a relationship, primary bodily presence is converted into pseudo-presence (Žižek, 2004). Lemma argues that virtuality alters the relationship between internal and external reality by offering an 'illusion of what is real, [which] bypasses the need for the psychic work necessary for understanding that inner and outer reality are linked rather than being either equated or split off from each other' (p. 696). Lemma proposes that in virtuality, 'the psychic equivalence mode of reality' (Fonagy & Target, 1996) dominates, a mode whereby the internal world that is projected into virtual space is seen to correspond to external reality. The technological environment of the online world thus confuses the boundaries between internal and external worlds, creating the illusion that internal and external reality are isomorphic. In these conditions of existence there are:

no limits to what can be imagined and acted out. As the self becomes intoxicated with omnipotence, it loses all contextual referents— of which the body is one — that would otherwise lend meaning to experience. Thinking is attacked: as fantasy and reality collapse into each other, there is no space from which to reflect. [Virtuality] may thus be seen as providing a psychic reserve within which all wishes are gratified, as reality becomes an irrelevance and the individual reclaims the infantile illusion of omnipotence. (Lemma 2010, p. 696)

Through a simulated reality, a world can be recreated in which 'its most unbearable features are eliminated and replaced by others that are in conformity with one's own wishes' (Freud 1930, p. 81). Lemma argues that 'embodiment shapes the mind' and claims that 'the body is a basic fact of life that supports all other psychic functions' and 'when it is denied, emotional, cognitive, and social functioning can be severely impaired' (p. 697). Paul Schilder (1950), emphasises that 'the body image itself—the psychic/libidinal map of the body is organised not just by the laws of biology, but also by the meanings and fantasies we bring to our understanding of the body' (ibid). In reference to Schilder, Lemma points out that these are factors to consider as users of social media further invest their lives within virtuality as 'it denies corporeality' (p. 695). She elaborates by stating that virtuality defies the history, the transience, and indeed the very physicality of the body.

This chapter examined the importance narratives have for human beings to comprehend meaning, and discussed how the digital communications revolution has further complicated notions of what constitutes narrative and adopted/adapted and transformed narrative creation. It explored the power narratives have to influence individuals and masses of people and argues that the digital media revolution has generated a social paradigm shift termed a 'new social order' (Nath, 2017). In the next chapter, identity-construction will be examined in relation to the impact the Internet, primarily the digital communications revolution, has informed new understandings of selfhood.

Chapter Two: Identity-construction within virtuality and reality

Today, many social media users' lived experiences have become performative, their daily lives a spectacle. This chapter will examine a range of studies that draw on Erving Goffman's (1959/1990) theories that all social interactions are fundamentally about the presentation of the self to examine identity-construction. Although Goffman did not live to see the social media revolution, his theories have been deployed and built upon to help explain how users understand, express and locate self in the Internet Age.

This chapter argues that digital communication technology use does not just influence its users understanding of self, but also informs Identity construction. This exegesis proposes that understanding of identity has shifted away from a static and definite element of the 'self', in which an individual discovers their true-self throughout their lifetime, into a polycentric experience that is fragmented into different social relationships and part-selves. Instead of 'discovering' one's identity, individuals now 'construct' their sense of 'self' through various social and cultural contexts (Berzonsky, 2016), within reality and virtuality.

2.1 - The self is multiple and fluid

In relation to today's era of digital communication technologies, Luke Turner (2011) emphasises that media has changed from broadcasting identities to playing a part in constructing and creating them. Similarly, Camilla Hällgren (2019) argues that online social contexts are not only conceptualised as spaces for representing identities, but also conceptualised as spaces for authoring, forming and performing identities. Christian Roesler (2008) believes that:

the cultural communication of these pluralised choices of identity mainly takes places via modern media, for example, via the presentation of clothing, ways of living, beliefs and behaviour patterns. Thereby the media [has] an enormous importance for the construction of identity in late modern societies. (p. 422)

Mark Deuze (2012) theorises that media not only constantly shapes us, but also in an ontological sense, functions as a space for existence. In this way, we now live in, rather than with, media. In today's Internet Age, the convergence between technology and the individual has made identity and social relations fluid and multiple. The 'self' is not unitary, because situated activities and interactions are manifold through the Internet. The virtual social world many inhabit calls for multiplicity and multi-dimensionality in relation to identity.

Goffman's book, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959/1990), was inspired by the lines 'The entire world is a stage and all the men and women merely players' from William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. A dramaturgical account of human interaction and social construction of self, the text claims that there is no true self, and challenges the notion that each one of us has a fixed character or psychological identity. Instead, Goffman argues that people display a series of masks to others in different social situations to present themselves in the most favourable light. He refers to the way people play different roles depending on who they are interacting with as 'impression management' (p. 18).

Among those scholars who have developed and applied Goffman's theories are: Timothy J. Owens (2006), who defines identity as 'categories people use to specify who they are and to locate themselves relative to other people' (p. 207); Herbert Blumer (1969), who believes that the self is an emergent, dynamic process that must be understood within a community, interacting with others, because a self only achieves its central existence in situated activity; and Mary Gergen and Kenneth Gergen (1987) who propose that the self is located within social relationships, which means that an individual consists of many part-identities or part-personalities. Incorporating these ideas, this section will discuss how notions of identity are shifting from singular and static, to multiple and fluid.

Applying Goffman's notion of masks to the era of the Internet, it can be argued that social media users have to adapt to multiple roles in 'virtual' exchanges which in turn produce multi-dimensional virtual identities depending on the context and means of communication (Munar, 2010). These multi-dimensional virtual identities can be adopted and discarded at will, a notion that Gerard Raulet (1991) terms 'floating identities'.

Sinan Aral & Dylan Walker (2011) propose that the multi-dimensional virtual identities that represent one's self-identity are not all available at the same time, but rather are best understood as a shifting array of accessible selves. According to Robert C. Prus (1997), theory of 'self' recognises that there are a multitude of possible selves without limiting the possibilities to a pre-defined set. Multiple selves can be constructive for personal development of an individual if a positive experience of a new self online can be integrated with life offline (Allison et al. 2006; Turkle 1995), but if the integration of the online self is not possible offline, the potential for pathological splitting is considerable (Lemma, 2010).

Communication and self-expression through digital technology allows for various iterations of a user's 'multiple, composite self' (van Dijck, 2013) to be portrayed without having to be evidenced through normal physical constraints in the 'real' world. Philip Seargeant and Caroline Tagg (2014) believe that:

if identities are discursively (and semiotically) constructed and dialogically performed, then nowhere is this more evident than on social media, where people have relative freedom to choose how they wish to present themselves, have the opportunity to address new, diverse and potentially global audiences, and have at their disposal a novel set of resources for doing so (p. 9).

Kerry Mallan, Barbara Ashford & Parlo Singh (2010) proposes that 'conventional understandings of identity and social relations are undergoing change in the light of the capacities of new digital technologies' to render space fluid and flexible' (p. 264). David Buckingham (2008) notes that contemporary technologies are spaces for learning that offer 'new ways of forming identity, and hence new forms of personhood; and by offering communication with different aspects of the self, it enables young people to relate to the world and to others in more powerful ways' (pp. 13 - 14). For Danah M. Boyd & Nicole B. Ellison (2007), the act of creating and maintaining profiles on social media serves as an 'initiation rite' in these virtual spaces, which have become an important part of youth culture in many parts of the world.

2.2 - The presentation of self online

In this section, a range of studies drawing on the theories of Goffman that consider social media as spaces for staging performances and conducting impression management will be examined in relation to the presentation of self on social media. This will be discussed within the next two sections.

According to Avril Loveless and Ben Williamson (2013), our narrative character seems to be partly changing from a version of selfhood represented by a notion of inner conversation towards a notion of selfhood represented by external interactive performance. Social media platforms are therefore spaces for self-representation where, through consistent and sustained actions and social interactions, people are able to assume certain social roles and shapes that align how they want to be perceived within their social network (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Peters et al., 2013). Knowing that the social media content they produce will be seen by their friends, followers and subscribers, as well as the wider social network connected to their friends, followers and subscribers, users perform their social ties to and for others (Hillewaert, 2015). While performances are self-representations and construct social roles, the performative constructs meaning and constitutes reality through the individual's social interactions (Cohen & Cohen, 2012; Harwood & El-Manstrly, 2012). Psychologist Jim Taylor (2011) suggests that the culture of social media has driven individuals away from self-expression and self-awareness and towards a society of impression management and self-promotion.

The nature of content production on social media is vastly different from the producer-centred content of traditional media, as it reflects the user's 'digital presence of self and the need to reflectively manage this presence as a multi-faceted identity project' (Fisher, Boland Jr. & Lyytinen 2016, p.138). Dar Meshi, Diana Tamir & Hauke Heekeren (2015) state that a major motivation for social media use was the ability for users to manage the impression they make on others, and through social media, users have the opportunity to create, modify, or maintain an impression of themselves in the minds of others. Michael Fisher, Richard Boland & Kalle Lyytinen (2016) suggests that social media enhances the user's awareness of a generalised other through voyeurism and the managing of reputations. When users narrate their everyday experiences through multi-semiotic linguistic/textual, visual, and/or auditory forms through social media, they become both the subjects and objects of a constant gaze – visible at all times, watching and being watched (Munar, 2010). According Lund, et al. (2018), when social media users communicate and 'share content' with others they are 'performing socialities' (p. 1). Jordan Crandall (2008) theorises that 'presentational culture', has now emerged with greater intensity as users of social media now have the opportunity to pay much more attention to the 'self' than ever before. Here the 'self' refers to the particular aspects of identity that individuals choose to portray to the public.

Joseph Lampel and Ajay Bhalla (2007) contend that sharing online content is strongly driven by status-seeking and that such status sentiments are likely to sustain and encourage an individuals of use social media. Through grounded analysis, Fisher, Boland Jr. & Lyytinen conclude that the construction and maintenance of an individual's self-identity undergirds much of the sharing that takes place on social media. When users share and consume online content through social media, they 'learn over time to participate in an extending range of behaviours related to projecting their identity and sense of self, such as managing reputations, living vicariously through others, exhibiting voyeurism, exhibiting exhibitionism, controlling diverse worlds, and expressing emotional intensity' (p. 141). Users of social media can both play the role of both the entertainer or the entertained, and are interlinked by a mutuality of interaction. In some contexts, users choose exclusively to be either the 'performer' or 'audience', in which case there is not an expectation of reciprocity (Prus, 1997).

Moira Burke, Robert Kraut & Cameron Marlow (2011) identify three accepted types of social media users: passive, active, and broadcasters. Passive users, sometimes known as passive followers or content consumers, utilise social media for observation rather than interaction (Krasnova et al., 2013). This observation consists of them viewing newsfeeds, posts, pictures, and updates without 'liking' or 'commenting' on them (Burke, Kraut & Marlow, 2011). An extreme

form of passive usage is 'Facebook stalking' (Yang & Brown, 2013), in which an individual often searches through the entire history of another user. Active users, also known as interactive users, predominantly utilise social media for messaging, posting updates and photos, and similar activities that involve nurturing an existing social network and creating new ones (Deters & Mehl, 2013). And broadcasters utilise social media to project themselves to others without direction. This type of user does not specifically direct their postings to another user, rather it is intended to be consumed by a wider audience (Burke et al., 2011). Broadcasters often use social media to elevate their standing in the social groups to which they already belong to set them apart from the masses.

Voyeuristic and exhibitionistic behaviour relates strongly to the notion of the entertained and entertaining self. Users who demonstrate exhibitionism on social media regularly upload pictures of themselves, generally referred to as selfies, post their experiences, and update their life status in the hope that others will view the content and be entertained (Fisher, Boland Jr. & Lyytinen, 2016). Today, such exhibitionistic behaviour is financially rewarded, as successful broadcasters, known as influencers, commodify their online content.

2.3 - The commodification of self online

With Instagram being one of the most popular platforms for image circulation within the social media landscape, Crystal Abidin (2016) traces the connection between the use of 'selfies' and influencing behaviour as a form of subversive frivolity that capitalises on online social connections as an entrepreneurial means to market both the self and the product to establish a branding presence. Jill Walker Rettberg (2014) contends that selfies, along with other technologies of self, allow us to see ourselves as an object and through this to know ourselves and add the irreducibly intersubjective element of this self-recognition: from the moment we post selfies and make them part of social and communicative practices and contexts, we see and know ourselves through others' engagement with them. We tell our stories with and for others. This culture of presentation within the structures of social media encourages us to relate to the self as a commodity.

The influencer phenomenon has to some degree democratised celebrity status to an achievable end for many 'regular' people. Abidin (2016) has traced the rise of the influencers and defines them as:

everyday, ordinary Internet users who accumulate a relatively large following on blogs and social media through the textual and visual narration of their personal lives and lifestyles, engage with their following in 'digital' and 'physical' spaces, and monetise their following

by integrating 'advertorials' into their blogs or social media posts and making physical paid-guest appearances at events. (p. 3)

Theresa Senft (2008) defines the influencer phenomenon as 'a new style of online performance that involves people amping up their popularity over the web using technologies like video, blogs and social networking sites' (p. 25). Tom Peters (1997) argues that the only way to compete with large multi-national companies is to become their micro-equivalent. Peters believes that we are CEOs of our own companies: Me Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You. Peters declares that self-branding is an inevitable necessity in the future of work, and that one must be a mix of leader, teacher, visionary, and businessperson. He proposes that the self should become a commodity or 'brand' to be capitalised on, and through the miracle of social media platforms, an individual can actualise their potential social and economic value.

Social media corporations encourage users to be entrepreneurial through the creation of marketable identities, that are generally referred to as personal brands, which capitalise on the user's lived experiences as narrated on their social media profiles. These are then 'sold' to their followers/friends/subscribers. This form of self-branding is part of a broader post-Fordist neoliberal ideology that valorises the entrepreneur (Hearn 2008). Kane X. Faucher (2018) claims that

the act of self-branding makes the leap from simple use value to an exchange value by participating in a social market, the abstract unifying relation that mediates the different brands on offer being a different form of price – the numeric counters of social buttons as a symbol, for example – in an economy controlled by the social networking service. (p. 24)

The desire for a successful marketable online identity is to accumulate 'online social capital' - a 'product of online exchanges that in many cases can be expressed in some numeric form' (Faucher 2018, p. xiii). Pierre Bourdieu (1994) explicates this notion by stating that the volume of social capital is dependent upon some conditions, such as network size, effective use of connections, and the volume of other forms of capital each user within the network possesses. According to Robert Putnam (2001), social capital involves trust, reciprocity, information, the possibilities for collective action and the transition from individual identity to a collective identity.

Online social capital is generally assessed and valued through the metrics of 'likes' a user receives from their status updates/posts and the friends/followers/subscribers that they have acquired through the social media platforms they use. An influencer then leverages their online social capital to endorse products and services for money. The brands that work with influencers are then absorbed into the influencer's virtual self-representation, or personal brand, which is then sold to their followers, friends, and subscribers.

If one of the ideals of social media is to connect people globally inside a digital public place that doesn't discriminate, the advent of social marketing colonised that space, blurring the lines between user and brand, while also normalising the objectification and commodification of self. Once a user commodifies their identity and life experiences as an influencer on social media, there is a tension between self-branding and authenticity, rehearsing and performing self, and the desire to appear genuine and spontaneous (Marwick, 2013).

Authenticity is often seen as crucial to identity management across online situations, as the extent to which an online persona is seen by interlocutors to relate to the person behind it affects their social, and therefore commercial value (Seargeant & Tagg, 2014). In order for a user to read something on social media, the user needs a social signal to trigger and capture their attention. Hence, the user evaluates the authenticity of content based, in part, on the trust they have in the user that is sharing the content.

Nell Haynes (2016) proposes that the notion of 'authenticity' as a term, much like normativity, can be defined in various ways, depending on its context and the aims of the person using the word. She states that the concept of authenticity does not indicate an 'inherent essence', but is relational, in that it relies on being contrasted with what individuals in that context consider false or deceptive. She contends that authenticity is established through the various communication methods people represent themselves, including spoken and written language, self-styling and the visual modes of representation.

One of the reasons that authenticity is considered such an important issue on social media is that it provides an anchor for communication. Communication operates as a sort of contractual transaction: interlocutors agree to co-operate with each other in exchanging information, be this interpersonal or ideational. They invest in the interaction in terms of both emotion and personal disclosure, and do this on the basis of a belief that the other person is likewise agreeing to the contract (Grice, 1975).

Despite its centrality, defining authenticity is far from easy, and it is not an absolute quality which a person, text or object may or may not exhibit (Coupland, 2003). Instead,

authenticity is better conceptualised as an intersubjective process of authentication that takes place between participants. The process of authentication thus depends on the cues supplied by the textual sender, and the judgements made by the text's audience(s): in Coupland's terms, the 'expert authenticators' who reach a consensus about an item or person's value (Page 2014, p. 49) .

Page (2014) proposes that judgements of authenticity are often measured against textual and contextual conditions, which include the need for consistency. Martin Gill (2011) describes consistency as the over-riding requirement for an authenticity effect to be successful. Consistency

entails both internal textual features, 'where unexpected stylistic shifts prompt suspicions of inauthenticity, and the correlation between the participant's assumed identity and their linguistic behaviour' (Page 2014, p. 49).

Nikolas Coupland (2003) points out that authenticity is governed by 'systemic coherence'. This means that what might be accepted as authentic in one context may be considered inauthentic in another context. On social media platforms, 'the ability to detect authenticity (and its counterpart, inauthenticity) has important contextual outcomes for the updater and audience as a form of heightened social value' (Page 2014, p. 50). 'Authenticity, trust and reputation [are] crucial to the discussion of impersonation in online contexts' (Page 2014, p. 47). When communication on social media is deemed inauthentic it undermines the solidarity between the updater, as the trust of the latter has been broken.

