

**LIFE AS A BUJ AUTHOR:  
PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE**

**A Berkeley Undergraduate Journal Special Issue**

**Presented by BUJ Leadership Board and Featured Authors**

## Editor's Note

As the oldest undergraduate research publication on campus, The Berkeley Undergraduate Journal reflects a long legacy of scholastic rigor, passion, and success. Our traditional publications showcase the shining products of applied student thought, bearing witness to many scholars' willingness to go the extra mile and synthesize their own arguments and theories, adding fresh philosophies to an already abundant collection of knowledge established by our forerunners. While it always a joy to look back on this rich heritage of learning and appreciate how it reflects upon our university, the BUJ Leadership Board has decided to shed light on how our journal benefits student authors' futures. We have amassed here an assortment of various interviews and responses from past BUJ-published student authors, all of whom are eager to share how their experiences with BUJ have influenced their careers, academic endeavors, and personal lives in their post-Berkeley years.

It is our hope that this special issue will reveal the extent to which past, present, and future students have and may profit from collaborating with our publication to debut their work on the academic stage. We are proud to have played such a significant role in the lives of these intelligent, unique individuals, and we would like to display the impact that BUJ has not only on our student authors but also the journal's extended impact on various communities by means of those who have been a part of the BUJ legacy.

Sincerely,  
BUJ Leadership Board.

## Rosie Aboody

Volume 25, Issue 3

“The Effect of Imagining Outcomes on Children’s Causal Reasoning”



**What does your professional/academic life look like today? What are your current academic interests?**

Currently, I am a graduate student in the Psychology Department at Yale University, and I study how kids learn from others. Most of what we know, we learn from other people, but not everyone is equally knowledgeable. I study how kids and adults decide whether someone is knowledgeable (or not), and how they decide whether to trust information they receive from others.

**How did the research you did for your paper “The effect of imagining outcomes on children’s causal reasoning” have an impact on your academic/professional career?**

The research I did for my paper “The Effect of Imagining Outcomes on Children’s Causal Reasoning” had a huge impact on my career thus far. It was the first project I led from start to finish, so it was my first experience of what research is really like. My work on the project gave me invaluable experience, but also helped me to decide that I wanted to continue studying how children learn and develop!

**Have you published any other papers after your student research paper for the BUJ? How have your writing and your writing process grown?**

I have worked on several other publications since writing my student research paper for the BUJ. I am still learning a lot! Every bit of feedback helps me learn how to write better and more clearly. The BUJ experience was a great first step to all of the future learning opportunities that have happened since!

## Kelly Jones

Volume 27, Issue 2

“ ‘A Time of Great Tension’: Memory and the Malaysian Chinese Construction of the May 13 Race Riots”



**What does your professional/academic life look like today? What are your current academic interests?**

**A**lthough I briefly considered going to graduate school to earn a Master of Arts degree in Southeast Asian Studies, I eventually decided to pursue a career path into library work due to how fascinating I found my work-study job at the Bancroft Library. Today, I am continuing on that path as a library assistant in a public library. My current academic interests remain the same since I was at Cal, especially with regards to following up on the role of government in racial relations in Southeast Asian countries. I am lucky enough to have family and friends in the region to talk about that topic and how it manifests in their lives, and thankfully, a lot of literature is accessible through National University of Singapore Press. Beyond that, I read historical and political nonfiction for fun.

**How did the research you did for your paper “ ‘A Time of Great Tension’: Memory and the Malaysian Chinese Construction of the May 13 Race Riots” have an impact on your academic/professional career?**

My research into my honors thesis did help me tremendously into being accepted to graduate school, even if in the end I decided against taking that opportunity. However, it still has an impact on my life because it was a massive undertaking that allowed me to further my skills in research, data collection, and analyzing biases in presented information, as well as improving my writing skills! I use these tools today in my career by presenting data and advocating for my and others' viewpoints so that my library can work more efficiently when possible. Also, part

of the reason why I was able to continue within the library field was that my knowledge of research methods had increased to the point where I felt it was easy to assist library patrons with their own research, and it is always an amazing feeling to be able to help others with their own papers and to help them to grow into learning how to more effectively research for themselves.

