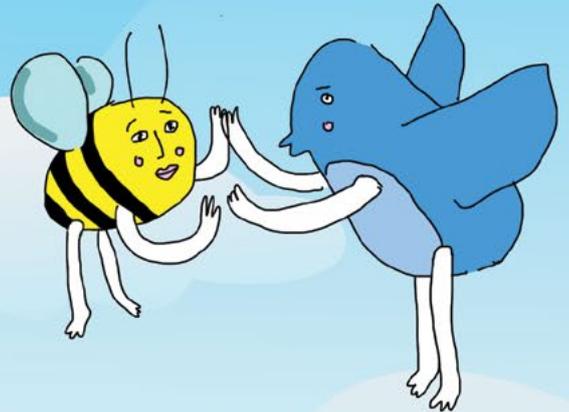
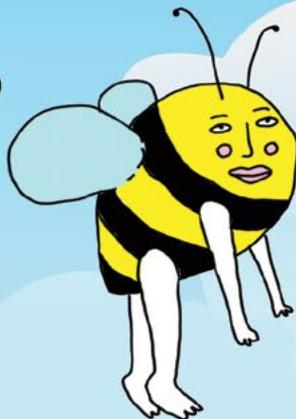
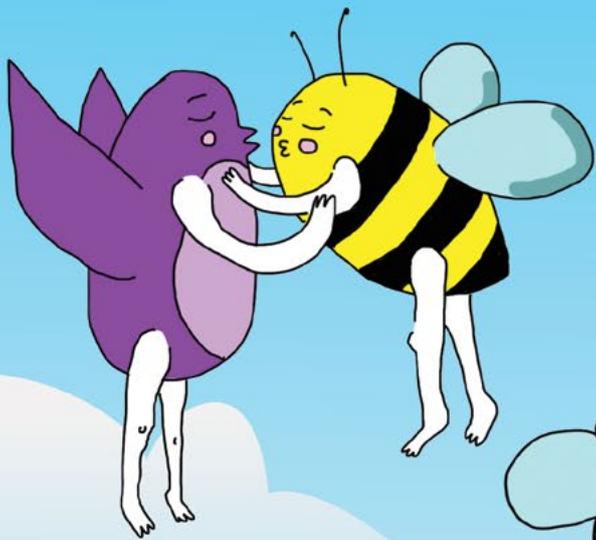
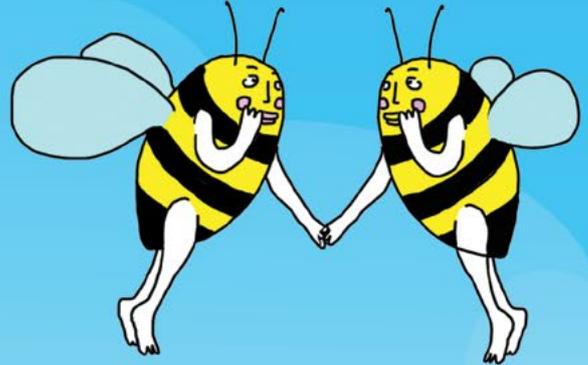
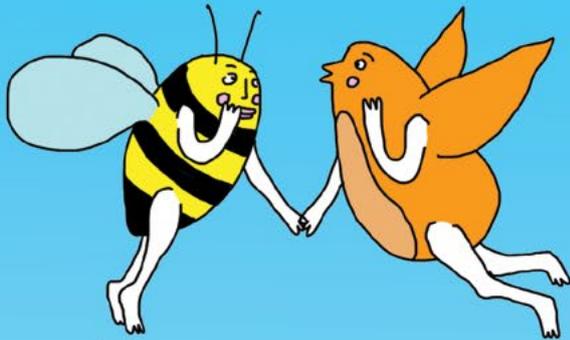
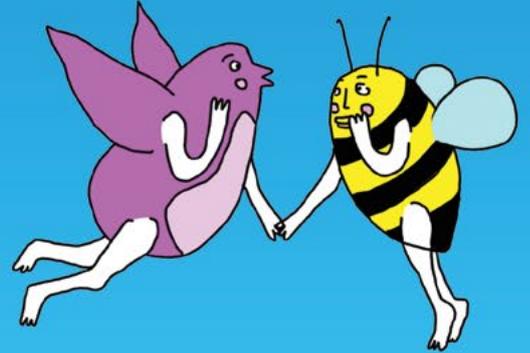
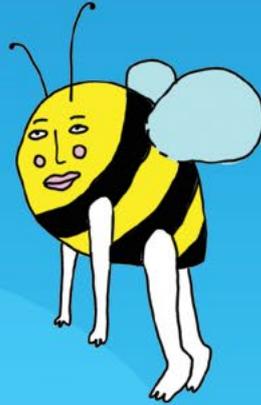