Presentation of self within virtuality is not necessarily less authentic than reality, as many studies in recent years have pointed out that individuals do not give up their notions of authenticity when they interact with others online (Rak, 2005). However, due to the option of anonymity within virtuality, there is ample opportunity for people to be inauthentic in that space. The 'failure to detect inauthenticity can be face-threatening for audience members who do not "get the joke"' (Page, 2012, p. 170). When Individuals are online, it is preferable to be 'a member of the knowing "in-group" who avoid falling for the hoax' (Page 2014, p. 50).

2.4 - Curating self

As social media has become entrenched in daily life, the profiles of many of its users appear to be reflections of their lives. In truth, a user's profile is a curated representation of 'self' in relation to others and the world they inhabit. While Goffman's theories derived from and related to face-to-face situations, they are equally also applicable to today's virtual social spaces, as the act of posting any content on social media is one of curation aimed at maintaining control over a virtual social interaction. This conscious act of curation on social media builds neatly fits with Goffman's (1959/1990) theory of the facade, which he defines as 'expressive equipment of a standard kind intentionally or unwittingly employed by the individual during his performance' (p. 13). Social media profiles exemplify Goffman's concept of the 'facade', as they are generally designed to present their producers in the best possible light, suppressing negative or socially unacceptable aspects of their personalities. Goffman refers to this kind of manipulation of self-presentation as 'impression management' (p. 23). A concept further examined below.

David Marshall (2015a) proposes that contemporary technologies have created spaces for constructing and performing a mediated identity, also referred to as an online personality or persona. This process can involve 'monitoring and editing ourselves, connecting with strategic purpose to others and building recognisable reputations' (Marshall 2015b, p. 115). In online identity-construction, language, both verbal and non-verbal, are utilised through multi-semiotic (linguistic/textual, visual and/or auditory forms that play a vital role in the development of identity. Page (2014) affirms this when she argues that:

research in computer-mediated discourse analysis does not conceptualise identity as a stable attribute maintained by individual participants. Instead, identity is understood as constructed through interaction, fluid and open to revision. Computer-mediated contexts bring to the fore the centrality of language in performing identity, where the typed words on a screen (sometimes in conjunction with other modes such as image and sound) become primary resources for identity work. (p.46-7)

Aaron Hess (2015) points out that online self-representation does not exclusively operate online, but rather at the intersection of several 'modes of existence'. Online self-representation also 'features the corporeal self, understood in relation to the surrounding physical space filtered through the digital device and destined for social networks' (p. 1,629). Giuseppe Riva and Carlo Galimberti (1998) distinguish three basic dimensions that can account for the construction of identity on the Internet. The first is anonymity versus identification. In most virtual online environments' users can remain anonymous, create false identities or avatars, or they can represent themselves as they are legally recognised offline. Second, within virtuality, users can offer synchronous or asynchronous communication. Third, both textual and visual information is available.

In Fisher's (2009) study, no single virtual identity or particular way in which social media contributes to identity-building was detected. Instead, creation of content online content and associated projects of identity construction comes in diverse forms and are being constantly reconstructed through multiple interactions and the discovery of new services whereby users could generate collages of multiple, fluid, and complex expressions of self and others (Munar, 2010). Sherry Turkle (1995) proposes that because of the plasticity of online identities, anonymous or pseudonymous representation can be regarded as 'masks', which are adopted and discarded at will. The 'metaphor of the mask implies playful performativity where there need be no assumed correlation between the online and offline identities constructed by a user' (Page 2014, p. 47).

Liad Bareket-Bojmel, Simone Moran & Golan Shahar (2016) highlight that self-presentation methods used to curate online selfhood are intimately linked to the feedback process generated by a user's followers, friends, and subscribers, or by anonymous strangers through their 'likes' or remarks in the 'comments' sections available on many social media platforms. This feedback

from a user's online network creates a self-perpetuating cycle of behaviour that informs the user's identity. The identities of prolific users of social media, particularly teenagers, in the early stages of personal development, are more likely to be shaped and informed by this online feedback loop.

Taylor (2011) emphasises that human beings are inherently social creatures who use the feedback from others as a vital component in the evolution of our self-identities. Michelle Carter and Varun Grover (2015) contend that once an individual enters into a pattern of repeatedly altering their behaviour in response to feedback, their identity will ultimately change. The notion of an 'online feedback loop' can also be referred to as 'crowdsourcing' (Hällgren, 2019). Hällgren proposes that when social media users turn to online crowds to discuss matters of being, belonging and becoming, they are effectively crowdsourcing the making of their identity, hence, her term, 'crowdsourcing identities' (n.p.).

Similarly, Mallan, Ashford & Parlo (2010) argue that in any discussion of identity:

tension exists between a sense of a unifying collective, on the one hand, and distinguishable personal difference on the other hand. Both meanings are implicated in the perception of what constitutive identity... The play between shared collective identity and unique singular distinction confounds an easy understanding of identity formation and this complexity is further complicated when the rational world in which [individuals shift] between so-called 'real' and 'virtual' experiences. (p. 269)

Mallan, et al. contend that both collective and individual aspects of identity, as collective and individual, are formulated within a world in which the subject is a participant. Marc Prensky (2011) believes that for 'digital natives', identity will further become externalised, constructed from the feedback of an inherently flawed social system, rather than the traditional internally derived identity that was experienced in earlier generations. Lund et al. believe that social media platforms have become places for storytelling and 'embodied performances' (p. 11) which enable users to project bricolages of self-representation. Today, many digital natives that have grown up only knowing a world with the Internet are identifying with a broader spectrum of understanding in relation to identity, gender, and sexuality, which has been facilitated by the evolution of digital communications technology. This social paradigm shift that has resulted from this has encouraged the notion that identity is a fluid rather than static construct.

2.5 - Positive and negative true-self

Previously, a person's social interactions were experienced purely in the physical world, but the advent of the Internet created a virtual social space for the construction of identity and self-guide. Within virtuality, people have found a new dimension wherein they can express themselves without necessary reference to their corporeal bodies. Building on Goffman's (1959/1990) theory

of 'impression management', this section will examine how users project various modes of self within social media, which Goffman refers to as 'masks'.

John A. Bargh, Katelyn Y. A. McKenna & Grainne M. Fitzsimons (2002) claims that online, without the presence of physical appearances, users are able to express themselves more freely and openly. Moreover, the Internet provides users the ability to reconstruct their identity based on their own discretions. Online communication through digital communication can enable people more control to re-construct their identities as users may express themselves with less fear of sanctions and disapproval from others than in the physical world. Roesler (2008) elaborates on this point by stating that:

the virtual space shows traits of freedom in the sense that the normal consequences of play and experimentation in social interactions within the physical world are eradicated: one can leave the interaction at any time and need never come into contact with the other persons involved again if one does not want to. This has clear advantages for the process of identity formation (p. 427).

The notion of true-self is defined as the self that presents what people intrinsically think and believe (Harter, 2002). Carl Rogers (1951) suggests that true-self is one of the significant aspects of an individual's identity and that people are highly motivated to express this in their social interactions. However, in face-to-face communications, if those aspects conflict with social norms and expectations, most people choose to hide these attributes due to the fear of disapproval from others (Tosun, 2012). This is why some individuals express more of their true-self when online, employing a reconstructed virtual identity.

On Facebook, Gwendolyn Seidman (2014) states that those who enjoy the freedom to express their true-self have more self-oriented motivations for posting, and these postings reveal more personal and emotional content. Leman Pinar Tosun (2012) adds that users with high level true-self expression use Facebook more frequently for the purpose of establishing new relationships. Shenyang Zhao, Sherri Grasmuck & Jason Martin (2008) state that the practice of identity-construction does differ significantly between transparent and anonymous online social interactions on social media platforms. A transparent online social interaction can be traced back to the user while an anonymous online social interaction cannot. This ability for people to be partly or totally anonymous can lead to less restraint in social interactions. In comparison to the consequences of a negative social interaction offline, online there are fewer real costs, such as negative judgments from others, and damage to relationships due to anonymity. Therefore, true-self is more likely to be active when individuals reconstruct their identity within virtuality. The notion of true-self not only includes positive aspects, but also negative ones – namely positive true-self and negative true-self.

Chuan Hu et al. (2017) claim that 'online-offline dissociation diminishes a [person's] concerns on acting out both positive true self and negative true self online' (p. 13). This means that an individual's online behaviour can differ remarkably from their behaviour offline. Katelyn Y. A. McKenna, Aime S. Green & Marci E. J. Gleason (2002) observe that socially anxious people express their true-self more easily online than offline, and that introverted and neurotic people are more likely to take advantage of the anonymity in virtuality to express their true-self. Due to the ability to remain anonymous when online, users are able to express negative true-self with less fear of negative social evaluation and disapproval by others (Bargh, McKenna & Fitzsimons, 2002; Bargh & McKenna, 2004).

Chuan Hu, Li Zhao & Jiao Huang's (2015) research found that social media users often reconstruct their identity in order to express more true-self, especially negative true self, in anonymous online environment' (p. 12). They state that:

due to online-offline dissociation, people may feel less inhibited by social norms in online world. They may no longer follow some of the social norms they used to follow in real life (such as be honest to others). Therefore, it is likely that there might be a decrease in the duties and responsibilities that people want to take in online world. Their ought-self guide online might decrease when compared with that in offline. Moreover, people are able to reconstruct their online identity based on their own ideas. (Hu, Zhao & Huang, 2015)

The need for autonomy when communicating online suggests that users desire to act with a sense of volition in order to feel psychologically free (Deci & Ryan, 2000). It is for this reason that some individuals and groups feel threatened when faced with the regulations of 'speech' in relation to what is tolerated and what is not tolerated when communicating online. Bargh, McKenna & Fitzsimons (2002) suggested that true-self actually exists psychologically, but is not fully expressed in offline social life so as to avoid conflict with others. But in online environments, under the guise of anonymity, the negative true-self can be discharged due to the loosening of social norms and censorship laws, giving the individual a sense of freedom from the negative consequences that they would normally come into contact with offline.

According to Edward Tory Higgins (1987), self-discrepancy theory proposes three domains of self: actual, ideal and ought self. The actual self represents the characteristics that oneself or others think an individual possesses. It reflects the current state of an individual. The ideal self represents the characteristics that oneself or others wish an individual to possess. It reflects someone's hopes and aspirations. The ought-self represents the characteristics that oneself or others believe an individual should possess. It reflects someone's sense of duties, responsibilities and obligations (Higgins, 1989). Hu, et al. claim that:

the positive true-self overlaps with ought-self and ideal-self, and can be expressed in both online and offline world; whereas negative true-self, which conflicts with social norms and

expectations, is not suitable to be expressed physical world. (p. 15)

As Internet users seamlessly interweave their lives within virtuality and reality, there becomes less discrepancy between 'actual'-self and 'virtual'-self. The consequences being that users will experience their virtual identity as if it were their actual identity (Jin, 2012). Kevin Leander & Kelly McKim (2003) claim that online and offline everyday practices are 'co-articulated' (p. 212). Soraj Hongladarom (2011) contends that 'a fusion between the offline and online is taking place in the area of the self and the person' (p. 534) . He argues that

the so-called online self, in other words the putative self existing on profile pages and updated timeline or news status on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and others, is essentially no different from the real self that is already there in the 'offline' world (Ibid., p. 534).

Mallan, Ashford & Singh (2010) propose that rather than separating an individual's participation online from their offline interactions, individuals' 'identities and friendships are infected by the techno social situatedness of their everyday lives' (p. 265). They note that 'the concept of space is now generally understood as social and productive, and interpenetrating physical and virtual realities' (p. 288). Don Slater (2002) argues that online networks enable relationships to transcend the restrictions of time and space and have produced new forms of sociality and identity-formation that cross the perceived online-offline divide. These new cyber-influenced identities and social relationships are possible largely because the spatio-temporal aspects of human experience have been transformed (Mallan, Ashford & Singh, 2010) with the introduction of digital communication technology.

Social media consumption is enmeshing people in media, and this has influenced the way people relate to themselves, each other, and how they perceive and locate themselves in the world. In the next chapter, the way in which digital communication technology has redefined how people connect with one another, and how they find a sense of belonging will be examined. The results of digital technology have broken down geographical borders in relation to communication and disrupted the primacy of proximity in favour of fragmented global communities. As virtuality becomes a larger part of human experience, information consumed from media impacts perspectives of reality. The consequences of this will be further discussed.

Chapter Three: *The Internet is a place to find belonging*

The need for relatedness implies that human beings desire to be connected to and be supported by others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Seargeant and Tagg (2014) propose that social media is predicated on notions of connectedness and the establishment of social networks due to:

the visible display of one's network of followers or friends; the ability to 'like' posts and for this information to be shared amongst your network; the capacity to comment; and the way one can congregate around issues or concepts by using conventions such as the hashtag in Twitter. (p. 9)

In this chapter, the exegesis will argue how social media is redefining how people make connections with each other. Also discussed is how information via social media is shared amongst like-minded users, which often create echo chambers that unite digital tribes and influence identity, belonging and political, cultural and intellectual worldviews. This phenomenon feeds into what has become known as the culture wars. The exegesis states that the vast amount of information now available due to digital communication technology has resulted in people becoming attracted to more simplistic narratives that adhere to their personal worldviews. Over time, this has enabled particular influencers to give legitimacy to the variety of conspiracy theories that are circulating on the Internet. The QAnon 'movement' will be identified to explain how grand unified conspiracy theories are able to construct a reality for their followers.

3.1 - Digital tribes

In the era of digital communication technologies, geographical borders are all but irrelevant, as social media users are free to virtually socialise with people from all over the globe. Rather than people's associations being governed by geography, ethnicity and nationhood, they are now more commonly determined by a shared worldview, as like-minded people, gather online, supporting and reinforcing each others convictions, prejudices, and values. Seargeant and Tagg propose that 'identity performance cannot be discussed in isolation from the communities with which individuals align themselves and the ways in which those communities establish and maintain the relationships that comprise them' (p. 9). This section discusses how identity, both in virtuality and reality, is partially performed by aligning oneself with different groups, opinions and cultural issues.

When individuals disclose personal information about themselves to like-minded people, they feel understood and supported. This creates empathic bonds between individuals and facilitates

the establishment of close relationships. Previous research has found that people are more likely to establish close relationships with others in a virtual setting where they can be more comfortably express their true self (McKenna, Green & Gleason, 2002), knowing they have the power to build or break such relationships at any time with less conflict than would occur in reality. Virtuality offers the user more opportunities to socialise with like-minded others, as there is a greater capacity to quarantine themselves from the views of those with whom they disagree.

According to Michael Walzer (1992), 'our common humanity will never make us members of a single universal tribe'. He argues that 'the crucial commonality of the human race is particularism' (p.171). Particularism is a political theory that states that each political group has a right to promote its own interests, especially independence, without regard to the interests of larger groups and argues that a collective community of individuals requires the existence of some external other to contrast with in order to define itself. This argument proposes that some individuals must necessarily be excluded in order for a collective to exist as a cohesive whole.

Chris Brown (2001) elaborates on Walzer's argument by stating that:

identity is about difference. There is no reason why a European identity could not gradually supersede British or French or Portuguese identities, but there is every reason why a global identity could not supersede European or North American or Japanese identities. Such a global identity would have no borders, no frontiers, no sense of the other. (p. 131)

And Arash Abizadeh (2005) points out that:

the second, stronger version of the particularist thesis goes further and specifies the nature of the relation to the other that the constitution of a collectivity supposedly requires: a relation of either antagonism or hostility. On this interpretation, a collectivity inherently requires adversarial exclusion: the existence of some external other against which it can define itself. (p. 45)

He also highlights that this 'exclusion claim says nothing about the nature of the other-relation: that relation may be (some combination) of love, admiration, competition, resentment, hostility, etc' (ibid). Chantal Mouffe (2000) adds that 'collective identities can only be established on the mode of an us/them. But solidarity and community are related to identity as well' (p. 213). In terms of collective identity through cultural connection, Anthony D. Smith (1990) asserts that:

we can only speak of cultures, never just culture; for a collective mode of life, or a repertoire of beliefs, etc., pre-supposes different modes and repertoires in a universe of modes and repertoires. Hence, the idea of a 'global culture' is a practical impossibility, except in interplanetary terms. (p. 171)

Charles Taylor (1994) argues that the close connection between identity and recognition should be understood in terms of the fundamentally dialogical character of human life: He proposes that we become full human agents through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression learnt through exchanges with others and the genesis of the human mind is in this

sense, not monological, but dialogical. He defines our identity always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the things our significant others want to see in us. Abizadeh illustrates that Taylor's argument appeals to the fact that:

identity formation occurs through a linguistically mediated process of socialisation. For an individual, socialisation requires interaction with external others. But socialising an individual to identify with a collective identity could, rather obviously, simply occur through interaction with individuals who also identify with it. The point is not that the constituent members who engage in mutual recognition or dialogue must be paradoxically specifiable prior to the constitution of the collective identity; the point is simply that the constitution of the collective identity via recognition or dialogue is not dependent on the existence of excluded individuals (p. 48).

Maajid Nawaz (2011) proposes that we live in the age of behaviour, where identity is no longer purely linked to an ethnicity or nation state, and where ideas and subsequent calls for action move freely across borders aided by the technology of social media. Holmstrom (2016) adds to Nawaz's proposition by stating that 'personal and cultural identities are now predominantly defined by ideas and narratives, rather than nationalities or ethnicity' (pp. 123-4).

Today, individuals place their identities and sense of belonging with the 'virtual' and 'real' communities in which they feel connected. This commonly leads to identifying with and belonging to a 'digital tribe', an online community based on areas of interest rather than geographical locality or regions of governance. The connection to a particular digital tribe is reinforced by the shared values and worldviews held by those in that community.