**Have you published any other papers after your student research paper for the BUJ, and if so, how have your writing and your writing process grown?**

I have not published any other papers, nor have I written academically since graduation. Other than the odd memo or report, most of my writing is fiction in nature, which is a long-held hobby I deeply enjoy. Like most things, the more you do something, the more your skills improve — so having done a lot of writing for pleasure before writing my honors thesis helped me in consistently reaching my self-imposed deadlines during the thesis itself, and the consistent research and writing of the thesis have improved my ability to do so for my stories now. I have been asked to write for publications but haven't accepted; I hope that when I have more time to agree to do so, my efforts thus far will be evident then, as well.

## Andrew David King

Volume 26, Issue 3

“The Statement of Who?: The Narrative of the Howl Trial and its Discontents”



### **What does your professional/academic life look like today? What are your current academic interests?**

I am currently a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) candidate at the Iowa Writers' Workshop in Iowa City. Prior to that, I worked for a year at a university in Shanghai on a fellowship. As part of the funding package for my graduate studies, I teach several class sections of creative writing each year. I find teaching to be rewarding in surprising ways, and since teaching, I have taken a recent interest in works on creative writing pedagogy. I'm still interested in 20th-century American poetry and poetics — the same interest that led me to write my paper on the Howl trial for BUJ — but beyond that, my interests are broad and include: Romanticism, Surrealism, the history of critical and literary theory, the relation of poetry and philosophy, international aesthetics, and various topics in ethics.

### **How did the research you conducted for your paper “The Statement of Who?: The Narrative of the Howl Trial and its Discontents” have an impact on your academic and professional career?**

The research I conducted for this paper had definite impacts, and in several ways. Mainly, it reaffirmed my thought that archival research can be surprisingly fruitful for people working, as I was, on a topic that has to do with “cultural history” broadly defined. That may seem obvious, but the ratio of available archival materials to researchers actually making use of them is very skewed; the amount of materials will always, I think, outstrip the number of researchers. So it's possible, even for topics that have long been combed over by academics, that archival investigations will turn up surprising, narrative-altering discoveries. It's kind of like panning for gold; the work is slow, chance is heavily involved; you're only human, after all, and can only paw through so many boxes of old correspondence before you lose your mind. But then you hit upon something critical — like I felt I did when I discovered that Ginsberg owned a copy of Gil Orlovitz's *The Statement of Erika Keith*, and so had to have been aware of him — which validates all the hours spent that turned up nothing.

**Have you published any other papers after your student research paper for the BUJ?**

I haven't published any research papers since then, though I'm at work on several. The BUJ really provides a unique opportunity in that regard: the chance for undergraduates to publish in a venue where their academic work is taken seriously. Professional journals are most often the province of graduate students and professors, and they (and the work that goes into the articles they contain) can seem very distant; but really the kind of thought and labor that goes into producing the best papers in the BUJ and professional journals is on more of a continuum than I perhaps had thought.

## Sophia Mao

Volume 27, Issue 2

“The Tower and the Telescope: The Gaze and Colonial Elsewheres in Virginia Woolf’s Fictions”



**What does your professional/academic life look like today? What are your current academic interests?**

I am currently a PhD student in the English Department at Harvard University. Very broadly, my interests include American and British Transnational Anglophone novels in the 20th and 21st centuries. My secondary interests include Asian American literature and contemporary popular culture.

**How did the research you did for your paper “The effect of imagining outcomes on children’s causal reasoning” have an impact on your academic/professional career?**

“The Tower and the Telescope” was my senior honors thesis for the English Department, and the final chapter on Woolf’s short story “The Searchlight” helped me to secure a position in a PhD program. Writing this thesis was a sustained, yearlong process that taught me how writing that strives to be good — that is, interesting and inspired — must come from a place of personal interest and inspiration. I believe that academic writing that does not have a strong personal element (whether implicit or explicit) is harder for readers to digest and can therefore feel less impactful. This is one of the reasons I chose to open “The Tower and the Telescope” with a first-person preface. While many of the technical aspects of the thesis worried me, such as how to engage with secondary criticism and how to conduct archival research, I learned that what’s essential is figuring out what you care about and why. Everything else falls into place after that.

**Have you published any other papers after your student research paper for the BUJ, and if so, how have your writing and your writing process grown?**

At the moment, I’m working on the foundation for my dissertation, which is in many ways informed by my original thesis. Woolf was devoted to accurately portraying “life,” particularly through moments that are not dramatic or seemingly even worthy of record; recently, I’ve become interested in how the everyday and the

dramatic or seemingly even worthy of record; recently, I've become interested in how the everyday and the ordinary manifests in contemporary immigrant novels, ones that do not focus on extraordinary achievements and triumphs, but rather focus on states of indecision and stasis.