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ISSUE 6



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Fatima discusses terror attacks in Afghanistan during Nawroz.

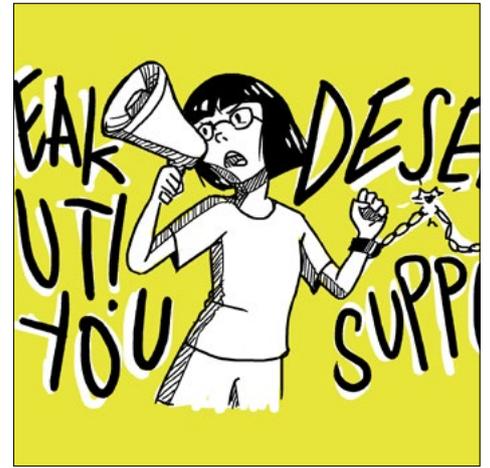


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Emelia interviews Minushka, an educator at Rape Prevention Education.

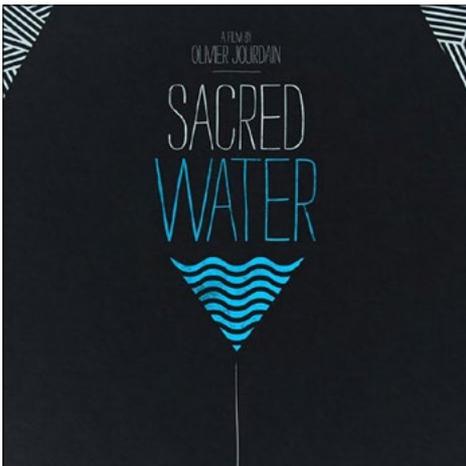


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EDITORIAL

with Helen Yeung and Jasmin Singh

ENERGISED AFTER THE BREAK?



Jasmin: We're back! And the answer to the above question is a sort of. Did we want a longer break like everyone else? Yes. But here we are writing another editorial for another issue of Craccum. We recently found out from our News and Politics Editor that there are copies of Craccum at Shaky Isles and that people are actually reading the editorial (*GASP*). So hello to you reader who is reading this and making us feel as if this is not just going into the void.



Helen: Great, we're back, if you can't sense the sarcasm in this I don't know who you are and you should stop reading this! Jasmin and I were extremely productive these holidays, this is not an ironic statement. Call it shameless self promotion or not, but we started a side project called *Migrant Zine Collective* (like us on Facebook) and hosted a zine-making workshop at Auckland Public Libraries on migration, feminism and diaspora. I've also been on a cat-searching journey but have been unsuccessful so far, if you have any tips on finding my soulmate please email me through the editor email.



Jasmin: The workshop was a huge success and we were both so glad so many people showed up and made beautiful art. Helen has been sending me cute pictures of possible cats, warming my heart and making me jealous I can't have a cat in my flat. We also planned to make Laksa over the break and will probably do so soon, stay tuned for an update on the Laksa in the next editorial. The theme of this week's issue is sex, in line with the university and AUSA's Sex Week. We don't understand the problematic emoji use for the event, but okay.