3.2 - Echo chambers

Digital tribalism has created a phenomenon commonly referred to as 'echo chambers' or 'filter bubbles' (Pariser, 2011). Fabiana Zollo (2019) describes echo chambers as well separated and polarised groups of like-minded individuals that communicate and share the same narrative on social media. Immersed in these echo chambers, individuals continuously frame and reinforce their worldview to one another, ignoring information dissenting from their preferred narrative. In this scenario, corrections in the form of fact-checking or reasoned rebuttal, generally fail and instead reaffirm the tribe's point of difference. This section will discuss this notion and its consequences.

Due to the ethos of public sharing of information on the Internet, online social interactions result in the creation of 'communally curated narratives' (Schmid et al. 2017, p. 388). At their best, communally curated narratives are examples of 'collective intelligence', 'smart mobs' (Rheingold, 2000), 'wisdom crowds' (Surowiecki, 2004), and the power of 'organising without organisations'

(Shirky, 2008). At their worst, they are sources of disinformation, defamation and, through doxing, distribute people's private information without their consent. Henry Jenkins (2006) claims that:

storytelling has changed through the technological enhancement of human capacity, which turns media into prosthetic devices of the body, and through the way storytelling invites collective participation. Both collective intelligence, which is often discussed by transhumanists, and transmedia storytelling are participatory and collaborative as they free —individual members from the limitations of their memory and enable —the group to act upon a broader range of expertise. (p. 139)

Jodi Dean (2005) argues that the mass profusion of opinion symbolises the fantasies of abundance and participation very well, and thus devalues the content of political discourse, as well as working against unity.

The proposition that the design of social media platforms can seclude online communities which result in creating an echo chamber is contested by some (Schlegel, 2019). A recent study found that neither the recommender systems on Reddit [aggregator] nor Gab [social media platform] led users who had viewed right-wing being increasingly recommended similar material (Reed, et al. 2019). In contrast, YouTube's algorithms prioritised right-wing material and suggested this type of content more often after users initially engaged with it (O'Callaghan et al. 2015). While algorithms certainly shape the content users see, their influence on creating extremist echo chambers largely depends on the design of the individual social media platform meaning this criticism should not be generalised.

Linda Schlegel (2019) proposes that echo chambers can be understood as a cognitive property shared by members of a virtual community rather than a function of social media itself. Schlegel elaborates by proposing that 'echo chambers are related to the concept of confirmation bias, which describes the human tendency to seek out information which confirms already-held beliefs and disregards information contradicting these views to avoid cognitive dissonance' (n.p). Although individuals are more connected globally than ever before, they may still be confined to a cognitive echo chamber as they do not pay equal attention to the information, they have access to outside of their secluded online network. Schlegel states that echo chambers are entities that transcend individual cognition. She points out that while users of social media may subconsciously create their own echo chambers by selecting to follow and consume online content from sources in accordance with their worldview due to confirmation bias, they would not be able to do so without other users producing and sharing this type of content. An echo chamber may, therefore, have two levels: one describing a certain network of individuals or organisations postulating similar frames and narratives due to a similarity in worldview; and the other, a result of a customised cognitive virtual space unique to each actor and created by the users themselves.

No one echo chamber in individual cognition will be the same because even if users are connected within the same online network, they will make slightly different choices regarding whom they follow and engage with due to differences in personal preferences or habitus (Bourdieu, 1994). Schlegel proposes that the collective echo chamber may be characterised as both constructivist and interactionist. It is constructivist because multiple actors produce and share content online, whereby individual meaning assigned to the content is transformed into an overarching production of meaning existing outside and, through the storage function of the Internet, is ultimately independent of the individual actors. And it is also interactionist, because the narratives and identities derived from the collective production of meaning are then fed back into both the individual and shared community within the echo chamber, ultimately shaping and re-shaping the discourse.

Social media corporations are not purposely creating echo chambers through the platforms they create, but rather the business model of social media has resulted in the phenomenon. The purpose of the creation of social media platforms is to construct a virtual space in which users socialise and curate their self-representation. By way of customisation, social media platforms enable their users to personalise the virtual space that is their profile. Social media profiles become (virtual) places to inhabit with selected friends to socialise with and a platform to receive news and information. If a user does not engage with any media that conflicts with their social/political/religious values, then there is no potentiality for cognitive dissonance.

The customisation of social media platforms is desirable for both users and the creators. For users, customisation of their profiles produces a place that caters to their personal needs and desires in a specific way. For creators, the more customised their platforms are, the more specific data can be collected to target individual users, which means less time and money is needed to target and match specific groups with specific products. Instead, the users themselves willingly do the work of marketing products, ideas and ideologies free of charge.

Pomerantsev (2019) quotes Guillaume Chaslot, who revealed that the way the YouTube algorithm is designed uses an individual user's search history to determine that they see more of the same content, which then reinforces the original point of view. This is the consequence of customising individual experiences on social media platforms via algorithms. The algorithms block or avoid content that they calculate is not in the individual user's interest. Pomerantsev also quotes Walter Quattrociocchi, who analysed 54,000,000 million comments in various Facebook groups over four years, and found that the longer the discussion continued, the more extreme people's comments within it became. Quattrociocchi argues that cognitive patterns in echo chambers tend towards polarisation, and concludes that this evidence shows the emotional

structure of social media and that social media drives more polarised behaviour, which leads to more sensationalised content.

Social media platforms might be neutral in relation to the content they host on a user's personal profile as there is no human curation, but the platforms involve a host of design choices. Specifically, they are formulated to optimise engagement and interaction. This is done through algorithms targeting content that is specific to a user's preferences and networks. Through algorithms, artificial intelligence organises and ranks what a user sees on their profile, and when, as well as decides the basis for classification of 'trending topics' (Kak, 2018). The manipulation of preferences on social media may not interfere directly with a user's personal profile options, but, as legal philosopher Joseph Raz (1986) explains, it 'perverts the way [a user] reaches decisions, forms preferences, or adopts goals' (p. 377).

Arash Javanbakht (2020) elaborates on Raz's proposing that algorithms that track users are often triggered by negative emotions, typically impulsivity or anger. As a result, the algorithms amplify the negative and then spread it by sharing it among groups. This might play a role in the widespread anger among those engaged in politics, regardless of the nature of their conviction. Javanbakht asserts that the social media algorithms expose users to mostly, sometimes solely, engage with the ideology of one 'digital tribe'. This is the reason why digital tribes come to occupy the extremes of various social/political/cultural causes and ideologies. Individual members of a digital tribe will consume and share information that champions the tribe's ideology, whilst policing one another against opening up to alternative perspectives.

Online dynamics induce the distortion of information received through digital communication technology, which then can become a loop due to the algorithms being designed to customise each individual user's profile based on their content history. This means that if an individual consumes disinformation on a social media platform, they will be fed similar disinformation that then creates a disinformation loop. This is an example of how propaganda can be spread horizontally if a digital tribe embraces the propaganda narrative. Javanbakht's proposes that human beings are 'tribal creatures' and states that when individuals are scared, they regress further into tribalism and tend to trust information relayed to them by their tribe and not by outsiders.

Echo chambers result from digital tribes uniting around shared beliefs and ideologies, and the emotions these carry. As identity-formation involves understanding self in relation to others (Valentine & Holloway, 2002), the digital tribe a person belongs to greatly influences their identity and worldview.

3.3 - The culture wars

Angela Nagle (2018) argues that by the second decade of the twenty-first century, commitments to pluralism, diversity, and community have produced reactionary backlashes and running battles across the Internet. Arguing that Post-9/11, Liberal-Democratic societies have been struggling with right-wing challenges to multiculturalism, she points out that many media figures openly espouse controversial ideas about race, gender, identity, and culture, and that these have been amplified through the advent of social media and its usurpation of the old media's primary role in dissemination of information. This 'battle for power' is generally referred to as the 'culture wars'.

The term 'culture wars' entered US political discourse in 1991 with the publication of James Hunter's *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*. Tracing the concept to the 1960s, Hunter perceived a dramatic realignment and polarisation that had transformed American politics and cultural issues such as abortion, gun laws, immigration, separation of church and state, privacy, recreational drug use, censorship and LGBTQI+ rights. The definition of the term 'culture wars' has taken various forms since then (Hartman, 2015).

Pomerantsev claims that social media corporations sell the data they collect to political and commercial actors, who then use that information to overtly or surreptitiously campaign or advertise to users' most personal online spaces through their digital devices, which are thoroughly integrated into the texture of their daily lives. He proposes that the 'information war' being fought online is led by political groups that propagate their political/social/cultural values through 'articulating agents' (Mouffe, 2000) or thought leaders.

Another feature of digital communication that exacerbates the culture wars is the lack of physical cues provided online, such as body language and verbal tone. Albert Mehrabian (1972) suggests that people deduce 55% of communication from body language and 38% from verbal tone. The loss of these vital cues means that when online, people are mostly communicating through the remaining 7% of offline communication cues. Without physical cues, online communication can muddy the context of what is being communicated or can 'trigger' inappropriate or inappropriately intense emotions. Pushing people's emotional 'triggers' is a common tactic in influencer's online arsenal in the culture wars.

Pomerantsev (2019) quotes Camille Francois, an expert in cyber warfare, who observes that a new version of the old game of power versus dissent, freedom of speech versus censorship has turned the old rules on its head. She states that previous methods of silencing people have become untenable. Today, due to the Internet, few regimes can prevent people from receiving or propagating information. So, due to the inability to control information, battles within the culture

wars is won by one side having a wider social media reach, thereby enabling them to control the narrative.

The main weapon in today's culture wars is information. Where once opposing forces fought to control territory, now they fight to control the flow of information, and thereby to influence the largest number of people. Through echo chambers, articulating agents can reduce the vast spectrum of opinions on social, cultural and political issues and re-articulate them into a binary choice: to affiliate oneself with 'us' or with 'them'. In order to influence others, an articulating agent will present a social issue, value, belief, or practice into a 'for' or 'against' position to create an 'other'. If an articulating agent is able to persuade individuals that they have an enemy to fight, then they can then seduce them to join a community of 'like-minded individuals', commonly referred to as a digital tribe, to conquer the perceived 'evil' that is threatening their values, beliefs and practices. This is how influence and control of individuals, and the digital tribes they identify with, is practiced.

'Cancel culture' is a term that describes a virtual form of protest or active expression of power that is used by digital tribes, or a collection of individuals that are united around a particular social, political and cultural issue and set of values or goals. The strategy of the act of 'cancelling' is to use social media to show collective support for a social, political and cultural issue and set of values or goal to influence an individual or group that holds power. This form of collective power has gained influence and results due to the capacity of social media to communicate and organise through a global network of social connectivity. This phenomenon has shown that collective action can affect real change in the offline world. It also highlights the power an individual or group can have if they hold influence over a digital tribe/s. In an interview with Pomerantsev, an anonymous political 'spin doctor' from Mexico asserts that 'populism is not an ideology, it's a strategy' (p. 209).

As social media plays a more dominant role in people's social lives, virtuality provides political actors direct access to people's profiles, arming them with the heightened ability to reshape the worldviews of users. Due to the phenomenon of digital tribalism, charismatic articulating agents now have the ability to use social media to bring together individuals who may have very different causes and grievances and bind them together into one political digital tribe by defining a common enemy. This has further fractured the ability to create political or even epistemological consensus. Pomerantsev states that 'since the financial crash of 2008, politics has become a 'space where words, desires, meanings and behaviours are put together and dissolved into the most important battle for power played out' (p. 216). Michael McGowan (2021) quotes Joshua Roose, who

believes that today, the current cultural and ideological polarisation that fuels the culture wars in Western societies is due to an extreme lack of trust in politicians and the political establishment.

Pomerantsev proposes that social life exists within a 'liquid society' (Bauman, 2013), as virtual communication allows 'information to move so easily it fractures old notions of belonging and a sense of uncertainty pervades everything' (p. 208). He claims that this uncertainty has undermined old notions of class and ideology (Pomerantsev 2019, pp. 208-9) and has exacerbated the culture wars both online and offline. Previously, the opposing ideologies of the Left and Right-wing factions were defined by class politics. Today, these opposing factions still exist, but they are being redefined by identity politics, meaning people align with a political position based on the social and cultural values the Left or Right-wing factions espouse.

The structures of social media define a user's identity through their profile. As social media profiles further become platforms to understand oneself and locate oneself in the world, identity politics in recent years has come to the forefront of mainstream politics. Majid Yar (2014) claims that since the introduction of social media the 'cultural imaginary' of the Internet has been radically transformed, so that all politics has been reduced to the creating of identity. Supporting Yar's (2014) claim, Mouffe (2018) argues that identities are the result of political construction.

3.4 - Information is power

Concerned with the climate crisis, economic instability and increasing inequality, and, more recently, the threat of a global pandemic, many people around the world are keen to embrace a more optimistic future than the one they fear awaits them. To be part of a digital tribe, enables an individual to belong to a community and to thereby not feel so isolated, powerless and alone. What follows, examines how in today's 'information society', power is welded through narratives, which can inform identity, belonging and in some cases, people's perception of reality through the embrace of grand unified conspiracy theories.

Guardian journalist, Olivia Solon (2016), writes that the post-2016 media environment is a networked society in which people can no longer determine the veracity of the information they consume, much of which constitutes mis- or disinformation. The spread of mis- or disinformation is most successful when a large percentage of the narrative is anchored to verifiable truth. This is a strategy known in the intelligence world as a 'limited hangout' (Kaminska, 2020). When a conspiratorial narrative makes connections to facts, it confirms its legitimacy in the minds of 'ordinary people', especially those who are genuinely concerned about political corruption, abuse of power, or violent or sexual abuse against children, a crime that cuts across the political and

cultural divide in the culture wars. Recent research has found that ontological insecurity and anomie, or distrust of state and government institutions (Durkheim, 1893), are related to the scepticism of scientific methods and institutions, as well as of mainstream narratives of events. This, in turn, lends legitimacy and endorses alternative versions of events, namely conspiracy theories (Achterberg et al. 2017).

Mathew Hannah (2021) argues that as the Internet has evolved, so too has our access to information. Ironically, though, he points out that our unprecedented access to information has not ushered in a new enlightenment, because, accompanying the ceaseless flow of information is an equally unending torrent of mis- disinformation, resulting in what he refers to as the 'information dark age' (n.p). Hannah describes this term as 'the viral spread of unsubstantiated, unverified information (which seems plausible enough on the surface) through [unauthorised] channels combined with a general reaction against corporate media and academic expertise' (n.p). The combination of open access to information and dis-misinformation, and networked anonymised mass communication platforms, has resulted in 'the rise of opinion sites masquerading as news, social media platforms as primary mechanism for information retrieval, viral memes and meme warfare, propaganda, and "fake news"' (Farkas & Schou, 2020).

Hannah proposes that the twenty-first century has witnessed a paradoxical technological expansion of communications technologies and, at the same, the growth and spread of bizarre, vast and complex conspiracies. While Case Sunstein and Adrian Vermeule (2009) argue that belief in conspiracies is the mark of a 'crippled epistemology', Hannah proposes that today's fusion of information access and ignorance is emblematic of individual content creation within a mass medium.

Stef Aupers (2012) states that conspiracism is a natural by-product of modernity and its concomitant ontological insecurity as well as a reaction to the public debates among scientists regarding their fields of study. Hannah makes a similar point when he contends that 'the information dark age has thus produced an online environment where many anonymous individuals post and share information as part of a nebulous whole' (n.p.). Hannah points out that unlike conspiracies in the pre-Internet age, which relied on word of mouth and risk of personal judgement, today's conspiracies spread rapidly because the very technologies that enable instantaneous global communication also fuel conspiratorial co-ordination.

This exegesis affirms Viren Swami et al.'s (2016) definition of conspiracy theories as 'narratives in which multiple agents are believed to be working together toward malevolent ends' (2016, p. 86). Roland Imhoff and Pia Lamberty (2018) claim that the distinction between conspiracy and paranoia is primarily located in the difference between distrust of groups and distrust of everyone.

Because of the closed, self-referential thought processes conspiracists employ, individuals who believe in one conspiracy theory are more likely to believe in others (Goertzel, 1994). Gregory Rousis (2018) argues that individuals who believe in conspiratorial narratives often endorse multiple conflicting narratives, with seemingly little recognition of the dissonance between them. In the endorsement of conflicting conspiracy theories, individuals can hold contradictory narratives at the same time by supporting an overarching belief in governmental malfeasance rather than an explicit endorsement of the individual narratives. The local narratives are not what individuals focus on, but rather the message behind the narratives, and how these assimilate with their particular worldview (Wood et al., 2012).

Conspiratorial narratives that previously existed on the fringes of society have recently received public credence through the rise of social media news outlets such as Breitbart and prominent public support from leaders such as former USA President Donald Trump, whose repeated references to a 'deep state' exemplify and affirm conspiratorial thinking. Both plausible and paranoid, the notion of the 'deep state' leaves enough to the imagination for Internet conspiracies to fill the void between fact and fiction. Kiera Butler (2021) quotes Seema Yasmin, a Stanford physician and expert on health misinformation, who points out that conspiracies thrive in the absence of clear and consistent guidance from leaders. When leaders of mainstream institutions give legitimacy to conspiratorial narratives, those narratives move from the fringe into the mainstream.

Roose claims the widespread acceptance of particular conspiratorial narratives has happened in the decade after the global financial crisis. He points out that five or six years after the GFC, globally, the rise of far-right populist movements are not just forming in the US with Donald Trump but also in the UK, Australia, Poland, Hungary, Italy, India, the Philippines and Brazil. He states that 'these issues are not going to go away. They're only going to get bigger'.

