

Aussie Life / Language

James Nicholls



It used to be that sporting endeavour was regarded as a noble cause, and that our sporting pastimes were governed by unwritten rules that complimented the written rules or laws, as in the case of cricket which is oft regarded as the most character-building and purest of games.

This is no longer the case with sport in thrall to the dollar rather than the intrinsic pleasure to be gained from participation or indeed spectating. Betting, alcohol, fast food and sugary drinks are cheek by jowl with virtually every sport in every stadium and on every one of the many screens by which we now live our lives. What would thinkers such as Marshall McLuhan or a philosopher such as Roland Barthes make of our society today?

As we sit in Olympic fever amidst the far more deadly fever of the global pandemic, I ask myself how is it that athletes are allowed to travel into and out of Australia so freely whilst I must remain desk-bound? With my civil liberties being constantly eroded by politicians who after nearly 18 months of exposure to the pandemic seem still to have no understanding of how to cope with or handle it. Surely all sensible people realise that this affliction cannot be kept to zero and that we must learn to live with Covid-19 and its variants. This large and beautiful prison that we call home is still a prison after all, unless one happens to be playing sport.

The Olympic Games go ahead, Australia's cricketers are in the West Indies (they are not winning so that it is why it has not been big news), the State of Origin goes ahead, whilst our rugby players compete against France and New Zealand. If these young athletes are allowed to ply their trade as professionals, then why not I?

It is reminiscent of the end of the Roman Empire, *panem et circenses* or bread and circuses, to use the phrase attributed to the 1st century satirical Roman poet Decimus Iunius Iuvenalis, known to us as Juvenal. Politicians, from our happy-clapper federal leader who this week went on popular radio to disclaim past urban myths, to our state leaders, all are wonderful at providing extravaganzas to divert our attention, to pacify us from the real source of grievance which is sure-

ly their very incompetence at coming up with a sensible combined and coherent approach to the pandemic.

I have been amazed that the sheep in Victoria and now NSW have continued to accept the situation imposed upon them by their governments and have not kicked against the pricks. It is incomprehensible that our governments continue to tell us what we can and cannot do in contravention of civil liberty and as a cover for their inadequacies in dealing with what is undoubtedly a far from simple situation. But they want to have the glory of Rome and haven't these politicians, of whom we were not previously aware, milked their Warhol period of fame! Perhaps once elections have come and gone, and we have been saved by our well-meaning but o'erweening leaders we shall be able to return to the real world and learn to live again even with the threat of this pandemic still in existence.

A Portuguese friend of mine recounted an apocryphal story the other day; sitting on a train a man observed another passenger peeling a banana and then throwing it uneaten out of the window. After the third banana, he could not resist but asked the banana-peeling traveller why he was acting in this fashion. The reply came, that it was to keep away the elephants. My friend observed that here there were no elephants. The banana peeler rested his case at his perspicacity.

There have been just too many incidents whereby politicians in their didactic fashion tell us how we can and cannot behave but carry on with a total disregard for their own actions. The leader of Queensland plans to attend the Tokyo Olympics in order to press the case for Brisbane 2032. Another ridiculous example one rule for them and another for us, as another friend is unable to be at his dying father's bedside overseas as it will be impossible for him in the current situation to return to his work and family in Queensland.

Politicians in this incredibly wealthy and lucky country need to remember that they are representatives of the people and not glorified Roman senators and emperors. It is a disgrace that so few people in Australia have been vaccinated. The misinformation presented by our leaders has been mindboggling. At the end of the day all those who wish to be vaccinated should be and quickly, those who do not want to do so should be allowed their wishes; and then we all need to face up to the consequences of being allowed back into the real world.

I do have empathy, or perhaps at my age, sympathy with the athletes going to Tokyo – it is their dream, their passion, their livelihood: but why should their dreams, passion, livelihood, their ability to

be allowed to follow them be placed above those of others?

The Premier of Queensland should not be going to Tokyo. The Premier of NSW should not have got into a State of Origin pandemic match. And while I am at it, does anyone really know the location where and the circumstances of how the Premier of Victoria had his bad accident and hurt his back?

As Juvenal also said, 'Was there, at any time, a richer harvest of evil?'

Kel Richards

Talking to Peta Credlin on Sky News I coined a new expression, 'language communists'. I used to call the bullies who want to force us to change the words we use 'language fascists', but I want to acknowledge that these aggressive campaigners for novel pronouns and the banning of such words as 'wife', 'husband', 'mother' and 'father' come from the Left, not from the Right. That makes them 'language communists'. And although they call themselves Marxists or socialists 'communist' is the correct word chosen by Comrade Karl himself. When the bearded prophet co-wrote a summary of his ideology with his good mate Friedrich Engels he didn't call it *The Marxist Manifesto* and he certainly didn't call it *The Democratic Socialist Manifesto*. His chosen label was *The Communist Manifesto*. The word 'communist' was coined by the French in 1840 to name the abolition of personal property. But the word would be dead and buried today if it hadn't been taken up by the unfunniest of the Marx Brothers. It was Marx's use of 'communist' for his ideology that gave the word currency. Of course, the Left hate being labelled 'communist' because they know that every day, unpolitical Aussies can still hear the ring of totalitarian jackboots in the word. So the Left avoid it like crazy. We should not let them get away with this. We should start calling out the Marxists for the communists they are – with the totalitarian ambitions they have. We became cautious about doing so when, in the 1960s, calling someone a 'Communist' was declared by the courts to be defamatory. But there is a difference between a Communist and a communist. The first is a paid-up member of The Party, while the second is merely a promotor of Karl's Crazy Ideas. Hence my label of 'language communists'. American radical and communist sympathiser Saul Alinsky (in his book *Rules for Radicals*) gave the game away when he wrote: 'He who controls the language controls the masses'. That's their game. We must keep calling them out on this. Are you with me, comrade?

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