Helen: Neither to be honest, why is a taco emoji used? Pretty uncomfortable that an ethnic food is used to symbolise genitalia for one. Jasmin and I only embarrassingly found out about this during a conference in Wellington at the start of the year. This issue is full of great articles though, Cameron's article on male contraceptives is really informative and I love love love Jenn's birds and bees on the cover. Anyway, happy reading and listen to us ramble again in the next issue!

WORLD NEWS

Lake Chad, Disappears as Problems Grow

BY HAYDEN NOYCE

An international conference held in Abuja, Nigeria, a month ago, has brought renewed attention to Lake Chad in Central Africa. A vital water source for 20 million people over four countries, sharing its basin; the lake has shrunk from 25,000km² in 1963, to 1500km² today.

Coupled with unsustainable environmental practices and overpopulation; climate change has been attributed to this decrease. Dr ChiChi Aniagolu-Okoye, Director of WaterAid in Nigeria, in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria, says; "... drought and desertification brought about by the effects of climate change; high winds and temperature in the region have resulted in diminishing resources of the Lake Chad Basin."

Also affecting the basin is a humanitarian crisis, perpetuated by Boko Haram's presence. An estimated 9.2 million people require humanitarian relief, including 2.8 million refugees. Famine and poverty, stemming from the degradation of the lake's resources, has been linked to increased violence and jihadist recruitment.

Following the conference, the Chinese and Italian companies, PowerChina and Bonifica Spa, announced their intentions to divert water from the Congo River to the Lake. However, 50 billion dollars must first be raised; as well as environmental and security challenges, to be overcome. The feasibility report has yet to be undertaken. ■

Confidential Documents Implicating Oil Companies Released

BY NAOMI SIMON-KUMAR

In recently released documents, Dutch news organisation De Correspondent has uncovered that the oil conglomerate Shell was aware of the impacts of fossil fuels on climate change by at least the mid-80s. The confidential documents have been published online by an environmental advocacy organisation known as Climate Investigations Centre. In one 1988 internal report titled 'The Greenhouse Effect', researchers employed by Shell raised concerns about the risks of fuel industry at the time, noting that 'by the time the global warming becomes detectable it could be too late to take effective countermeasures to reduce the effects or even to stabilise the situation.' They also recognised a need for corporations to take 'forward-looking' action, emphasising the implications for the world were too large to not address immediately.

Similar reports have also revealed awareness of the science around climate change from oil and gas corporate ExxonMobil. Environmental advocates point out that the files contradict the public position taken by the companies on climate change concerns throughout the 1990s. These findings follow multiple investigations on industry collusion, including a lengthy expose published by the Los Angeles Times in 2015 detailing how industry executives have long been aware of the risks associated with carbon dioxide emissions, but funded research to suppress these concerns and block potential solutions. ■



Air Force Base in Auckland halts operations after drone incident

BY UMASHA GUNARATHNE

A drone resulted in a halt of operations at Auckland's Whenuapai Airport on Monday morning after a close encounter with a Royal New Zealand Air Force Helicopter. The incident occurred when the SH_2G(I) Seasprite helicopter was involved in an instrument training flight near Browns Bay in Auckland's North Shore, and a drone was spotted just 60 meters away from the helicopter at a height of 914 meters. Under standard procedure, due to the drone breaching the no-fly zone near Whenuapai airport, operations were suspended for 30 minutes. Browns Bay is a popular area for drone use with the Whenuapai air traffic control area being the busiest nationwide.

The deputy director of general aviation of the Civil Aviation Authority, Steve Moore called the incident "very annoying" and also commented on the frequent drone incidents interrupting airport operations; as a similar incident occurred just a few days before near the Auckland Airport when a drone was located around 5 kilometers away from a runway towards Manukau. Following this incident the deputy director stated "Pilots and their passengers should be able to take off and land at our airports without the added risk of a drone coming into contact with their aircraft,".