Daniel Loxton (2020) states that conspiratorial narratives 'thrive most dangerously during times of uncertainty and societal stress - such as during a pandemic' (p. 40). Roose makes a similar point by suggesting that Western societies are at a really critical juncture for democracy, and if governments fail reach out and engage their citizens and put more effort into social cohesion, polarisation will only intensify. He further points out that the creep of conspiratorial thinking during the COVID-19 pandemic has not apparently been restricted to the political right. Individuals and their digital tribes at both ends of the political spectrum share a distrust in 'the system' and a desire to replace the current system with an alternative that reflects their values.

With the rise of inequality, the climate crisis, corruption of power, and the loss of faith in a unifying mainstream media, the credibility and legitimacy of democratic and scientific institutions

is in rapid decline. This exegesis proposes that people are looking for alternative institutions to build different societies. The recent QAnon 'movement' is an example of how a grand unified conspiracy theory gave its followers hope that the institutions that they believe are corrupt might be overthrown and replaced. The QAnon conspiratorial narrative legitimises its truth through the consensus of the community and is quasi-automatically regulated by the echo chamber of its followers. This is how on social media dis-misinformation can influence a mass of people and thereby manifest as power.

As increasing numbers of people lose faith in societal institutions, articulating agents are promulgating grandiose claims to digital tribes formed on social media. Individuals seeking alternatives to the status quo, are drawn to these unifying narratives and develop a sense of belonging within their tribe. This may become a future blueprint for articulating agents to persuade masses of people globally to vote and unconditionally support a political party's agenda or, in Donald Trump's case, to attempt to overturn the election results that lost him the presidency. In the rest of the twenty-first century, political campaigns might not merely propagate narratives to influence people's opinions, values and ideologies, but also disseminate conspiratorial narratives that alter their sense of reality in order to secure their vote.

The following chapter will demonstrate how the creative component of this thesis, the novel *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* draws on, and gives fictional expression to, the concepts and theories discussed in the previous three chapters of this exegesis. The novel fits into the genre of Internet Literature, which will be analysed in relation to notable novels of that type. The next chapter articulates how *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* incorporates the use of language and narrative structures of social media to reflect the Internet age through a fictional narrative.

Chapter Four: *Internet novels*

In this last chapter, the two novels which fall into the category of 'Internet literature' (Scanlon, 2021), *No One Is Talking About This* (2021) by Patricia Lockwood, and Lauren Oyler's *Fake Accounts* (2021) are discussed in order to provide context for the creative component of this thesis, entitled *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* for an explanation of how the novel should be read as a literary response to the challenge of representing the inter-penetration of virtuality and reality in contemporary life, *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will*. then identifies how Mikhail Bakhtin's literary concepts of 'polyphony', (1965/1984) 'heteroglossia', 'carnival' and 'grotesque realism' (1968) inform the novel's literary structure, tone and themes, as well as how many of the notions and theories examined in chapters one through three of this exegesis have been interwoven into the architecture of the novel.

4.1 - Novels that engage with virtual-reality

Recently, the novels that engage the age of the Internet which have gained the most widespread attention and accolades have generally fitted into the literary genre of autofiction - a form of fictionalised autobiography. As social media encourages a form of life writing, or autobiographical spectacle, it makes sense that many contemporary novelists would use the genre of autofiction that tends to replicate the 'shagginess and shapelessness' (Emre, 2021) of the autobiographical elements of social media.

Philippe Vilain and Jeanine Herman (2011) distinguish autofiction from autobiographical novels in that autofiction requires a first-person narrative by a protagonist who has the same name as the author. Christian Lorentzen (2018) muses that 'the way the term is used tends to be unstable, which makes sense for a genre that blends fiction and what may appear to be fact into an unstable compound' (n.p.). In his own use of the term, Lorentzen makes the distinction between the similar sub-genre of autobiographical fiction/metafiction and autofiction by arguing that autofiction tends to emphasise the authorial alter ego's status as a writer or artist and that the book's creation is inscribed in the book itself.

While there is a vast number of critically acclaim autofictional novels that explore living in the age of the Internet, this section limits its analysis to two recently published and highly acclaimed texts, Patricia Lockwood's *No One Is Talking About This* (2021) and Lauren Oyler's *Fake Accounts* (2021). Both books have been praised for their ambition to repurpose the conventions of the literary novel in ways that engage with the Internet.

In Patricia Lockwood's debut novel *No One Is Talking About This*, the main protagonist is a young white millennial woman who travels the world giving lectures after having found fame from a single post on a social media platform: Can a dog be twins? The protagonist is clearly a fictional avatar of Lockwood herself, who is a respected authority on the Internet, writing and giving public lectures about the subject. *No One Is Talking About This* falls into the category of autofiction as its main protagonist is clearly directly informed of its author and the novel incorporates aspects of her real life.

Lockwood's novel is structured in two parts. The first, explores the protagonist's relationship with the Internet, which is referred to as 'the portal' (p. 10). This section follows the narrator as she travels the world giving lectures regarding 'the portal', and references various online content - her own and those that participate in the online collective. The second part concerns itself with the offline demands of a family tragedy that pulls the narrator outside of 'the portal'. This part of the novel reflects a real-life tragedy that occurred in Lockwood's family, wherein Lockwood's older sister had a baby with a rare genetic disorder from which it died a few months after his birth. A year later, another of her sisters became pregnant with a baby that had a different life-threatening genetic disorder. That baby also died (McNeil, 2021).

Alexandra Schwartz (2021) describes the literary structure of *No One Is Talking About This* (2021) as a kind of riff on the tweet scroll, with discrete paragraphs (many two hundred and eighty characters or less in length) arranged one after another on a fixed page to simulate the rhythm of a digital feed. Kyle Chayka (2021) proposes that Lockwood's novel is a fictional narrative composed of 'brief fragments', which gives the impression that she is 'texting you her thoughts in so many pixelated blue bubbles' (n.p.). Merve Emre (2021) writes that the chief virtue of Lockwood's novel is how it:

transforms all that is ugly and cheap about online culture — the obsession with junk media; the fragmentary and jerked presentation of content; the mockery, the snark; the postures, the polemics — into an experience of sublimity'. Lockwood grasps one of the most extraordinary tricks of the internet, which is its capacity to metamorphose billions of short, often brutish and haphazard utterances into something that feels immensely and solidly real. (n.p.)

Chayka (2021) argues that of the relative few novelists attempting to represent life on the Internet, Lockwood is the rare voice who admits to actually enjoying life online. He proposes that Lockwood 'finds pleasure in the web's absurdity and uses its native language joyfully to heighten her own' (n.p.). He believes Lockwood's wholehearted, perhaps unavoidable, embrace of the online vocabulary is more total than other novelists who include brief interpolations of chats, direct messages, or emails in otherwise smooth prose.

This thesis proposes that the multi-semiotic forms that constitute language on the Internet shares the same function of language offline, namely, that it is not simply a means of communication, but also informs and shapes how people think and are in the world. The language that constitutes the Internet is not limited to the communication of experience by its users but a lens or filter for the internet as a place. Chayka points out that it's easy enough to hate the Internet, but that it's more important to contend with it as our era's dominant mode of expression.

In Lockwood's novel, 'Internet humour' is utilised to capture the experience of what it feels like to be on the Internet, typically fragmentary, these humorous snippets generally take the form of seemingly random memes, such as: 'It me' (p. 29), 'Did you even read the piece?' (p. 58), 'Europe.is.A.Fag.' (p. 103), 'binch' (p. 20), 'SHOOT IT IN MY VEINS' (p. 65). Chayka suggests that these ephemeral references, almost verbal tics, capture the distorting effect that Twitter has on everyone on the platform. On Twitter, he states, all writers are stand-up comics riffing in front of a live audience, trying to get laughs, cheers, or boos. Typing into the box feels like a form of unmitigated self-expression, but Lockwood reflects how we're really working to retrofit our words, and thus thoughts, to the machine that distributes them. Schwartz writes that if everything is treated as a joke, reality quickly warps, and so does judgment.

In much digital communication, Ana Deumert (2014) believes that 'obscurity and ambiguity are licensed, relevance [is] a matter of choice, and truthfulness [is] at times unnecessary' (p. 27). As an environment, the Internet is a place that encourages the notion of 'ludic self-construction' (De Mul, 2005), a space in which individuals relate to one another in a playful manner. Jos de Mul (2005) has drawn on Paul Ricoeur's (1992) theory of narrative self-construction to develop his idea of ludic self-construction in new media contexts. Deumert proposes that Ricoeur's work is based on:

the fundamental insight that we don't have access to our 'selves' through mere introspection, rather we come to know about us through mediation: we construct an image of who we are – for others and for ourselves – through the way we act, move and dress, the music we enjoy, the food we eat, the beliefs we hold, and the stories we tell. (p. 24)

In an interview with Lockwood, Mattie Wyndham (2021) believes that humour provides a key plot point in her novel and asks the author, what is the appeal of internet jokes? Lockwood responded that

if you're going to construct a fake internet, you have to make it as funny as the internet itself. And that's going to be really difficult because the internet is written communally. That problem really attracted me. The way I look at humour in the second half of the novel is different. This thing that we thought was a defence against the world, this kind of joke that we evolved to fight against the forces that seemed absolutely unfightable—you have to look at it and think, what were we doing? (n.p.)

Chayka writes that Lockwood's wholehearted embrace of the online vocabulary is more total than other novelists who include brief interpolations of chats, direct messages, or emails in otherwise smooth prose. He proposes these forms are not just how people communicate; they are now how many people think and how they exist in the world. This vocabulary is not a limit to experience but rather a lens through which to focus our view of it. Lockwood's editor, Paul Slovak, describes her work as 'extremely profane and funny and yet [offers] these devastating and profoundly sad meditations on human experience' (McNeil, 2021). Chakya claims that the impulse behind Lockwood's novel 'is to try to capture and memorialise this volatile and evanescent mode of expression, with its references both obscure and shared by millions' (n.p.). Lockwood's protagonist reflects on a notion about the 'stream-of-consciousness that is not entirely your own. One that you participate in, but that also acts upon you.' (p. 42). Her novel gives expression to this collective consciousness, also referred to as the collective hive mind, that is a result of the social paradigm shift that has occurred due to the social media revolution.

Lauren Oyler's (2021) debut novel *Fake Accounts* follows an unnamed narrator who, in the days leading up to Donald Trump's inauguration, discovers her boyfriend Felix has a secret Instagram account in which he posts alt-Right conspiracy theories. Before she has time to dump him, she is informed that he has died in a road accident. Deciding to go to Berlin, the place where she and her now dead boyfriend first met, she begins her own deceptions by embarking on a series of dates, each in the guise of a different fake persona. She also, like the author, begins writing a novel. Like Lockwood's novel, Oyler's *Fake Accounts* falls into the category of autofiction, as the protagonist also closely resembles the author herself. Jared Marcel Pollen (2021) believes Oyler's novel is meant to resemble a piece of gossip exchanged between the narrator and the reader. Scott W. Stern (2021) describes *Fake Accounts* as a traditional novel about an untraditional subject: a bildungsroman with no growth, a hero's journey with no hero and not much of a journey; and a comedy of manners in a world in which the powerful are so spectacularly stupid that they're essentially immune from satire. Oyler explores the emotional dissonance of online life and 'reflects the author's fixation on social media and the role it plays in society' (Stern 2021, n.p).

Central to Oyler's novel is the notion of authenticity. Stern writes that *Fake Accounts* is a story about catfishing and shit-posting—a story, in other words, about lying. Oyler observes that her generation values authenticity because they have been bombarded since their impressionable pre-teen years with fakery, but acknowledges that she and her contemporaries casually commit fakery themselves (Thomas-Corr, 2021). Rhiannon Lucy Cosslet (2021), a journalist of the same generation as Oyler, points out that:

it is true, we do value authenticity; of a sort, anyway. It is an authenticity that at times feels as deliberately curated as everything else online: an emotional amplification that is calculated to resonate, a widowed penguin with its arm around another penguin. We know what we are supposed to feel, but what value is this “authenticity” in the middle of a global crisis? Suddenly the layers and layers of irony that we’ve built up, the specific, communal language that we’ve evolved, seem insufficient, especially in a maelstrom of 'context collapse' – the flattening of multiple audiences into a single context (n.p.).

Cosslet adds that she once read that the greatest crime a member of her generation could commit in the eyes of their peers is hypocrisy. She, though, has always privately believed it to be earnestness.

Lorentzen (2021) has similar concerns about the state of contemporary fiction and claims that difficult writing is now scarce. He argues that our most laureled writers are easy to read, are mostly unironic, and rarely engage in ambiguity. Reflecting on the state of contemporary fiction, he asks:

how many [authors] stray from the left-liberalism of our op-ed pages? Moral didacticism, formal conventionality, political consensus—within these broad parameters there is room for a robust literature. This literature doesn't at the moment seem revolutionary, but that may be a consequence of its absorption of the past century's revolutions: modernism, postmodernism, magic realism, science fiction. (n.p.)

Fake Accounts is a novel that is pessimistic about social media and the nature of authenticity in the Internet age. Online, as well as offline, the narrator's boyfriend Felix is a liar. The narrator herself is a liar. Social media, Oyler seems to suggest, makes liars of us all (Stern, 2021). The structures of social media:

demands careful curation and constant creation. Social media makes it almost impossible to avoid turning the self into a brand, even as it also becomes almost impossible to log out, to turn off, to avoid the likes and hearts and news alerts and effectively infinite scroll of smart and stupid and pretty and ugly content. We may not all run alt-right alt-Instagram accounts, and we may not all falsify backgrounds on OkCupid all day, but all of us perform online, for one reason or another. And if online is indeed real life, then these performances have seeped into our every interaction. (Stern 2021, n.p.)

Oyler has stated that she wanted to write a novel where 'the internet and social media were portrayed very realistically, from an insider's point of view, without having the novel reproduce the feeling of being online – which she believes is 'terrible' (Thomas-Corr, 2021).

While Lockwood and Oyler's protagonists both grapple with grief, the narrative structures and thematic concerns of their novels differ. Lockwood, through her prose style and the novel's narrative structure, explores how the Internet influences the way we connect to each other, and how Internet humour through the constant torrent of memes and stream of commentary obscure the reality of the family tragedy that the protagonist is experiencing. Oyler's novel makes a similar

critique of contemporary culture through fiction, one that questions the notion and nature of authenticity into the context of the virtual/real binary that our lives now inhabit.

4.2 - *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will.*

It's Going To Be Okay. It Will introduces the characters of Rose, Luca and Mark, all of whom, in their own ways, contend with the challenges of trying to form meaningful bonds with others, and to create and/or locate themselves in today's digitally connected globalised world. The setting of *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* is a fictional world that closely resembles that of the readers, and much like the autofictional novels discussed above, *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* also blurs the line between the fictional world of the novel and the world that the reader inhabits. The narrative arc of all three protagonists resists a neat beginning, middle, and end, instead following each character at a particular period of time within their lives.

While autofiction is the dominant literary genre employed by authors to examine the Internet age, *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* avoids an autobiographical singular narrative perspective in favour of multiple narrative perspectives through the main three protagonists of Rose, Luca and Mark, as well as the 'small stories' in the form of online comments, tweets, and posts, that were written by various authors from the Internet. Rose, Luca and Mark's stories are all individually well defined, at the same time, each character has a critical influence on one another to enable the reader to understand their stories with more context and depth. The readers understanding of Rose and Luca is further explored through the multiple voices that they engage with online. Through the multiple points of view of Rose, Luca and Mark, along with the various online authors of the 'online artefacts', the novel is an example of what 'heteroglossia' (Bakhtin, 1935/1981).

In the essay, *Discourse in the Novel*, Bakhtin (1935/1981) articulates the notion of heteroglossia as qualities of a language that are extralinguistic, but common to all languages. These include qualities such as perspective, evaluation, and ideological positioning. In this way most languages are incapable of neutrality, for every word is inextricably bound to the context in which it exists. *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* embrace the multi-semiotic forms that constitute language on the Internet and implements Bakhtin's notion of 'heteroglossia', therefore, the novel's narrative structure. *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* could be regarded as a 'social novel' (Schwartz 2021, n.p.).

The ambition of *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will.* is to go beyond representing what it is like to be online, but rather, use the language and textual structures of the Internet in order to conceptually represent virtuality itself, which this exegesis proposes is not a simulated digital visual representation of our physical world that one might experience wearing VR headsets (virtual-reality googles), but is the accumulation of multi-semiotic linguistic/textual, visual, and/or auditory forms that people engage with to communicate on the Internet in daily life. The creative choices that informed the architecture of the novel were inspired from the structures, voice, and tone of narratives created on the Internet by anonymous users that were reappropriated. How digital natives narrate stories, express themselves online and make connections with others within online spaces was mimicked throughout the text in order to reflect virtuality. Chapters one through to three of the exegesis discuss theories that propose that a new social order has occurred due to the introduction of digital technology. This proposition establishes the setting of the novel, and informs the thematic premise of how one understands and locates self in today's Internet Age.

As a literary critic, Oyler (2020a) has expressed a consistent consternation with the 'moral obviousness of most contemporary fiction' (n.p.), arguing that anxieties about 'being a good person pervade contemporary novels and criticism' (Oyler 2020b, n.p.). She believes that much contemporary fiction is informed by societal reckonings surrounding race and sex and power, as well as the rise of 'popular, social-media-inflected criticism' (ibid). She argues that 'if the author was once God, creating worlds over which he had total control, the reader has usurped this position' as they 'examine works for their political content and assessing the moral goodness of the author in the process' (ibid). According to Oyler, the consequence of this literary cultural earnestness is that many novels now 'feature writers who are wildly self-conscious about both the thing they spend all their time doing and what that says about the essence of their souls' (n.p.).

