

*Letter to Prof. Andrei Markovits  
From his student, David*

Dearest Andy,

I'm wishing you the happiest of 70th birthdays today. I am so sorry I can't be in Ann Arbor to celebrate with you; unfortunately my brother's wedding in Sydney is on October 12.

I hope you get some time today to reflect on what an incredible influence and presence you have been in the lives of so many people, including mine. I'll never forget John Trobe's perfect summation of the way you combine the best of the European and American, of high culture and the street. Meeting you at Michigan was an extraordinary revelation. I remember all the way back in 2004 how you invited me (the first of many, deeply appreciated invitations) to see *Der Untergang* with some of your undergraduate students. The way they then all talked about it over coffee afterwards, with you, the trusted mentor, helping them make sense of what they had seen--I still don't think I've ever seen a more ideal representation of what the academy could, and should be. Students--and I was one of them--come to you because they sense that there can be more to university life than simply getting grades and getting skills. There is a whole world to be understood, interpreted, fascinated by, using the immense resources bequeathed to us by generations of scholars, artists and activists. You have been the gateway to that world for countless young people. At a time when social science is constantly in danger of forgetting about the social, you show us everything that it can be.

Thank you so much for everything over the last 14 years, Andy. I have modelled myself on you as a scholar and a teacher, and many of my happiest memories of Ann Arbor are ones you gave me. All those games we saw, all those conversations we had over lunch or in your living room, our times in lecture halls together, your time in Sydney. I will treasure these things forever. I can't imagine my time in America without you--you, quite simply, *are* America to me. Thank you for your extraordinary generosity as a mentor and friend. Thank you giving me such a strong grounding in the theories that still help me make sense of everything. Thank you for all the joy we have shared together.

With much love,  
David