Operations at Whenuapai Airport are continuing as usual now. ■

How “Crispy” Rendang Turned into a Global Conversation

BY HELEN YEUNG AND JASMIN SINGH

When was the last time you turned on the televisions and tuned into the intensely white world of MasterChef? As firm believers of torturing ourselves with tasteless food shows, we've both been following the recent “crispy” rendang incident which has sparked into a juicy international debate. For those of you that are unfamiliar with such “ethnic” foods beyond the land of roast potatoes and gourmet steamed dumpling, rendang is a delicious Southeast Asian slow cooked meat dish of a coconut based sambal. The meat of choice is usually beef but there are variations made with chicken too.

So how did the controversy start? It all happened a few weeks ago when MasterChef UK contestant Zaleha Kadir Olpin, who is of a Malaysian migrant background, was told by two white male judges (no surprise) on the show that her chicken rendang should have been “crispy” as opposed to how it was traditionally made.

This plunged into a raging debate amongst netizens and even political figures. While Foreign Minister Anifah Aman wrote on Facebook: “It is amusing when foreigners try to teach Malaysians about their own traditional foods. I wonder if this is a form of ‘whitesplaining’ that you hear about on social media.” The conversation even spread to previous Malaysian Prime Minister and current opposition party leader, Mahathir Mohamad, commenting on the issue and suggesting that the judges were probably

confusing rendang for KFC chicken instead.

But despite the amount of commentators arguing how Zaleha deserves an apology for being eliminated from the show, (not very) shockingly, John Torode, one of the judges on the panel decided to stand his grounds, embarrassingly questioning the authenticity of the dish's origins. He tweets: “we could of course argue as to it's origin and **wether** chicken is classic or an adaptation”. Firstly John, you could at least utilise the spell check feature, but more importantly who do you think you are to correct something that has existed before your ancestors colonised every one of our countries.

He further throws himself into the fiery pit of shame, by responding to criticism on Twitter with: “Maybe Rendang is Indonesian!! Love this!! Brilliant how excited you are all getting... Namaste.” We get it John, you enjoy lighting incense and doing yoga in your spare time. Apparently all Asian cultures are the same and you can greet everyone with Namaste no matter where they are from, eat pray love folks.

But wait there's more, grab your popcorn. In defence of his statement about the “non-crispy” chicken rendang, Gregg Wallace explained later on *Good Morning Britain* that he didn't mean he expected fried chicken but instead he meant the chicken was “uncooked”, “white and flabby”. Sorry, did we miss the memo or have our families been feeding us raw chicken our

whole lives. Does chicken turn purple when it's cooked, is that what you expected Greg with 2 g's?

This is not the first time people of colour have faced racial discrimination on cooking shows. While the judge panel consistently lacks diversity, often consisting of bland white men, ethnic minorities are often critiqued for cooking traditional ethnic foods whereas white contestants who cook the same food are considered “knowledgeable” and “trendy”. Not to mention how the food ethnic minorities cook often has to be tailored to the aesthetics and tastes of white judges and audiences. This serves as a reminder of how ethnic foods are often perceived as inferior, lacking technique or skill in comparison to Western cuisine, leaving people of colour confined to “cheap eats” spaces or opening small scale restaurants and takeaways.

Amidst all the anger we have, we will now end this article with one tweet which carries our hopes and dreams: “God, give me the confidence of a white man who believes he knows how to make a Malaysian dish better than a Malaysian woman.” ■

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Cambridge Analytica and the Privacy Fallout

BY ALISHA SIRAJ

Social media appears to have an unavoidable presence in the 21st century. We're in a state of constant consumption while absorbing information from all directions. We're somewhat aware of the negative effects of these social platforms, including depression, marketing sensationalism and unrealistic expectations, but what doesn't get mediated enough are the potential threats posed to our cybersecurity. In the wake of the Cambridge Analytica scandal, I took some time to think about the extent to which I had control over what I was consuming or whether I was really just another cog mindlessly churning the wheels of the grand media machine. So yea, some real heavy, existential thinking, Noam Chomsky style.