Thematically, my writing has shifted from the "postcolonial" to the "transnational" — it has become less concerned with the contrast between the colony and the imperial metropolis, and more concerned with the cross-national affiliations that have emerged with the increased movement and exchange of people, ideas, and capital. I don't know that much has changed about my actual writing process between then and now. One of the biggest challenges of being in a PhD program is that writing is now my profession, rather than just something that I like to do and work hard at. Spending the majority of my senior year writing "The Tower and the Telescope" gave me the chance to discover the literary themes and styles that truly spoke to me without many external pressures. Returning to this state of calm and joy in my current work despite the professional pressures for recognition and publication remains my primary goal. I've always wanted to tell a good story.

## Justine Parkin

Volume 24, Issue 2 and Volume 25, Issue 2

“Narratives and the Social Imagination: Lessons in Reading for Ghandi’s Theory of Action”

“Narrative, Speech, and Action: Ghandi’s Satyagraha and the Constant Becoming of Truth”



I am currently a writer and teacher at a private, philosophy-based high school in Los Angeles. I received my Masters in Comparative Literature from the University of Oregon, where I continued studying literature through the lens of philosophy in order to think through the political import of literary study. While still largely concerned with the political realm and how we come to articulate political truths, my written work has begun to take on a more ecological focus. My Masters thesis developed the work I began in my article for the BUJ on the political theorist Hannah Arendt by bridging her work and Theodor Adorno’s thought with current scholarship in political ecology and the environmental humanities. I also recently published an article entitled “Fecundity” in the academic journal *Environmental Humanities*, imagining politics that integrate human and nonhuman life. My writing has developed significantly since publishing in the BUJ, especially as I have become more comfortable with the slow, consistent and necessary process of editing; nevertheless, my cross-disciplinary approach and literary-philosophical style remains.

## Meg Perret

Volume 27, Issue 2

“Amphibians, Affect, and Agency: On the Production of Scientific Knowledge in the Anthropocene”



**A**s a graduate student in History of Science at Harvard University, I examine the cultural, historical, and rhetorical dimensions of scientific research on species extinctions. I analyze narratives about biodiversity loss embedded in scientific texts and illuminate the rhetorical devices used to communicate the cultural significance of endangered and extinct species. Working at the intersection of feminist science studies and environmental humanities, I am particularly interested in how gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, species, and identity are leveraged in controversies regarding the future of Earth’s biodiversity. My project concludes with novel metaphors, images, models, key terms, and diagrams for representing scientific research on biodiversity that both promotes robust scientific findings and transforms representations of humanity’s relationship with nature.

Changing the narrative of the future of biodiversity is ethically, politically, and scientifically urgent. When I wrote “Amphibians, Affect, and Agency,” I was intoxicated by the love, joy, and sorrow of articulating a feminist response to ecological destruction at the hands of humanity. Today, I continue to live, breathe, and theorize within the fractured in-betweens of generations of feminist environmental philosophers who came before me. Inspired by the ecological fragility, resilience, and inventiveness of amphibians, I continue to write towards a passionate, embedded, and relational response to contemporary environmental crises. I return to the earth, reach my hands into the soil, and feel for novel scholarship of and for the survival and flourishing of vulnerable human and nonhuman communities. The survival of our species and our nonhuman kin depends on this struggle to think differently.

## Stephanie Petrillo

Volume 27, Issue 1

“Moral Theories and Cloning in Kazuo Ishiguro’s Never Let Me Go”



### **What does your professional/academic life look like today? What are your current academic interests?**

I spent the past three years at UCLA Law, preparing for a career in criminal prosecution. In a few months, I will join the team at the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office. My enthusiasm for studying the philosophy of ethics continues to play a central role in my professional and career choices. I was drawn to criminal prosecution because the consideration of ethical action is embedded in every part of the prosecutor’s role. These days, I am interested in applying moral and economic theories to the exploration of how our criminal justice system can most effectively achieve its purposes of facilitating public safety and rehabilitating offenders. I am currently conducting research about how the prison credit system can be better utilized on the rehabilitation front, particularly in response to animal cruelty crimes.