It's Going To Be Okay. It Will is purposefully morally ambiguous to push back on Oyler's concerns about contemporary literature. Rose, Luca and Mark all have traumatic histories yet also harm others, consciously or unconsciously. All three characters are therefore victims and perpetrators of some sort. Larissa Pham (2020) writes that 'the lesson we have begun to learn amid this ongoing dialogue about power and privilege is that we are all, at some point, both being exploited and exploiting others' (n.p.).

The theoretical framework for *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* use Bakhtin's (1964/1985) notions of 'carnival' and 'grotesque realism', the latter term being the literary mode of the former, as an analytical category in the study of online popular culture. Bakhtin proposes that:

Carnival is life itself, but shaped according to a pattern of play... Carnival is not a spectacle seen by people; they live in it, and everyone participates because the very idea embraces

all people... During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom... carnival is the people's second life, organized on the basis of laughter, the entire world is seen in its droll aspect. (pp. 7-11)

Lachmann, Eshelman & Davis (1988), believe that 'carnival' is more than a safety-valve where the tensions and frustrations of everyday life are temporarily suspended, as it reflects a deep quest for freedom from constraints, dogma and authority. They believe that liberation is achieved through play and the transgression of the 'proper' order and values and propose that carnival is 'free-time' and 'free-space'. Bakhtin contends that 'grotesque realism' is the 'language of the marketplace', which includes 'profanities, abuse and indecent expressions' (Allan & Burridge 2006, pp. 145ff). This form of language overtly challenges the prevailing norms of society where such topics tend to be taboo and improper. The social expectation for polite euphemisms is thus replaced by one for crude dysphemisms, that is, words, phrases or images which are intended to be offensive (Allan & Burridge 2006, pp. 31ff.).

In these two concepts there are carnivalistic *mésalliances* between 'the sacred and profane, the lofty with the low, the great with the insignificant, the wise with the stupid' (Bakhtin 1964/1985, p.123). Deumert claims that the hacker subculture, with its important overlaps with the gaming community, has played a central role in establishing a general ludic mood in the digital world from its inception. This has resulted in the Internet becoming a space that has embraced Bakhtin's concepts of 'carnival' and 'grotesque realism', and this is reflected in the novel.

Drawing on both modernist and postmodernist literary conventions, *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* incorporates first-person narration and textual digital communication, which is comprised of 'small stories' in the form of digital narratives, which consist of 'episodic narratives' (Page, 2010) or micro-narratives, yet also collectively build a larger narrative that is the novel itself. The 'small stories' in the novel are both fictional textual digital communication and what this exegesis terms 'online artefacts', which is textual digital communication from real people that has been posted onto the Internet and then re-appropriated for the purposes of the novel.

As Internet users invest more of their lives online, virtuality and reality are becoming seamlessly inter-penetrated. The use of both first-person narration and textual digital communication in *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* is a literary exploration of what sociologist Nathan Jurgenson (2012) terms 'digital dualism' (p. 84), which critiques the fallacy that what happens within virtuality is less 'real' than reality. The use of 'small stories' in the form of online content in *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* are all set apart from the first-person narratives on their own pages, encouraging them to be read both as individual micro-narratives, as well as elements within the narrative as a whole. This conceptually puts the Rose and Luca's 'virtual' lives on an equal footing with their 'real' lives.

The choice of narrative structure is informed by the fragmented yet fluid nature of social media itself. The collection of 'small stories' within *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* engage with Virno's (2004) notion of virtuosic performance, as Rose and Luca's online creation and consumption express their personal lives as an ongoing narrative. They also fit into Linde's (1993) notion of a personal 'chronicle', as the reported events are not necessarily organised around a unifying theme or single evaluative focus, but are unified by their concentrated focus on Rose and Luca's life experiences. The novel's narrative structure does not give more importance to either Rose and Luca's first-person perspective or the online content they produce and consume.

While superficially appearing random, the online artefacts have been chosen and curated, and are carefully woven into the fabric of the narrative. The use of online artefacts that have been re-appropriated from social media user's online posts form a collaboration with the online collective – the 'hive mind' (Schwartz 2021, n.p). The literary structure of *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* on the surface appears experimental by conventional literary standards, but is in fact conventional for users of social media.

The notion of 'online artefacts' draws inspiration from Marcel Duchamp's concept of 'readymades' (Tate Gallery, 2021), which refers to re-contextualising/re-appropriating everyday objects into an artistic context, thereby making them artistic creations. The theory behind the readymade was explained in an anonymous editorial published in the May 1917 issue of avant-garde magazine *The Blind Man* produced by Duchamp and two friends (ibid). It claims that:

whether Mr Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, and placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view – created a new thought for that object. (Tate Gallery 2021, n.p)

The Tate Gallery (2021) further elaborates on the concept of readymades, by stating that firstly, the choice of object is itself a creative act. Secondly, that by cancelling the 'useful' function of an object it becomes art. And thirdly, that the presentation and addition of a title to the object give it 'a new thought', a new meaning. The assertion of the creation of readymades is that art is defined by the artist. The Tate proposes that:

this move from artist-as-maker to artist-as-chooser is often seen as the beginning of the movement to conceptual art, as the status of the artist and the object are called into question. At the time, the readymade was seen as an assault on the conventional understanding not only of the status of art but its very nature. (Tate Gallery 2021, n.p.)

The use of online artefacts as a literary device within *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* explores the concept of writer-as-maker and writer-as-chooser. This literary concept has also been explored by other writers, such as Jarret Kobek who re-appropriated direct quotes from celebrities in his experimental novella *If You Won't Read, Then Why Should I Write?* (2012), as

well as Darcie Wilder, who re-appropriated her own tweets into her novella *literally show me a healthy person* [sic] (2017). In an interview, Wilder states that:

the way the book functions is like a piece of art, [where as] Twitter is in spurts. Everyone's 140-character lines are mixed in with everyone else's stuff. I think a book is a work of art that communicates something intentional, and the experience of reading it is so different from scrolling on the computer. It's repurposed with different intention. (Tiffany 2017, n.p.)

Wilder also re-appropriated text in an earlier novella, *Flagged and Removed* (2014), in which she compiled a collection of both fictional and real Craigslist posts from residents of New York and Los Angeles to create an abstracted narrative.

The use of 'online artefacts' in the creation of the novel relinquishes monologic control over the narrative as autonomous authors online narratives are reappropriated into the narrative. This creates a '*plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices*' (Bakhtin 1984, p. 6 - 7). This situates *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* as a polyphonic novel. In the polyphonic novel,

the voices are unmerged: they cannot be contained within a single consciousness, as in monologism. Rather, their separateness is essential to the dialogue: even when they agree, they do so from different perspectives and different senses of the world. (Morson & Emerson 1990, p. 237)

Bakhtin (1964/1985) outlined the polyphonic concept of truth by proposing that truth needs a multitude of carrying voices. It cannot be held within a single mind. It also cannot be expressed by a single mouth.

The online artefacts in *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* affirm Scanlon's definition of Internet Literature as text that contains internal references that exist beyond the text. *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* reference existing Internet content from Youtube, Twitter, Facebook as well as anonymous 'green text' (anecdotes written in short, concise sentences that are often shared on the image board 4chan). The use of online artefacts functions in a number of ways. One, it connects the fictional world of the novel to the real world inhabited by the reader. Two, it reflects the notion of 'media convergence' (Georgakopoulou, 2016b) or/and 'transmedia storytelling' (Gürel & Tıgılı, 2014) within narrative consumption as a result of the new social order. Three, read in combination with the first-person perspectives, the online artefacts become another narrative in which to understand the characters. Four, the online artefacts are an example of the notion of 'platform vernaculars' (Gibbs et al, 2015) that is, social media platforms '[come] to have [their] own unique combination of styles, grammars and logics'(p. 260). Martin Gibbs et al. argue that

platform vernaculars are shared (but not static) conventions and grammars of communication, which emerge from the ongoing interactions between platforms and users'... However, 'every platform has a vernacular specific to it that has developed over

time, through design, appropriation and use'. (ibid)

Platform vernacular draws attention to how 'particulars genres and stylistic conventions emerge within social networks and how – through the context and process of reading – registers of meaning and affect are produced' (Gibbs et al. 2015, p. 262). Lastly, the choice to examine a virtual-real existence creatively through the form of a traditional novel as opposed through a digital communication platform was done in order to examine virtual narration outside of it's virtual environment which enables the reader to experience it in a different form.

While the online artefacts function as text that exist beyond the text, the online artefacts also function as abstracted narratives as the novel does not directly contextualise their references, so the reader will either 'get it' or read it as an abstracted/absurdist narrative. This narrative device reflects the notion of 'context collapse', wherein online narratives morph and mutate into other forms and incarnations. The context of the online artefacts is also informed by the tone of each character's narrative. For example, in Luca's section, the context is seen through his cynical and nihilistic lens. A worldview that is emotional immature, misogynistic and prone to misanthropic rage. In contrast, in Rose's section, the online artefacts relate to her expression of humour via Twitter, as well as her political views and personal musings on celebrity and culture.

Both Rose and Luca use the Internet as a place for storytelling and 'embodied performances' (Lund, Cohen & Scarles 2018, p. 11). According to Page (2014) 'computer-mediated contexts bring to the fore the centrality of language in performing identity, where the typed words on a screen (sometimes in conjunction with other modes such as image and sound) become primary resources for identity work' (p. 46-7). In *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will*, both Rose and Luca are performing and constructing their identities through the online platforms they use to communicate with others. Mark on the other hand does this through his stand-up comedy routine, in which he also narrates his story in the form of a public performance.

The use of online artefacts in *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* is also informed by Mikhail Geffer's notion of a 'flat world'. Geffer claims that 'history has exhausted itself' (Pomerantsev 2020, n.p) and that humanity is 'running out of unifying, universal visions of historical development' (Pomerantsev, 2019, p. 225). He calls this end point in history a 'flat world', in which everything is contemporaneous, but with no model of common communication (ibid). *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* mixes together content without distinguishing the importance between the death of Grumpy Cat – a cat that become a viral sensation – and police killings in America, or Kim Kardashian and Kanye West's baby announcement with gun violence at BLM protests. Everything is accorded the same cultural and historical weight, each 'small story' 'jostling against each other with no way of saying which represents the past and which the future' (Pomerantsev, 2020). The narratives of

Rose and Luca embrace the often whimsical nature of online content creation, placing them side by side with posts and links about police shootings. This is purposeful in relation to how online culture blurs the line between high and low art and public and private.

Reinforcing this sense of discontinuity and flattened out fragmentation, narrative time is itself fragmented and disjointed within the structure of *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will*. Narrated in six parts, the novel is non-linear, as the timeframes between the story of Rose, Luca and Mark are not aligned. Rose's narrative begins with her father's death. Her father, Mark's narrative begins on the night of his death. And the beginning of Rose's narrative is briefly acknowledged near the end of Luca's story, which encompasses a year. Either virtually or physically, the three main protagonists' narratives are loosely entwined, in order to mirror the ways people are interconnected within today's 'networked society' (Castells, 1996/2010). Particularly in the case of Rose and Luca, the connection between them is purposefully distant to illustrate the fluid and fleeting nature of people's online connections.

The curated online artefacts are themselves also deliberately non-linear, as the time and dates shown are sometimes up to the minute, also termed "breaking news", while others were posted years earlier. This structural choice creatively explores the fragmentary experience of being in time and space within the Internet age. Denise Rose Hansen (2017) claims that we now see media as a way of logging memories to fixed locations. She proposes that receiving social media posts that record the time and date of posting 'is a mediation of human memories, a spatial logging of memories to mutually spatial/temporal points' (n.p). This enables users to relive a 'phenomenological experience of being in a certain place at a certain time' (ibid). Sybille Krämer (2016) proposes that:

the most elementary experience in human existence is the irreversibility of the flow of time. Technology provides a means for channelling this irreversibility. Media are practices that use strategies of spatialisation to enable one to manipulate the order of things that progress in time by transforming singular events in[to] reproducible data. (Abstract)

Judy Wajcman (2014) proposes that understanding how digital media affect our experience of time then calls for an investigation of the reciprocal relationship that is continuously reshaped between technology and people, claiming that the novel form is ideally suited to being an "en garde" respondent in this ongoing conversation.

Luca, who lives with his grandmother, has a very highly dysfunctional relationship with his parents and is enraged with society as a whole. He is a nihilist, has very little physical social interactions with others, and his inability to find a sexual partner defines his identity and the community he feels a sense of belonging with. Luca's identity is embedded within a digital tribe that refer to themselves as darkcel, a subset of the larger Incel (involuntary celibate) community,

who embrace extreme nihilism and transgression, while priding themselves on 'giving up on life'.

Along with the Incel community he subscribes to, Luca is a participant in the 'beta uprising' – a grand-unified conspiracy theory advocating that 'beta-males' work together online to transpose all human activity to a digital non-corporeal existence. The outcome would mean that humans would discard their physical bodies in order to exist virtually. This grand unified conspiracy theory purposely resembles the premise of *The Matrix* trilogy, a series of films written and directed by the Wachowski sisters that has had major influence on the Incel community. Online, with other 'betas', Luca participates in an 'information war' (Pomerantsev, 2019) by instigating acts of violence and social unrest globally by antagonising various digital tribes on both sides of the culture wars. Or so he claims. The reader is left not knowing which of his boasts are real and which are expressions of grandiose delusion.

Particularly in Luca's narrative, *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* depicts how online users are receptive to the projection and acting-out of unconscious fantasy (Curtis 2007; Gibbs 2007; Wood 2006). Roesler (2008) elaborates on this by stating that:

the virtual space shows traits of freedom in the sense that the normal consequences of play and experimentation in social interactions within the physical world are eradicated: one can leave the interaction at any time and need never come into contact with the other persons involved again if one does not want to. This has clear advantages for the process of identity formation. (p. 427)

The exhilaration of virtual existence and experience comes from the sense of transcendence and liberation from the material and embodied world (Wood, 2007). But, Lemma points out that:

when the pursuit of such unlimited freedom becomes compelling and all-consuming, this comes at a price: an important consequence of immersion in [virtuality] is a corresponding shrinking of shared, physical space, and hence the loss of actual, physically mediated relationships that provide a kind of psychic anchor. (Lemma 2010, p. 693)

Lemma adds that the seduction of the virtual experience is that it can become a:

refuge away from the demands of embodiment and may then be used to bypass the arduous psychic task required to represent experience, giving way instead to simulation, with the attendant risk that 'the 'fake' can replace the real and become more compelling. (ibid)

In Luca's case, his virtual world has become a psychotic enclave that has become more compelling than the physical world he inhabits. Lemma suggests that '[virtuality] is ideally suited to being defensively used to bypass the psychic implications of an embodied self' (p. 694). Particular psychological factors are associated with the excessive use of various kinds of virtual reality. These include: loneliness (Whang, Lee, & Chang, 2003), low self-esteem (Yang and Tung 2007), and shyness and social anxiety (Pratarelli, 2005). There is also evidence to suggest that depressed young people are more likely to use the internet more than their non-depressed peers

(Ybarra, Alexander, & Mitchell 2005), and that socially anxious and lonely individuals are more likely than others to develop a preference for online social interaction over face-to-face encounters (Ervin et al. 2004). These issues are all factors in Luca's inability to make connections in the 'real' world.

The darkcel community Luca feels belonging with, and the 'beta uprising' he subscribes to, inform his relationship to self, others, and society at large. Luca believes he is genetically inferior to other men – particularly 'alpha males' that he refers to as "Chads" – and is convinced that he will never form a loving relationship with a woman, a belief that the darkcel community all subscribe to. This engenders a deep-seated misogyny and a hatred of 'normies', otherwise known as people that "fit in". In Luca's first-person narration, the terminology he uses, exemplifies how language can inform the relationship to self and others. In Luca's case, and the wider darkcel community, the terminology they use encourages the disconnection they already feel for others and society at large. The words they use, such as 'femoid' (female android), 'moid' (male android), 'cuck' (a dominated male), 'sperm donor' (an absent father), or 'The Cathedral' (people in entertainment, media, government and academia that hold power), just to name a few, all reduce the complexity of gender, human relationships, society and politics, into simplistic understandings which inform the worldview of the grand unified conspiracy theory they subscribe to. The interchangeability of Luca's online communication and the darcel community he belongs to is intentional as it highlights how digital tribalism encourages collective expression of identity through conformity.

The terminology of the darcel community is an expression of their worldview, but also informs and feeds into the resentment they feel for society. Their nihilistic behaviour purposely disassociates them from society, which they both despise yet feel resentful for not being accepted by. Subscribing to the darkcel worldview disconnects their ability to form positive relationships with themselves or others. This is evident in the opening sentences of each of Luca's first-person narrated sections in which he declares how long it has been since he last masturbated. This element in Luca's story functions as a humorous example of the absurdity of the darcel worldview, which fits into the Internet's penchant for black comedy, but also illustrates the power digital tribes have over the individuals that subscribe to them. In Luca's case, it dictates his physical relationship with his own body. The digital tribe Luca subscribes to are literally controlling his body.

In relation to the Luca's use of social media, while he infers that he is very active in communicating within his digital tribe, outside of his community he is a 'passive user' (Burke et al., 2010), instead, preferring to view others without exposing himself or presenting himself

through avatars. This aspect of Luca's online expression of self explores Raulet's (1991) notion of 'floating identities', particularly in relation to his online relationship with Daniel through his avatar Hitomi. Pretending to be a young woman called Hitomi, Luca develops an online relationship with the unsuspecting Daniel. This deceptive act is generally referred to as 'catfishing'. As the relationship continues, Luca begins following Daniel offline, developing an opaque fixation on him. This element of Luca's story is an example of Goffman's (1959) notion of 'masks'. Online, Luca's explores identities that are pseudonymous representations which he adopts and discards at will.