If you're not familiar with the controversy, 'Cambridge Analytica', is a data analysis firm that specialises in boosting political campaigns. It has been revealed that through a manufactured Facebook quiz, the company acquired access to the information of over 80 million individuals globally. Through this data, psychographic profiles were created, which were employed to supposedly situate advertisement (notably the US presidential campaign and the Brexit referendum) to certain demographics of the public. Naturally, people were a tad angry about the violation, with more and more people

encouraging others to #deletefacebook. This infringement of privacy poses many questions, which remain unanswered... Like did this really affect Trump's ascent to the presidency in 2016? How accurate are these psychographic profiles? Can the evil geniuses at data mining firms really sway me enough to change my political views or make me buy a better toaster?

Approximately 80% of these profiles were from the US but it was recently estimated that 10 kiwis took part in the quiz, resulting in the leaked data of nearly 64,000 New Zealanders. Privacy Commissioner, John Edwards, is in a futile battle with Facebook in an attempt to gain more information about this collected data, a request that has been denied. These revelations may be considered a watershed moment for what's to come, but it's clear that the real issue at stake is much, much bigger. Users are confronted by a complicated question: is being 'connected' through social media really worth these faceless conglomerates harvesting our information as a potential tool of manipulation? This fear is further propagated by the threat posed by state surveillance. For instance, China's proposed 2020 social credit scheme. A system in which every citizen will be ranked based on gathered economic and social data. This includes social media interactions, quarrels with employers,

speeding tickets and even an overall evaluation of how trustworthy an individual is deemed to be- all at the fingertips of the government. It appears we're slowly approaching Big Brother territory...

I was curious about the information Facebook had on me so I downloaded all the stored data on the site (you can do this at the bottom of your general settings). I ended up scrolling through files upon files of pictures, videos, contacts, messages, things I've liked and even (somewhat pointlessly) all the stickers I've used on the app since 2011. Seeing all my information neatly collated in folders reminded me of assemblies in high school where an IT expert would come in to explain the 'technological footprint' we all leave behind. Or in my case, a gigantic boot print, easily retrievable within 10 minutes.

At the heart of things, the most troubling issue is the fact that users have been dispossessed of their agency to decide what happens with their own personal information. We may 'grant access' but where does this information go? Perhaps something to consider next time you're online, after all, it's quite a bleak moment when you come to realise that the greatest commodity being sold in this world today, is in fact you. ■

A Call for Action

FATIMA MOHAMMADI DISCUSSES THE TERROR ATTACKED IN AFGHANISTAN DURING NAWROZ.

Nawroz, also known as the Persian New Year, or the first day of spring, is celebrated by many across the globe. In Afghanistan, Nawroz is typically celebrated by the country's minority Shiites (Shia), by visiting shrines. It is a time of happiness, a time of promoting the values of peace and solidarity, and one may see it as a fresh start or renewal. But this was not the case for the thirty-two or so Afghans who lost their lives while attending the celebration. On Tuesday the 20th of March, amongst the many celebrants, a suicide bomber detonated himself.

That day a mother lost her child, a child lost his father, a husband lost his wife, and a wife lost her husband. This is the reality of Kabul - that one does not know if they are to step outside today whether they may return home alive or in one piece. It is no longer safe to attend celebrations such as Tuesday's event.

In a statement on Wednesday, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Mr. Tadamichi Yamamoto condemned the horrific attack alongside Afghan Prime Minister Ashraf Ghani¹.