### **How did the research you did for your paper “Moral Theories and Cloning in Kazuo Ishiguro’s Never Let Me Go” have an impact on your academic/professional career?**

My paper is frequently a topic of discussion during interviews with prospective employers, especially judicial chambers. Having a BUJ publication on my resume has given me the opportunity to demonstrate evidence of my writing and research experience while also sharing my personal and academic interests. Dystopian themes are increasingly prevalent in literature and media, so I have been fortunate to experience a lot of excitement about the issues I considered in the paper. Connecting with people through my paper has resulted in professional opportunities that I otherwise may not have had. Additionally, the depth of research and analysis that the peer-review process required helped prepare me for the rigors of legal writing and research.

**Have you published any other papers after your student research paper for the BUJ? How has your writing and your writing process grown?**

I hope to publish in a legal journal in the future. Law school and my legal externship positions have had a transformative impact on my writing. Most recently, I had the incredible opportunity to draft Respondent's Briefs on behalf of the California Attorney General's Office, in the Appeals, Writs, and Trials section. Writing in the appellate criminal law area demands precision, meticulousness, and brevity. Through those experiences, I like to think my writing has developed greater clarity, as I have honed my ability to make focused and substantiated arguments. However, it was the process of writing "Moral Theories," in addition to exceptional courses I took as a Berkeley English major, that directly led me to the path I am on today.

## Kelsey Westphal

Volume 25, Issue 3

“Teuf Love: Verlan in French Rap and Beyond”



### **What does your professional/academic life look like today? What are your current academic interests?**

**A**fter Cal I went to Angoulême, France and got a Research Masters in Text and Image Relations (a.k.a. comics) at École Européenne Supérieure de l’Image (EESI). For my day job, I am an event planner and curator at the Classic Cars West Gallery in Downtown Oakland, a mixed-use event space and art gallery where we host performance art, dog shows, fashion parties, and everything in between! I’m also a freelance cartoonist, my main projects being a cartoon biography of the legendary punk publisher V. Vale of RE/Search Publications in San Francisco, as well as nonfiction comics about local issues and characters for the new online newspaper the Bay City Beacon. I am also a performer with Dingbat Superminx, an Oakland-based experimental pop band. I just got back from a southwest tour and I am preparing to go on two more tours this spring and summer. I caught the wanderlust bug, and I’m never turning back! My life is research, you could say!

### **Did the research you did for your paper “Teuf Love: Verlan in French Rap and Beyond” have an impact on your academic/professional career and how?**

Doing field research was one of the most rewarding and exciting experiences I’ve ever had, and I long to do it again! During my Master’s program, the skills I developed writing my senior thesis helped me immensely in interviewing my subjects and organizing the composition and content of my two masters theses. I ended up getting a 20/20 and 18/20 on both pieces, which still amazes me! Knowing as much as I did about verlan was incredibly valuable; it also allowed me to advance my French fluency and communication skills, as well as aid my readings of contemporary alternative comics.

### **Have you published any other papers after your student research paper for the BUJ, and if so, how have your writing and your writing process grown?**

Well, yes! I published two theses for my Masters, one being about comics journalism and the other about radical underground comics collectives. The insight my BUJ paper gave me into experimentation with language as a critique of society was a fundamental idea in both my theses that was endlessly fun to explore. I have also been publishing interview comics about V. Vale and adapted Kim-Mai Cutler’s TechCrunch article “How Burrowing

Owls Lead to Vomiting Anarchists” about the San Francisco housing crisis into comic form. I am currently in the planning and negotiation stages of turning the history of BART into a serial comic, which I really hope works out. My process has grown in that now it is hybrid, both visual and verbal, and sometimes musical! I do miss being in the world of academia sometimes, but I’m so lucky to have the opportunities I have; I get to explore art and music all the time!

**Kelsey has a website: <https://www.krustywheatfield.com>**

## Eli Wirtschafter

Volume 25, Issue 3

“Street Theater at Astor Place: The Silk Stocking Regiment and Antebellum Public Performance”



I was a double major in American Studies and Theater, Dance & Performance Studies. The research I did on the Astor Place Riot fed into an American Studies thesis paper, as well as a play that I wrote and directed with the Theater Department. Today, I'm a public radio reporter, working for San Francisco NPR stations KALW and KQED. My job uses the same skills I practiced as an undergrad: research, writing, and storytelling. I became a journalist because it was important for me that my work reached a broad audience. Writing for the BUJ was the first time my original research was published and made available to the public. I still get occasional messages about it, like the time a 7th grader in Thailand wanted my help for her presentation in history class!

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— Kayli Jester, Editor-in-Chief