Luca's contradictions are obvious. A misogynist, he is nonetheless obsessed and furious that he is unable to have a relationship with a woman. He views immigrants negatively, yet his beloved grandmother migrated from Italy to Australia. He despises the need for love and sex, seeing it as a weakness, yet pines for both. He believes he is 'blackpilled', but it is clear there are people who care for his wellbeing. Luca's story is a portrait of a young man that despises his corporeality and embraces his 'disembodied self' (Lemma 2010, p. 695). Luca is an unreliable narrator who embodies the Incel cultural perspective, that if viewed through a Bakhtin lens would be categorised as carnivalesque in nature. He expresses the hopelessness of late-stage capitalism which expresses Bakhtin's theory of grotesque realism. The structure of his section is polyphonic in nature as his self expression online is merged with the collective darcel community. This is evident in the ambiguous nature of many of the online posts that are done anonymously.

Rose's story begins at her father Mark's funeral, and eludes to her complicated relationship with him. While her social life is also heavily entrenched within virtuality, unlike Luca, she embraces her reality. Rose is socially and sexually active, politically progressive, and would be categorised by Burke et al. as an active user of social media. Her social media accounts are all under her own name, therefore virtuality is a space for self-representation and online self-construction. Rose uses social media to author, form and perform her identity.

In the narrative structure of Luca's story, the reader understands his character primarily through his first-person narration and the virtual content he consumes. Rose's story has structural similarities but differs as her virtual narratives combines online content creation and consumption. Her virtual narrative is chronicle in its structure, her digital narratives knotted together to form a 'virtuosic score' (Virno, 2006). Her digital narratives tend to be narrating a particular moment in time as opposed to a collection of narratives that fit into Labov's (1972) narrative pattern that proposes that a story needs a start, middle and end. Rose's social media content creation exemplifies how she expresses her identity and locates herself relative to other people, and uses Gibbs et al's (2015) notion of 'platform vernacular' as she expresses her self different through different social media platforms.

Rose's use of Twitter, and the tweets she consumes, is a feature within her story that gives expression to her particular sense of humour. The use of Twitter as a literary device explores De Mul (2005) notion of 'ludic self-construction'. Rose's Twitter output fits into the term 'weird Twitter', which is a loosely connected group of Twitter users who are known to experiment with spelling, punctuation and format for humour or poetry (Know Your Meme, n.d.).

Rose's Twitter output is inspired by the weird Twitter community. Much like the humour in Lockwood's novel *No One Is Talking About This*, the tone of Rose's tweets expresses a 'ludic state of mind', as her tweets embrace 'temporary role[s] and interactional stance[s] which reflects her orientation towards the textual and visual utterances produced' (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). On Twitter, Rose expresses a wide range of ludic practices that draw on Bakhtin's notion of 'carnival', which refers to spaces where tensions and frustrations of everyday life are temporarily suspended. The carnivalesque nature of the Internet is represented throughout the novel's tone, which is informed by the notion grotesque realism, which embraces a sense of humour that is dark, nihilistic, and at times abstracted and absurdist.

Rose's progressive cultural/political/social views are on display throughout the online content she produces and consumes. This aspect of her personality is a purposeful authorial choice that contrasts Luca's cultural/political/social leanings which generally despise everything that Rose represents. This forces the reader to engage outside of a singular cultural/political/social point-of-view within the reading experience through the use of a multi-protagonist narrative structure. Rose, Luca and Mark all understand and locate themselves in very different ways. Their worldviews are in some instances ironically similar, but in much of the novel are worlds apart.

Rose's values and contradictions are also on display in her narrative. Like her father Mark, Rose wants to challenge power. She mainly does this by online 'trolling' celebrities and writing snarky posts on social media. When at a protest, she violently punches an abusive man in the throat, the act is recorded and goes viral. Instantly she becomes both hero and villain depending on the binary affiliation one has in relation to the culture wars. After an interview with a right leaning television host, she becomes a target for the alt-Right and receives severe online and offline abuse. She eventually feeling compelled to leave the country. Although very progressively politically conscious in Australia, Rose is less critical of China's politics due to her cultural connection there. Losing faith in Australia, she chooses to stay and build a life in China, an inverse of the usual immigrant story.

Like Luca, Rose has a traumatic history, mostly due to her relationship with her father Mark, a comedian with a life-long drug addiction. Although Luca and Rose have divergent worldviews and experiences of the world, they share a cynicism for the ruling class and the structures of power,

and both feel a hopelessness in relation to the future, a state of mind that expresses a generation that has come of age during late-stage capitalism, or what Mark Fisher (2009) refers to as 'capital realism' – a theoretical term that articulates the notion that capitalism is the only viable political and economic system, and the impossibility of even imagining a coherent alternative to it.

Mark, Rose's father, is a flawed but talented ageing comedian who is having a creative existential crisis, and is unable to find his place today's Internet Age. His narrative arc differs to those of Rose and Luca as it is contained within a tightly defined time period, a single night, and is predominately written in first-person perspective.

In his stand-up comedy show, Mark unpacks his fears, anger, revulsion and confusion at the hyper-connected, globalised reality he now lives in. When punched in the face by a heckler, he runs off, only to return to the stage and digress into a reflective and insightful critique of contemporary culture. Even in his destructive behaviour, his pain is visible, the regret he feels, and the lack of control he has over his own life and decisions is evident. Mark's whole life, particularly in this performance, is a slow-motion train wreck and the audience simply cannot look away. Like Rose and Luca, Mark's story explores a dual existence, but not in relation to the virtual and the real. On stage Mark is belligerent, aggressive and unapologetic, but off stage he is vulnerable, insecure, and clearly yearning for his daughter's love and forgiveness.

Mark's story is predominately a narration of his stand-up comedy routine. With mixed results, Mark's humour pushes the boundary of what is socially acceptable in contemporary culture. The aesthetic of Mark's comedy is carnivalesque in nature as his humour engages in grotesque realism. Bakhtin (1968) states that grotesque realism's 'essential principle... is degradation, that is, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity' (pp. 19-20). Philip Thomson (1972) suggests that perhaps the most profound meaning of the modernist literary grotesque is that 'the value of tears and the circus are one, that tragedy is in some ways comic and all comedy in some way tragic and pathetic' (p. 63). In the carnival atmosphere, laughter applies to everyone, and this laughter often revolves around the degradation and debasement of persons and objects. Mark's genre of comedy is informed by comedians such as, Richard Pryor, George Carlin and Lenny Bruce, all of whom challenged the established social, political, and cultural structures of power within their time through confrontational social satire.

The crude and confrontational nature of Mark's stand-up comedic performance reflects the post-Trump atmosphere within Western culture and politics, which refers to Donald Trump's influence in changing social codes of conduct once he got involved in politics and eventually became President of the United States. In the *New Statesman*, David Hare (2021) writes that:

before Trump, the common pieties of public life had meant that any elector who had sexist or racist feelings, or who wanted always to insist on their own needs over the needs of others, might have vaguely rebuked by notions of good or bad. A scent of disapproval would have reached them from the religious and non-religious institutions which were to suggest social norms. But, under Trump, all bets were off. People of all backgrounds, super rich and dirt poor were given permission to feel whatever they damn well pleased by a president who proclaimed 'Look at me, I'm never ashamed. I'm never contrite. Why should you be?' (p. 26)

Shame and humiliation is a central feature in today's culture wars as it defines the moral codes that dictate social norms. Post-Trumpian shamelessness has become entrenched in alt-right culture and politics. It purposefully disrupts previous ethics of morality in favour of embracing a form of immorality that functions to discredit social norms that don't adhere to their social and cultural values and political agendas, while also protecting and defending the power of the alt-Right elite.

Mark's stand-up routine exemplifies an existential crisis within comedy in response to the generational cultural shift that has occurred due to today's culture wars. The shift in cultural, political and social values for the younger generation is challenging the 'carnavalesque' nature of stand-up comedy. Since the late '50's, pioneered by Lenny Bruce and his contemporaries at the time, the stage was a space in which comedians made jokes that typically re-evaluate social and cultural norms, and challenge established power structures that governed society. Due to the alt-right co-opting the outsider status and rebellious nature that was once the cultural, political and social identity of the progressive Left, an existential crisis has occurred, particular in the arts, which has traditionally been politically progressive.

Mark's section of the novel, particularly the second half of his comedy routine, purposely serves as a reflective and insightful critique on the Internet age and the new social order from the perspective a man whom has known a world without the Internet. As an outsider, his section purposely contrasts Rose and Luca's stories, whose lives are entrenched in virtuality. The emotional heart of Mark's story is his existential crisis in relation to his identity as a comedian and his failings as a father to Rose and inability to change his behaviour to become the father he would like to be. The last sentence of the novel deliberately ends on the title of the novel itself, which becomes an irony as the reader knows Mark dies. The ending therefore proposes a wider question relating to our current era. With the climate crisis, the covid pandemic, the culture wars, widening inequality through race, class, sexuality and gender, impending military conflicts, political and corporate corruption, Neo-liberalism and the commodification of daily life, amongst the many other issues we face as a global community, the novel proposes that if we are unable to change the way we live things most definitely won't be okay.

Hansen proposes that in the time of digital media, then, it is the role of the novelist to think beyond technology and explore what the novel, as an art form created by book culture, can offer in helping us navigate the new temporal regimes of the digital. She believes that a new kind of novel is needed to represent and respond to the new social order, with its fluid movement between the virtual and the corporeal. As such, the ambition of *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* took inspiration from many of the theories examined in chapters one through to three of the exegesis, and then utilised the language and structures of digital narratives found on the Internet to explore the Internet age in relation to identity and belonging, and how one understands and locates oneself in a virtual-real world.

Conclusion: *The creation of a novel that reflects contemporary life*

Given that the Internet has evolved beyond being merely a communication tool to become an environment we inhabit, this thesis argues that virtuality has inter-penetrated reality, and asserts that due to the social media revolution, a social paradigm shift has occurred termed the new social order. As stated previously, this thesis proposes that for the novel to represent the present authentically, it must be re-tooled and reinterpreted so as to represent life in the era of the Internet. Accepting that challenge, this thesis offers a novel that reflects today's new social order. The writing of *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will* was informed by the above research into current theories regarding the impact of the Internet revolution on identity-construction, belonging and the creation of Internet literature.

One of the main thematic questions the novel engages with is, how do we understand ourselves, and locate ourselves, in the Internet Age? The novel answers this question by experimenting with literary structure by embedding carefully crafted and curated digital narratives with the three first-person narratives in order to better reflect lived experience that is virtual and real. This style fits into the genre of Internet literature and reflects Lorentzen's notion of virtual realism.

To this end, the 'small stories' in the form of digital narratives within the novel are not solely produced by the narrators, but instead referenced online content from others, thereby highlighting how autobiographical writing on social media is a combination of the creation, consumption and re-purposing or sharing of digital content. This, then is memetic of how social media enables the production of a 'virtuosic score' (Virno, 2006), a form of life writing that never gives rise to a finished work.

The architecture of novel comprises three first-person narratives that sit within modernist literary conventions, as well as postmodern fragmented and non-linear narration in the form of digital communications or online artefacts. As already indicated, the creative component of this thesis was informed by the research contained within the exegesis. In the first chapter of the exegesis, narrative theory was examined that discussed the importance narratives have in giving context to our lived experiences. This informs our perception of ourselves and others in the world in which we live. With the introduction of the Internet, particularly social media, new digital narratives are now informing our perception of ourselves and others. The 'small stories' paradigm is posited in relation to articulate what constitutes a digital narrative, and this is used as a structural literary device within the novel. This thesis argues that the consequences of the social media

revolution which has entrenched digital communications into daily life has created a social paradigm shift that Nath terms a 'new social order'. This is the thematic foundation of the setting for the novel.

The second chapter of the exegesis discusses notions relating to identity in the Internet Age and proposes that many aspects of contemporary life have become performative due to the structures of social media platforms, which encourage users to record and post aspects of their daily lives. These posts, tweets, updates, can then be commodified, producing online social capital, which is then exchanged for money, goods and/or services. Erving Goffman (1959) argues that all social interactions are fundamentally about the presentation of the self and a range of studies that draw on his theories was discussed. Goffman's theory relating to presentation of self informs the literary structure of *It's Going To Be Okay. It Will*.

In the third chapter, how people find a sense of belonging with others in today's Internet Age is discussed. Social media has redefined how people make connections with others, and how digital narratives influence identity and the communities people form with one another. This is explored within the novel, particularly via Luca, who associates with a community of people that call themselves 'darkcel'. Loathing themselves, and everybody else in the world, Luca and his 'digital tribe' believe their genetic make-up condemns them to be 'betas', forever inferior to 'alpha males' that are referred to as 'Chads'. The ability for digital narratives to influence people's perceptions of the world is discussed in relation to the QAnon 'movement', which is described as a grand unified conspiracy theory. In the novel, this concept is developed in relation to the 'beta uprising' which Luca sees himself as being part of. This illustrates the power of such collective narratives, as the darcel worldview completely dominates Luca's sense of self.

In the history of literature, great novels hold significance in societies as they tend to reflect something profound about the time in which they were written. Literary form, style and structure changes and evolves so as to authentically represent human experience at a particular moment in time. Throughout history, humans have felt compelled to create art to reflect their lived experience of the world in order to find meaning. This project is no exception.

Accepting the premise of narrative theory that human beings are 'homo-narrans' (Fisher, 1984), which argues that narrativising is something all human beings do as a way to make sense of our experience of existence, the creative component in the thesis in the form of a novel aims to reflect the digitalised present and examine the human condition within the Internet Age.

More broadly, the purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the discourse surrounding social media and how to represent life within it through literary fiction. As a technology, the Internet is still

in its infancy, and the effects of it on human experience remain in flux, which means that Internet literature must register these changes through ongoing experimentation with form. My contribution to this emerging genre is but one example of how literary fiction can continue to contemplate and create meaning by representing how we relate to ourselves, and each other, in the real and virtual worlds that we now inhabit. While the ways in which narratives are written will always evolve and change, but the need for narratives so we can contemplate our existence will not.

The introduction of social media has allowed new forms of narrative-creation to reflect the human condition with unprecedented global reach, but the structures of posts and tweets encourage short-form narratives that conform to the conventions of the attention economy, resulting in a loss of nuance and complexity. As such, the long-form narratives of novels remain vitally relevant as authors continue to experiment with literary form, style and structure to provide sustained reflections on what it means to be human now that we live in a virtual-real world.

References

- Abidin, C 2016 'Aren't These Just Young, Rich Women Doing Vain Things Online: Influencer Selfies as Subversive Frivolity', *Social Media & Society*, April-June, pp. 1-17.
- Abizadeh, A 2005 'Does collective identity presuppose an other? On the alleged incoherence of global solidarity', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 99, Issue 1, pp. 45-60.
- Achterberg, P, de Koster, W, & van der Waal, J 2017, 'A science confidence gap: Education, trust in scientific methods, and trust in scientific institutions in the United States, 2014', *Public Understanding of Science*, vol. 26, no. 6, pp. 704-720.
- Allan, K & Burridge, K 2006, *Forbidden Words. Taboo and the Censoring of Language*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.
- Allison, S, von Wahide I, Shockley, T, & Gabbard, G 2006, 'The development of the self in the era of the internet and role-playing fantasy games', *American Journal of Psychiatry*, vol.163, no.3, pp. 381-385.
- Aral, S & Walker, D 2011, 'Creating social contagion through viral product design: A randomized trial of peer influence in networks', *Management science*, vol. 57, no. 9, pp.1623-1639.
- Aupers, S 2012, 'Trust no one: Modernization, paranoia and conspiracy culture', *European Journal of Communication*, vol. 27, no.1, pp. 22-34.
- Baelo Allué, S 2019, 'Transhumanism, transmedia and the serial podcast: Redefining storytelling in times of enhancement', *International Journal of English Studies*, vol. 10, no. 1, University of Murcia.
- Bakhtin, M 1935/1981, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin. ed. Michael Holquist. trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, *University of Texas Press*, Austin.
- 1965/1984, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Emerson, Caryl, ed. And trans. *University of Minnesota Press*, Minneapolis.
- 1968, *Rabelais and His World*. trans. Helene Iswolsky, *The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press*, Cambridge.
- Bamberg, M G 1997, 'Oral versions of personal experience: Three decades of narrative analysis', *Journal of Narrative and Life history*, vol. 7, pp. 335-342.
- Bareket-Bojmel, L, Moran, S, & Shahar, G 2016, 'Strategic self-presentation on Facebook: Personal motives and audience response to online behavior', *Computers In Human Behavior*, vol. 55, pp. 788-795.
- Bargh, J A, McKenna K Y A, Fitzsimons G M 2002, 'Can You See the Real Me? Activation and Expression of the "True Self" on the Internet', *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 58, pp. 33 - 48.

Bargh, J A, McKenna, K Y A 2004, 'The Internet and Social Life', *Annual Review of Psychology*, vol. 55, pp. 573-590.

Bauman, Z 2013, *Liquid modernity*, John Wiley & Sons.

Baumeister, R F, & Leary, M R 1995, 'The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation', *Psychological Bulletin*, vol.117, no.3, pp. 497-529.

Berzonsky, M D 2016, 'An exploration of personal assumptions about self-construction and self-discovery', *Identity: An International Journal Of Theory And Research*, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 267-81, PsycINFO, EBSCOhost, viewed 29 April 2017, <<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15283488.2016.1229609>>

Blumer, H 1969, *Symbolic interactionism; Perspective and Method*, University of California Press.

Bosker, B 2010, '71 percent of Tweets Are Ignored, Study Finds', *Huffington Post*, viewed 6 March 2021, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/10/12/71-percent-of-tweets-are-_n_759176.html>

Bourdieu, P 1994, *Structures, Habitus, Practices*, viewed 12 June 2020, <http://sites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic1458086.files/Bourdieu_structure%20habitus.pdf>

Boyd, D M & Ellison, N B 2007, 'Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship', *Journal of computer-mediated Communication*, vol.13, no.1, pp. 210-230.