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or ISIS) claimed responsibility for the attack. This is one of many terror attacks ISIS has carried out in Afghanistan since their arrival in 2014. With the announcement of a caliphate by ISIS infamous leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi in June 2014, the group quickly found some supporters among extremist individuals in Afghanistan. The group has substantially increased attacks in the past two years, and have recruited hundreds of additional supporters from within Afghanistan². Although the extremists have long targeted the minority Hazara Shia population in the country, recent attacks both in Afghanistan and worldwide have shown that it is not just a war against the Shia minority, but a war against humanity.

The Hazaras of Afghanistan form about nine percent of the total population. This ethnic group has been the victim of discrimination and terror faced by the Taliban for decades. For the past two years, ISIS and the Taliban have joined forces, subsequently changing the dynamics of war in Afghanistan and its impact on the Hazara community.³

Kabul has recently seen a flood of large-scale

1 TOLO News 'UN condemns suicide attack as death toll rises to 32' 21 March 2018 <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/unama-condemns-kabul-bombing-death-toll-rises-32>

2 'Afghanistan: Dozens Killed in ISIL attack Near Kabul University' 22nd March 2018, Aljazeera, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/03/afghanistan-dozens-killed-explosion-kabul-university-18032108338645.html>

3 Torfeh Massoumeh 'ISIL in Afghanistan: A growing threat' Aljazeera 20th August 2017, March 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/08/isil-afghanistan-growing-threat-17081313122968.html>

militant attacks by both the Taliban and the Islamic State group. The bombings in Kabul are so regular that it has become the norm for the citizens of Kabul. But it has also become the norm for us in the so-called West.

Today, a bomb blast kills 100 or so people and there is no reaction. It seems like the death of these people are just digital numbers that do not have meaning anymore because it is the norm - it happens all the time. We have accepted this and we go about our days without giving it a second thought. The UN condemns the actions of these extremists but it remains just a statement in the headlines. For example, in late January, a Taliban attacker drove an ambulance filled with explosives into the heart of Kabul city, killing at least 103 people and wounding as many as 235.⁴ Since this attack and Tuesday's, numerous attacks have followed, and nothing has been done. Just leaders expressing their empathy but sitting back and allowing these attacks to take place.

Will the citizens of Afghanistan be able to live peacefully? Without fear of indiscriminate attacks by a terrorist who has no respect for human life? The new generation in Afghanistan has seen nothing but deaths of their loved ones, suicide bombers, and buildings decorated in ruins.

Based on statistics of the Afghanistan Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), last year over 10,000 Afghan civilians were killed and wounded during attacks across the country - including 2,000 children.

This increase in attacks is due to the dominant presence of ISIS in Afghanistan. The Islamic State (also referred to as Daesh) first captured the world's attention when the group's fighters successfully drove the Iraqi government forces out of the cities of western Iraq, followed by the capture of Mosul city and Syria. ISIS was the most feared extremist group not just in countries the group occupied but here in the west.

It is time to recognise the extent ISIS has reached in Afghanistan. ISIS did lose the war in Iraq towards the end of last year but it did not die out, and it is very much still present in countries such as Afghanistan. When the Islamic state first emerged in Afghanistan, both the Afghan political and security leadership played down rumours of their growing numbers within the country, and claimed the group did not have the capacity to carry out attacks in Afghanistan⁵.

4 Faiez Rahim 'IS Suicide Bomber Kills 33 as Afghans Celebrate New Years' BBC News, 21st March 2018, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/explosion-heard-kabul-afghans-mark-year-53897273>

5 Langari Syed Zabiullah 'The Rise and Fall of Daesh's Caliphate' Tolo News, 19th January 2018, <https://www.tolonews.com/index.php/opinion/rise-and-fall-daesh%E2%80%99s-caliphate>

Within a few months, the reality of the situation became clear when the brutal and ideologically extremist group was recognised as active in the unstable regions of eastern Afghanistan. Daesh first appeared in Nangarhar and Kunar provinces (both border Pakistan) where they hung several Taliban commanders who refused to pledge allegiance to the group⁶. The announcement sparked major concerns among ordinary Afghans who were still paying a big price in the face of the Taliban's unending insurgency.