Boyd, D M 2010, 'Social network sites as networked publics', Papacharissi, Z (ed.), *Networked Self: Identity, Community, and Culture on Social Network Sites*, Routledge, Oxon, pp. 39-58.

Boyd, D M & Marwick, A 2011, 'Social privacy in networked publics: Teens' attitudes, practices and strategies', Paper presented at the *Oxford Internet Institute's A Decade in Internet Time: Symposium on the Dynamics of the Internet and Society*, 22 September 2011, viewed 23 December 2021, < <https://www.danah.org/papers/2011/SocialPrivacyPLSC-Draft.pdf>>

Brown, C 2001, 'Borders and Identity in International Relations Theory', *Identities, Borders, Orders: Rethinking International Relations Theory*, ed. Albert, M, Jacobson, D & Lapid, Y, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, pp. 117-36.

Bruner, J S 1986, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. Harvard University Press.

Bucholtz, M & Hall, K 2005, 'Identity and interaction: A sociocultural linguistic approach', *Discourse Studies*, Vol. 7, pp. 585-614.

Buckingham, D 2008, 'Introducing identity', David Buckingham (ed.), *Youth, identity, and digital media*, MIT Press, Cambridge, pp. 1-24.

Burke, M, Kraut, R & Marlow, C 2011, 'Social capital on Facebook: Differentiating uses and users', *Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on human factors in computing systems*, pp. 571-580.

Butler, K 2021, 'The Mother of Conspiracies', *Mother Jones*, vol. 46, no.1, pp. 55-58.

- Carter, M & Grover, V 2015, 'Me, my self, and I (T)', *Mis Quarterly*, vol. 39, no. 4, pp. 931-958.
- Carter, R 2004, *Language and creativity: The art of common talk*, Routledge, London.
- Castells, M 1996/2010, *The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture, Volume I: The Rise of the Network Society*, Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester.
- Chakya, K 2021, 'The Rise of the very Online Novel', *The New Republic*, viewed 22 December 2021, <<https://newrepublic.com/article/162641/rise-online-novel-patricia-lockwood-novel-review>>
- Cohen, E & Cohen, S A 2012, 'Current sociological theories and issues in tourism', *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 39, no. 4, pp. 2177-2202.
- Constine, J 2012, 'Your average Facebook Post Only Reaches 12% Of Your Friends', *TechCrunch*, <<http://techcrunch.com/2012/02/29/facebook-post-reach-16-friends/>>
- Cosslet, R 2021, 'What can the modern novel tell us about life in the age of the internet?', *The Guardian*, viewed on November 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/feb/04/internet-novel-patricia-lockwood-lauren-oyler-grief>
- Coupland, N 2003, 'Sociolinguistic authenticities', *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 417-31.
- Crandall, J 2008, 'Showing', *Art Journal*, vol. 63, no. 3, pp. 68-79.
- Curtis, A E 2007, 'The Clastrum: Sequestration of cyberspace', *Psychoanalytic Review*, vol. 94, no.1, pp. 99-139.
- Dean, J. (2005) 'Communicative Capitalism: Circulation and the Foreclosure of Politics', *Cultural Politics*, Vol.1, No.1: pp. 51 - 74.
- Deci, E L & Ryan R M. (2000), 'The "What" and "Why" of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs and the Self-Determination of Behavior', *Psychological Inquiry*, Vol.11, pp. 227 - 268.
- De Mul, J 2005 'The game of life: Narrative and ludic identity formation in computer games'. J Raessens & J Goldstein (eds.), *Handbook of Computer Game Studies*, MIT Press, Cambridge, pp. 251-66.
- Deters, F G & Mehl, M R 2013, 'Does posting Facebook status updates increase or decrease loneliness? An online social networking experiment', *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 579-86.
- Deumert, A 2014, 'The performance of ludic self on social network(ing) sites', *The language of social media*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 23-45.
- Deuze, M 2012, *Media life*. Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Durkheim, E 1893, *The Division of Labor in Society*, Free Press, New York.
- Ellison, N B, Steinfield C & Lampe C 2011, 'Connection strategies: Social capital implications of

- Facebook-enabled communication practices', *New Media & Society*, vol.13, pp. 873-92.
- Ellul, J 1962, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, *Vintage Books*, New York.
- Emre, M 2021, 'Patricia Lockwood's First Novel Reaches for the Sublime, Online and Off', *The New York Times*, viewed 22 December 2021, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/16/books/review/no-one-is-talking-about-this-patricia-lockwood.html>>
- Ervin, B, Turk, C, Heimberg, R, Fresco D & Hantula D 2004, 'The internet: Home to a severe population of individuals with social anxiety disorder?', *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, vol.18, pp. 629-46.
- Escalas, J E 1997, 'The positive effects of narrative thought in response to advertising', *Advances in Consumer Research*, vol. 24, pp. 67-8.
- Farkas, J & Schou J 2020, *Post-truth, fake news and democracy: Mapping the politics of falsehood*, *Routledge*, New York.
- Faucher, K X, 2018, *Social Capital Online: Alienation and Accumulation*, *University of Westminster Press*, United Kingdom.
- Fisher, M 2009, *Capitalist realism: Is there no alternative?*, *John Hunt Publishing*.
- Fisher, M, Boland Jr, R & Lyytinen K 2016, 'Social networking as the production and consumption of a self', *Information and Organization*, vol. 26, pp. 131-45.
- Fisher, W R 1984, 'Narration as a human communication paradigm: The case of public moral argument', *Communications Monographs*, vol. 51, no.1, pp.1-22.
- Fonagy, P & Target M 1996, 'Playing with reality: I. Theory of mind and the normal development of psychic reality', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 77, pp. 217-33.
- Foucault, M 1977, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. *Penguin*, London.
- 1980, *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and Other writings, 1972-1977*, *Pantheon Books*, New York.
- Freud, S 1930, *Civilization and its discontents*, *Standard Edition 21*, pp. 64–145.
- Galloway, A R & Thacker E 2007, *The exploit: A theory of networks*. *University of Minnesota Press*, Minneapolis.
- Georgakopoulou, A 2007, *Small Stories, Interaction and Identities*, *John Benjamins*, Amsterdam / Philadelphia.
- 2013, 'Storytelling on the go: breaking news as a travelling narrative genre', *The travelling concepts of narrative*, vol. 18, *John Benjamins publishing*, Amsterdam, pp. 201-24.
- 2015, 'Introduction: Communicating time and place on digital media-Multi-layered temporalities & (Re) localizations', *Discourse, Context & Media*, vol. 9, pp.1-4.

—2016a, *Life/narrative of the moment. From telling a story to taking a narrative stance*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

— 2016b, 'From narrating the self to posting self (ies): A small stories approach to selfies', *Open Linguistics*, vol.1 (open-issue).

Gibbs, M, Arnold, J, Nansen, B, and Carter, M 2015, '#Funeral and Instagram: Death, social media, and platform vernacular', *Information, Communication & Society*, vol 18, no. 3, pp. 225-268.

Goertzel, T 1994, 'Belief in conspiracy theories', *Political Psychology*, vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 731-42.

Gergen, K J & Gergen M M 1987, 'The self in temporal perspective', *Life-span Perspectives and Social Psychology*, pp. 121-37.

Gibbs, P I 2007, 'Reality in cyberspace: Analysands' use of the internet and ordinary everyday psychosis', *Psychoanalytic Review*, vol. 94, no.1, pp. 11-38.

Gibson, A 1996, *Towards a postmodern theory of narrative*. Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.

Gill, M 2011, 'Establishing authenticity in computer-mediated communication: The case of Nigerian letter fraud', Paper presented at the *Georgetown Roundtable of Linguistics 11*.

Goffman, E 1990 /1959, *The presentation of Everyday self*, Penguin, London.

Grice, H P 1975, 'Logic and conversation', *Syntax & Semantics, Academic Press*, vol. 3, pp. 41-58.

Grinin, L 2007, 'Periodization of History: A theoretic-mathematical analysis', *History & Mathematics*, Moscow, pp.10-38.

Gubrium J F & Holstein J A 1998, 'Narrative Practice and the Coherence of Personal Stories', *The Sociological Quarterly*, vol.39, no.1, pp.163-87.

Gürel E M E T & Tiğlı Ö 2014, 'New world created by social media: Transmedia storytelling', *Journal of Media Critiques*, vol.1, no.1, pp. 35-65.

Hannah, M 2021, 'QAnon and the information dark age', *First Monday*, viewed 10 Mar 2021, <<https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/10868>>

Hansen, D R 2017, 'Ben Learner and the novel in the Age of Digital Media', *The International Journal of the Book*, vol. 15, issue 3, pp. 11-21.

Hällgren, C 2019, 'Crowdsourcing identities: On identity as an existential practice mediated by contemporary digital technology', *First Monday*, vol. 24, no. 1-7, viewed 4 September 2020, <<https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/8112>>

Hare, D 2021, 'Populism without the people: Peddling the politics of grievance and waging tedious culture wars, the right has retreated into a world of fantasy', *New Statesman*, 26 March – 15 April, pp. 24 – 29, pp. 24-9.

Harter, S 2002, 'Authenticity', *Handbook of positive psychology, US: Oxford University Press*, New York, pp. 382-94.

Hartman, A 2015, *A War for the Soul of America: A History of the Culture Wars*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Harwood, S & El-Manstrly, D 2012, 'The performativity turn in tourism', *University of Edinburgh Business School Working Paper Series*, vol.12, no.5, pp. 1-18.

Harvey, D 1990, *The condition of postmodernity: An enquiry into the origins of cultural change*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Haugaard, M 2002, *Power: A reader*, Manchester University Press, UK.

Haynes, N 2016, 'Relationships: Creating authenticity on social media', *Social Media in Northern Chile: Posting the extraordinarily ordinary*, UCL Press, vol. 4, pp. 88-114.

Hearn, A 2008, 'Meat, Mask, Burden: Probing the Contours of the Branded Self', *Journal of Consumer Culture*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 197-219.

Hess, A 2015, 'The selfie assemblage', *International Journal of Communication*, vol. 9, pp. 1,629-64.

Higgins, E T 1987, 'Self-discrepancy: A theory relating self and affect', *Psychological Review*, vol. 94, pp. 319-40.

— 1989, 'Self-discrepancy theory: What patterns of self-beliefs cause people to suffer', *Advances in experimental social psychology*, vol. 22, pp. 93-136.

Hillewaert, S 2015, 'Writing with an Accent: Orthographic Practice, Emblems, and Traces on Facebook', *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 195-214.

Holmstrom, M 2016, 'The narrative and social media', *Defence Strategic Communications*, vol.1, no.1, pp.118-32.

Hongladarom, S 2011, 'Personal identity and the self in the online and offline world', *Minds and Machines*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp. 533-48.

Hu, C, Kumar, S, Huang, J & Ratnavelu, K 2017, 'Disinhibition of negative true self for identity reconstructions in cyberspace: Advancing self-discrepancy theory for virtual setting', *PloS one*, vol. 12, no. 4, viewed 12 June 2020, <<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0175623>>

Hu, C, Zhao, L & Huang, J 2015, 'Achieving self-congruency? Examining why individuals reconstruct their virtual identity in communities of interest established within social network platforms', *Computers in Human Behavior*, vol. 50, pp. 465-75.

Hunter, J D 1992, *Culture wars: The struggle to control the family, art, education, law, and politics in America*. Avalon Publishing.

Imhoff, R & Lamberty, P 2018, 'How paranoid are conspiracy believers? Toward a more finegrained understanding of the connect and disconnect between paranoia and belief in

conspiracy theories', *European Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 48, no. 7, pp. 909-26.

Javanbakht, A 2020, 'The Matrix is already here: Social media promised to connect us, but left us isolated, scared and tribal', *The Conversation*, viewed 23 Mar 2021, <<https://theconversation.com/the-matrix-is-already-here-social-media-promised-to-connect-us-but-left-us-isolated-scared-and-tribal-148799>>

Jenkins, H 2001, 'Convergence? I Diverge', *Technology Review*, vol. 104, no. 5, p. 93.

— 2006, *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture*, New York University Press, New York, NY.

Jenkins, H, Ford S & Green J 2013, *Spreadable Media: Creating Meaning and Value in a Networked Culture*, New York University Press, New York, NY.

Jin, S A A 2012, 'The virtual malleable self and the virtual identity discrepancy model: Investigative frameworks for virtual possible selves and others in avatar-based identity construction and social interaction', *Computers in Human Behavior*, 2012; vol. 28, issue 6, 2160-68.

Jones, R H & Hafner, C A 2012, *Understanding Digital Literacies: A Practical Introduction* Routledge, Abingdon.

Jones, S G 1995, *CyberSociety – Computer-mediated communication and community*, Sage Publications, California.

Jurgenson, N 2012, 'When atoms meet bits: Social media, the mobile web and augmented revolution'. *Future internet*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 83-91.

Kak, A U 2018, 'Cambridge analytica and the political economy of Persuasion', *Economic & Political Weekly*, vol. 53, no. 21, pp. 23-7.

Kaminska, I 2020, 'IS QANON A GAME GONE WRONG?', *Financial Times*, viewed 23 Nov 2021, <<https://www.ft.com/video/372cac40-0f6f-498b-8c19-7b635142296e>>

Kaplan, A M & Haenlein, M 2010, 'Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media', *Business Horizons*, vol. 53, no.1, pp. 59-68.

Kerby, A P 1991, *Narrative and the Self*, Indiana University Press, Indianapolis.

Keupp, H 2001, *Identitätsarbeit heute: klassische und aktuelle Perspektiven der Identitätsforschung*, (Trans. *Identity Work Today – Classic and Current Perspectives in Identity Research*), Suhrkamp, Frankfurt.

Kim, J & Monroy-Hernández, A 2016, 'Summarizing social media content based on narrative theory using crowdsourcing', *Proceedings of the 19th ACM Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work & Social Computing*, pp. 1018-27.

Kobek, J 2012, *If You Won't Read, Then Why Should I Write?*, Penny Ante Editions.

Krämer, S 2006, 'The cultural techniques of time axis manipulation: On Friedrich Kittler's conception of media'. *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 23, no. 7- 8, pp. 93-109.

Krasnova, H, Wenninger, H, Widjaja, T & Buxmann, P 2013, 'Envy on Facebook: A Hidden Threat to Users' Life Satisfaction', *11th International Conference on Wirtschaftsinformatik*.

Labov, W 1972, *Language in the inner city*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.

Labrecque, L I, Esche, J V D, Mathwick, C, Novak, T P, & Hofacker, C F 2013, 'Consumer Power: Evolution in the Digital Age', *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, vol. 27, pp. 257-69.

Lachmann, R, Eshelman, R. and Davis, M 1988, 'Bakhtin and carnival: Culture as counter-culture'. *Cultural Critique*, vol. 11, pp.115-52.

Lampel, J, & Bhalla, A 2007, 'The role of status seeking in online communities: Giving the gift of experience', *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, vol.12, no.2, pp. 434-55.

Leander, K & McKim, K 2003, 'Tracing the Everyday "Sittings" of Adolescents on the Internet: A Strategic Adaptation of Ethnography across Online and Offline Spaces', *Education, Communication and Information*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 211-40.

Lemma, A 2010, 'An order of pure decision: Growing up in a virtual world and the adolescent's experience of being-in-a-body', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, vol. 58, no. 4, pp. 691-714.

Linde, C 1993, *Life stories: The creation of coherence*, Oxford University Press, New York & Oxford.

Lockwood, P 2021, *No One Is Talking About This*, Penguin Random House, Australia.

Lorentzen, C 2018, 'Sheila Heti, Ben Learner, Tao Lin: How "Auto" is "Autofiction?', *Vulture*, viewed 22 December 2021, <<https://www.vulture.com/2018/05/how-auto-is-autofiction.html>>

— 2021, 'Literature After Trump', *Harpers Magazine*, viewed 22 December 2021, <<https://harpers.org/archive/2021/02/life-after-trump/>>

Loxton, D 2020, 'QAnon Is Just a Warmed Over Witch Panic--and It's Also Very Dangerous', *Skeptic*, vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 36-41.

Loveless, A & Williamson, B 2013, *Learning identities in a digital age: Rethinking creativity, education and technology*, Routledge, London.

Lund, N F, Cohen, S A & Scarles C 2018, 'The power of social media storytelling in destination branding', *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, vol. 8, pp. 271-80.

Mallan, K, Ashford, B & Singh, P 2010, 'Navigating iScapes: Australian youth constructing identities and social relations in a network society', *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, vol. 41, no. 3, pp. 264-79.

Marshall, P D 2015a, 'Intercommunication and persona: the intercommunicative public self', *International journal of interdisciplinary studies in communication*, vol.10, no.1, pp. 23-31.

— 2015b, 'Monitoring persona: Mediatized identity and the edited public self', *Frame*, vol. 28, no.1, pp. 115-33.

Marwick, A 2013, *Status update. Celebrity, publicity and branding in the social media age*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London.

McGowan, M 2021, 'How Australia became fertile ground for misinformation and QAnon', *The Guardian*, viewed 3 June 2021, <<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/feb/16/how-australia-became-fertile-ground-for-misinformation-and-qanon>>

McGurl, M 2017, 'Feeling like the Internet', *Public Books*, viewed 23 December 2021, <<https://www.publicbooks.org/feeling-like-the-internet/>>

McKenna, K Y A, Green, A S, Gleason, M E J 2002, 'Relationship Formation on the Internet: What's the Big Attraction?', *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 58, pp. 9-31.