The first attack launched by ISIS in Afghanistan took place on April 18, 2015, when a suicide bomber killed 33 people outside a bank in Jalalabad in Nangarhar. This was a wake-up call for the Afghan government to accept the presence of the terrorist group and their power⁷. Slowly over the past three years, the extremists have carried out on slaughter attacks across Afghanistan, especially targeting the minority Shia of the country.

In the past two years, the group has carried out an estimated 60 attacks across Afghanistan, with the majority of attacks being suicide bombers blowing themselves up amongst civilians.⁸ Included in these attacks were⁹:

- The attack on Tabyan Cultural Center in Kabul - 42 killed and 84 wounded
- The attack on Jawadia Mosque in Herat - 29 killed and 46 wounded
- The attack on Shamshad TV in Kabul - 2 killed and 21 wounded
- The attack on Imam Zaman mosque in Kabul - 50 killed and 46 wounded
- The attack on a mosque in Ghor province - 33 killed and 46 wounded
- The attack on al-Zahra Mosque in Kabul - 7 killed and 21 wounded

Afghanistan has been at war for decades, and Afghans have not seen a day of peace. This has become worse with the presence of ISIS. World leaders, and the UN and the Afghan president must stop making statements in the headlines, recognise the growing threat by ISIS and take immediate action - a war is not won by just empty statements and empathy in newspapers. There is no immunity from war. Civilians, journalists, humanitarian and health care professionals are on the frontline of seeing bodies twisted into corpses.¹⁰ ■

6 ibid.

7 ibid.

8 ibid.

9 ibid.

10 Dr Ahmad Ayshea 'War: A Landscape of Trauma' Tolo News, 13 February 2018, <https://www.tolonews.com/index.php/afghanistan/war-landscape-trauma>

Article number one; disappointment

BY BONNIE CRAWSHAW-MCLEAN

Three knocks and no answer.

Impatient and excited for the excessive alcohol consumption, free darts, and light hearted conversations, you burst in at the twist of the doorknob, temporarily forgetting that you are entering a place of covert peril. Only temporarily though.

There are lots of kids here; wearing slinky skirts and matte concealer, turned up collars and zipped-up-to-the-top track jackets (me), baggy shirts and baggy jeans and baggy lives. Kids are scattered here and there; so effortlessly cool and perpetually accompanied by 2/3 full bottles of generally beer (but often wine in the other hand too). Outside is an array of kids, talking sluggishly and leaning on each other, all presumed outsiders within their angsty lives. It's excellent.

You gravitate towards the kids sitting in the freshest of air in the cold night, filling it with more toxic fog and alleviating the hosts weariness around her parents finding out about the cigarettes that were smoked that night. The can in your hand gets lighter and illuminates as you suck the tar from the shittily rolled dart; time for another (what's that? Number 5? Damn, you must be finally making it to the cool teenager status, because you don't feel anything). An arm lurks nearby and snakes around your waist. "You're cold, holy shit dude." and he's rubbing up the side of your rib cage, kind of overstaying his welcome in your personal bubble and, although possibly well intentioned at the beginning, needs to stop. "Haha yeah it's fucking freezing out here. Are you cooked on something Ryan?" His eyes are darting around, but in slow motion, and he is mildly unbalanced, slapping your question away with a flick of his (not touching you) wrist. The other one is still cased up close to you and it's time to leave because his fingers are pretty much placed right on your tit. "Okay yeah bye Ryan, I need a refill."

What just happened? Did Ryan, know that he was making you uncomfortable and weird?

I mean the questions arise:

"Why didn't I stop that?"- Disappointingly, you shouldn't have had to stop anything.

"Why did I feel like I should've been okay with that?"- Disappointingly, that thought has been drilled into your head by mainstream media since you could read.

"Would anyone have understood that this incident was quite

damaging despite it having occurred more than twice again that night?"- Disappointingly, the majority of people won't understand that this incident was quite damaging for you.