McNeil, J 2021, 'Patricia Lockwood's Infinite Scroll: The Twitter-famous poet's first novel moves between the body in space and the mind online.', *Vulture*, viewed 22 December 2021, <<https://www.vulture.com/article/patricia-lockwood-no-one-is-talking-about-this.html>>

Mehrabian, A 1972, *Nonverbal Communication*, Transaction Publishers, New Jersey.

Meshi, D, Tamir, D, & Heekeren, H 2015, 'The Emerging Neuroscience of Social Media', Trends In Cognitive Sciences, vol. 19, no. 12, pp. 771-82, PsycINFO, EBSCOhost, <https://smnlab.msu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Meshi_2015_TICS.pdf>

Miller, D, Costa, E, Haynes, N, McDonald, T, Nicolescu, R, Sinanan, J, Spyer, J, Venkatraman, S & Wang, X 2016, *How the world changed social media*, UCL press, U.K.

Moritz, D 2018, 'The Rise Of Social Media Stories – What You Need To Know', *Socially Sorted*, viewed 9 Dec, <<https://sociallysorted.com.au/social-media-stories-story-format/>>

Mouffe, C 2018, 'The Affects of Democracy', *Eurozine*, viewed 23 November 2020, <<https://www.eurozine.com/the-affects-of-democracy/>>

— 2000, *The Democratic Paradox*, Verso, London.

Munar, A M 2010, 'Digital exhibitionism: The age of exposure', *Culture Unbound*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 401-22.

Mura, A 2012, 'The Symbolic Function of Transmodernity', *Language and Psychoanalysis*, vol.1, no.1, pp. 68-87.

Myers, G 2006, 'Where are you from?: identifying place'. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, vol.10, no. 3, pp. 320-43.

Nagle, A 2018, 'How The Grotesque Online Culture Wars Fuel Populism' *The Economist*, viewed 7 Aug 2019, <<https://www.economist.com/open-future/2018/08/03/how-the-grotesque-online-culture-wars-fuel-populism.>>

Nath, H K 2017, 'The Information Society', *Space and Culture*, India, vol. 4, pp.19-28.

Nawaz, M A 2011, 'Global Culture to Fight Extremism', *Ted Talk*, viewed 22 Nov 2021 <https://www.ted.com/talks/maajid_nawaz_a_global_culture_to_fight_extremism?language=en>

>

O'Callaghan, D, Greene, D, Conway, M, Carthy, J and Cunningham, P 2015, 'Down the (White) Rabbit Hole: The Extreme Right and Online Recommender Systems'. *Social Science Computer Review*. vol. 33, no. 4, pp. 459-78

Ochs, E & Capps, L 2001, *Living narrative: Creating lives in everyday storytelling*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Oldenburg, R 1996/1997, 'Our vanishing "Third Places"', *Planning Commissioners Journal*, vol. 25, pp. 6-10.

Owens, T J 2006, 'Self and identity', *Handbook of Social Psychology*, Springer, Berlin, pp. 205-232.

Oyler, L 2021, *Fake Accounts*, Hapers Collins Publishers. Australia.

— 2020a, 'Ha ha! Ha ha!', *London Review of Books*, vol. 42, no. 2, viewed 6 December 2021, <<https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v42/n02/lauren-oyler/ha-ha!-ha-ha>>

— 2020b, 'For Goodness' Sake: The self-conscious drama of morality in contemporary fiction, *Book Forum Magazine*, Summer 2020.

Page, R 2010, 'Revisiting Narrativity: Small Stories in Status Updates', *Text and Talk*, vol. 30, no. 4, pp. 423-44.

— 2012, *Stories and Social Media*, Routledge, London.

— 2013, 'Seriality and Storytelling in Social Media', *Storyworlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies*, vol. 5, University of Nebraska Press, Nebraska, pp. 31-54.

— 2014, 'Hoaxes, hacking and humour: analysing impersonated identity on social network sites', *The language of social media*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 46-64.

Pariser, E 2011, *The filter bubble: What the Internet is hiding from you*, Penguin, London

Peters, K, Chen, Y, Kaplan, A M, Ognibeni, B, & Pauwels, K 2013, 'Social Media Metrics - A Framework and Guidelines for Managing Social Media', *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 281-98.

Peters, T 1997, 'The Brand Called You', *Fast Company*, viewed 19 Jan 2020, <<https://www.fastcompany.com/28905/brand-called-you>>

Pham, L 2020, 'The Limits of the Viral Book Review: Why are literary critics fixating on one quality nowadays?', *The Nation*, viewed 14 December 2021, <<https://www.thenation.com/article/culture/online-literary-criticism-essay/>>

Phillips, A 2012, *Missing Out: In praise of the un-lived life*. Farrar. Straus and Giroux. New York, NY.

Pinker, S 2011, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: The Decline of Violence in History and Its Causes*, Penguin, UK.

Pomerantsev, P 2020, 'In Search of Lost Time', *The American Interest*, vol. 15, no. 6, viewed Feb 6 2021, <<https://www.the-american-interest.com/2020/05/07/in-search-of-lost-time-2/>>

— 2019, *This is NOT propaganda: Adventures in the war against reality*, Hachette, UK.

Pratarelli, M 2005, 'Sex, shyness, and social internet use', Paper presented to the *American Psychological Association*, Washington, DC.

Prensky, M 2011, 'Digital wisdom and homo sapiens digital', *Deconstructing Digital Natives: Young People, Technology, and the New Literacies*, Routledge, New York, NY & London, pp. 15-29.

Preston, A 2015, '10:04 by Ben Lerner Review—A Great Writer, A Great Novel'. *The Guardian*, viewed June 28, 2020, <www.theguardian.com/books/2015/jan/04/10-04-review-ben-lerner-great-writer>

Pollen, J M 2021, 'Wasted Awareness: A review of Lauran Oyler's "Fake Accounts"', *Vol. 1 Brooklyn*, viewed 12 December 2021, <<https://vol1brooklyn.com/2021/02/08/wasted-awareness-a-review-of-lauren-oylers-fake-accounts/>>

Prus, R 1997, *Subcultural mosaics and intersubjective realities: An ethnographic research agenda for pramatizing the social sciences*, State University of New York Press, New York.

Putnam, R D 2001, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Simon & Schuster, New York.

Quan-Haase, A & Wellman, B 2005, Hyperconnected Net Work: Computer Mediated Community in, *Working Paper Series*, KMDI-WP-2005-2, <<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/41ec/9ad4f369d6ff7610554739b7c9ee0752d7cd.pdf>>

Rak, J 2005, 'The digital queer: Weblogs and internet identity', *Biography*, vol. 28, no.1, pp. 166-82.

Raulet, G 1991, 'The new utopia: Communication technologies', *Telos*, vol. 87, pp. 39–58.

Raz, J 1986, *The Morality of Freedom*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Reed, A, Whittaker, J, Votta, F & Looney S 2019, 'Radical Filter Bubbles: Social Media Personalization Algorithms and Extremist Content', *Global Research Network on Terrorism and Technology*, viewed Mar 7 2021, <https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/20190726_grntt_paper_08_0.pdf>

Rettberg, J W 2014, *Seeing ourselves through technology: how we use selfies, blogs and wearable devices to see and shape ourselves*, Palgrave Pivot, Basingstoke, UK.

Ricoeur, P 1992, *Oneself as Another*. University of Chicago Press. Chicago.

Riva, G & Galimberti, C 1998, 'Computer-mediated communication: Identity and social interaction in an electronic environment', *Genetic, Social and General Psychology Monographs*, vol.124, pp. 434-64.

- Rheingold, H 2000, *The Virtual Community*, The MIT Press, Cambridge.
- Roesler, C 2008, 'The self in cyberspace: Identity formation in postmodern societies and Jung's Self as an objective psyche', *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, vol. 53, no. 3, pp. 421-36.
- Rogers, C 1951, *Client-centered therapy*, Houghton Mifflin, Oxford, England.
- Rousis, G 2018, 'The Truth is Out There: The Use of Conspiracy Theories by Radical Violent Extremist Organizations', *UNF Graduate Theses and Dissertations*, <<https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/etd/822>>
- Scanlon, S 2021, 'What We're Getting Wrong About So-Called Internet Literature: Shya Scanlon on Oyler, Lockwood, Wilder, Boyle, and More', *Literary Hub*, viewed 22 December 2021, <<https://lithub.com/what-were-getting-wrong-about-so-called-internet-literature/>>
- Schlegel, L 2019, 'Chambers of Secrets? Cognitive Echo Chambers and the Role of Social Media in Facilitating Them', *European Eye on Radicalisation*, viewed 4 March 2021, <<https://eeradicalization.com/echo-chambers-social-media-schlegel/>>
- Schilder, P 1950, *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body*, International Universities Press, New York.
- Schmid, K A, Züfle, A, Pfoser, D, Crooks, A, Croitoru, A & Stefanidis, A 2017, 'Predicting the evolution of narratives in social media', *International Symposium on Spatial and Temporal Databases*, Springer, Cham, pp. 388-92.
- Schwartz, A 2021, 'The Voice That Gets Lost Online: The Internet gave us a new language. Did it take one away?', *The New Yorker*, viewed 12 December, <https://www.newyorker.com/books/under-review/the-voice-that-gets-lost-online-patricia-lockwood-lauren-oyler>
- Seargeant, P & Tagg, C 2014, *The Language of Social Media: identity and community on the Internet*, Palgrave Macmillan, U.K, pp. 1-50.
- Seidman, G 2014, 'Expressing the "True Self" on Facebook', *Computers in Human Behavior*, vol. 31, pp. 367-72.
- Senft, T M 2008, *Camgirls: Celebrity & Community in the Age of Social Networks*, Peter Lang, New York.
- Shirky, C 2008, *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing without Organizations*, Penguin Books, New York, NY.
- Shuman, A 2005, *Other peoples' stories: Entitlement claims and the critique of empathy*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana IL.
- Slater, D 2002, 'Social Relationships and Identity Online and Offline', *Handbook of New Media: Social Shaping and Consequences of ICTs*, Sage, London, pp. 533-46.
- Smith, A D 1990, 'Towards a Global Culture?', *Theory, Culture & Society*, no. 7 (June), pp. 171-

91.

Solon, O 2016, 'Facebook's failure: Did fake news and polarized politics get Trump elected?', *The Guardian*, viewed Mar 9 2021, <<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/nov/10/facebook-fake-news-election-conspiracy-theories>>

Somers, M R 1994, 'The narrative constitution of identity: A relational and network approach', *Theory and society*, pp. 605-49.

Srnicek, N 2017, *Platform Capitalism*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Stern, S 2021, 'Lauren Oyler Is a Tough Critic of Contemporary Fiction. Can Her Novel Do Better?', *The New Republic*, viewed 2 march 2021, <<https://newrepublic.com/article/161324/lauren-oyler-fake-accounts-millennial-fiction>>

Sunstein, C R & Vermeule, A 2009, 'Conspiracy theories: Causes and cures', *Journal of Political Philosophy*, vol.17, no. 2, pp. 202-27.

Surowiecki, J 2004, *The Wisdom of Crowds*, Anchor Books, New York, NY.

Swami, V, Weis, L, Lay, A, Barron, D, & Furnham, A 2016, 'Associations between belief in conspiracy theories and the maladaptive personality traits of the personality inventory for DSM - 5', *Psychiatry Research*, 236, pp. 86-90, viewed 3 June 2021 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2015.12.027>>

TATE Gallery, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/r/readymade>

Tatham, S (2015), 'The Solution to Russian Propaganda is not EU or NATO Propaganda but Advanced Social Science to Understand and Mitigate its Effect in Targeted Populations', *Centre for Security and Strategic Research, National Defence Academy of Latvia*, viewed 7 July 2020, <<http://www.stratcomcoe.org/steve-tatham-solution-russian-propaganda-not-eu-or-nato-propaganda-advanced-social-science>>

Taylor, C 1994, 'The Politics of Recognition', *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J, pp. 25-74.

Taylor, J 2011, 'Technology: Is Technology Stealing Our (Self) Identities?', *Psychology Today, The Power of Prime*, viewed 8 Aug 2020, <<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-power-prime/201107/technology-is-technology-stealing-our-self-identities>>

Temple, E 2021, 'How Should a Person Write About the Internet? On Debut Novels by Lauren Oyler and Patricia Lockwood', *Literary Hub*, viewed 24 December 2021, <<https://lithub.com/how-should-a-person-write-about-the-internet/>>

Thomas-Corr, J 2021, 'Lauren Oyler's Fake Accounts is an exercise in snark', *The New Statesman*, viewed 11 December 2021, <<https://www.newstatesman.com/international-politics/2021/01/lauren-oyler-critic-fake-accounts-novel-review>>

Thomson, P 1972, *The Grotesque*. Methuen and Co Ltd. London.

Tiago, M T P M B & Veríssimo, J M C 2014, 'Digital Marketing and Social Media: Why Bother?',

Business Horizons, vol. 57, no. 6, pp. 703-8.

Tiffany, K 2017, 'HOW DARCIE WILDER'S STUNNING DEBUT NOVEL WAS BORN ON TWITTER: Her book finds art in a hopeless place', *The Verge*, viewed 11 December 2021, <<https://www.theverge.com/2017/3/31/15125102/literally-show-me-a-healthy-person-interview-darcie-wilder>>

Tosun, L P 2012, 'Motives for Facebook use and expressing "true self" on the Internet', *Computers in Human Behavior*, vol. 28, pp. 1510-17.

Turkle, S 1995, *Life on the screen: Identity in the age of the Internet*, Simon and Schuster, New York.

Turner, L 2011, *The Metamodernist Manifesto*, viewed 11 Aug 2019, <www.metamodernism.org/>.

Valentine, G & Holloway, S 2002, 'Cyberkids? Exploring Children's Identities and Social Networks in On-Line and Offline Worlds', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 92, no. 2, pp. 302-19.

van Dijck, J 2013, '"You have one identity": performing the self on Facebook and LinkedIn', *Media Culture & Society*, vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 199-215.

Veyne, P 1971/1984, *Writing History: Essay of Epistemology*, University Press, Middletown, Connecticut.

Vilian, P, Herman, J 2011, 'AUTOFICTION', Villa Gillet; Le Monde (eds.), *The Novelist's Lexicon: Writers on the Words That Define Their Work*. Columbia University Press, pp. 5-7.

Virno, P 2006, 'Virtuosity and Revolution. The Political Theory of Exodus', *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, pp. 189-212.

— 2004, *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life Semiotext(e)*, Los Angeles/New York.

Wajcman, J 2016, 'Pressed for time: The digital transformation of everyday life: Huvudanförande vid Sociologidagarna i Uppsala'. *ANFÖRANDE*. 10-12 mars 2016. Sociologisk forskning, vol. 53, no. 2, pp.193-98.

Walzer, M 1992, 'The New Tribalism: Notes on a Difficult Problem', *Dissent*, vol. 39 (Spring), pp. 164-71.

Watt, I 1957, *The Rise of the Novel*, University of California Press.

Weird Twitter, *Know Your Meme*, viewed 25th January 2022, <<https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/weird-twitter>>

Wesch, M 2008, 'Context collapse', *Digital Ethnography*, <<http://mediatedcultures.net/projects/youtube/context-collapse>>.

West-Knight, I 2021, 'The Rise of the Internet novel', *Prospect*, viewed 23 December 2021, <<https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/arts-and-books/internet-novel-patricia-lockwood-lauren>>

[oyler-no-one-is-talking-about-this-fake-accounts-review>](#)

Whang, I, Lee, F, & Chang, G 2003, 'Internet overusers psychological profile: A behavior sampling analysis of internet addiction', *Cyberpsychology & Behavior*, vol. 6, pp. 143-50.

Wilder, D 2017, *literally show me a healthy person*, *Tyrant books*, New York, Rome.

— 2014, *Flagged and Removed*, *Vigliano Books*.

Wood, M J, Douglas, K M & Sutton R M 2012, 'Dead and alive: Beliefs in contradictory conspiracy theories', *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, vol. 3, no. 6, pp. 767-73.

Wood, H 2006, *Sex, Mind and Emotion*, *Karnac Books*, London.

— 2007, 'Compulsive use of virtual sex and internet pornography: Addiction or perversion?', *Lectures on Violence, Perversion and Delinquency*, *Karnac Books*, London, pp. 157-78.

World Economic Forum 2012b, 'The global information technology report 2012', *Report*, <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/Global_IT_Report_2012.pdf>

Wyndham, M 2021, 'What's the Internet Got To Do with It?', *Publishers Weekly*, viewed 15 December 2021, <<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/authors/interviews/article/84875-what-s-the-internet-got-to-do-with-it-pw-talks-with-patricia-lockwood.html>>

Yang, C, & Brown, B B 2013, 'Motives for Using Facebook, Patterns of Facebook Activities, and Late Adolescents: Social Adjustment to College', *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, vol. 42, no. 3, pp. 403-16.

Yang, S C, & Tung, C J 2007, 'Comparison of internet addicts and non-addicts in Taiwanese high school', *Computers in Human Behaviour*, Issue 23, pp. 79-96.

Yar, M 2014, *The cultural imaginary of the internet: Virtual utopias and dystopias*, *Springer*, Berlin.

Ybarra, M I L, Alexander, C, & Mitchell, K J 2005, 'Depressive symptomatology, youth internet use, and online interactions: A national survey', *Journal of Adolescent Health*, vol. 36, pp. 9-18.

Zhao, S, Grasmuck, S & Martin, J 2008, 'Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships', *Computers in Human Behavior*, vol. 24, no. 5, pp. 1816-36.

Žižek, S 2004, 'What can psychoanalysis tell us about cyberspace?', *Psychoanalytic Review*, vol. 91, pp. 801-30.

Zollo, F 2019, 'Dealing with digital misinformation: a polarised context of narratives and tribes', *EFSA Journal*, vol.17.