"Did I do anything,? Wear anything? Say anything to provoke this groping?"- Disappointingly, in your teenage life, the probability of you being encouraged to believe that this all happened because you did something wrong, is very high.

Disappointingly, the rape culture that covertly snakes its way within your life and shows itself during a, somewhat ordinary, Saturday night out is everywhere in New Zealand.

Disappointingly, it doesn't just end at the end of high school.

Disappointingly, it's not occurring in the backstreets.

Disappointingly, the rape culture within our country is likely weaved into your family history.

Louis CK, Harvey Weinstein and Kevin Spacey are three successful, predatory, wealthy, powerful men that have -just recently- been held accountable, years on, for abusing women, men and children sexually, and using their status as justification for their selfish and ludicrous acts of abuse (shall we call it what it is).

While Louis CK released an apology to the five women who spoke out about him, his lack of ownership and remorse was glaring and the media sucked it up, absorbed all of the lovely aspects of his badly worded "apology". Through evocative media coverage and misreported stories, there is a notion that we must feel sorry for this rapist or sexual abuser. This notion neglects and sets aside the victims experience of sexual abuse and dismisses them in a way which glorifies the abuser. ("if your first impulse is to praise Louis CK for making a decent apology, take a second before you say something and pivot your attention toward the...survivors instead."-*Tom&Lorenzo*¹)

There is an idea that sexual abuse and sexual misconduct is in some way the victim's fault and, depending on the abuser, there will be NO justice or punishment given as the high profile nature of the abuser removes them from the moral ethics of human civilisation and places them above the law and superior to that of a "weak woman who asked for it". This notion has a trickle down effect. From the cosmetically enhanced streets of Hollywood, the media's stance and reporting of rape culture remains inaccurate and misrepresented and it influences the way that we act as New Zealanders. A country with a 'she'll be right' attitude and a terrible avoidance of any sort of sexual topic, the rape culture is able to thrive and run rampant in the less manicured streets of the nation's towns. ■

**Contact a support service near you by calling Rape Crisis'
National free helpline for more information.**

Phone: 0800 88 33 00

Website: <http://www.rapecrisisnz.org.nz/>

¹<https://edition.cnn.com/2017/11/10/entertainment/louis-ck-apology-reaction/index.html>



Rape Prevention Education

*Emelia Masari had the privilege of being in conversation with **Minushika Punchihewa**, an educator at Rape Prevention Education.*

What is Rape Prevention Education?

Rape Prevention Education is a non-profit organisation based within the wider Auckland region, working both locally and nationally to prevent sexual violence.

RPE has a rich and long history within New Zealand, as it was initially formed in the 1970s under the name of Rape Crisis Auckland, delivering support and counselling for survivors of rape and sexual abuse. In the mid-1990s RPE's focus shifted to address the lack of work being done in prevention of sexual violence and in 2006 became known as Rape Prevention Education.

RPE works alongside other organisations to prevent sexual violence through the promotion of healthy sexual relationships.

Who does RPE work predominantly work with?

RPE works with a diverse audience including students, community members and professionals and each year we reach over 6,500 young people. We work to prevent sexual violence through delivering educational programmes and health promotion activities. RPE maintains strong relationships with tangata whenua and is committed to Te Tiriti o Waitangi within the practice of this organisation.

What is one of the programmes that you deliver?

'Bodysafe,' is one of our programmes which facilitates conversation about respectful relationships and sex. This programme is usually delivered to year 10 students to develop important

life-skills and gives them the opportunity to ask questions and further their understanding within a safe space. RPE additionally provides resources and information on topics of sexual violence to more than 30 community organisations both locally and nationally.

What inspired you to join this organisation?

I joined the incredible RPE team two years ago and have been extremely lucky to work alongside some of the most diverse and passionate people within this field.

I was inspired to join RPE, firstly because of their strong health promotion background and secondly because I believe sexual violence is a major problem within New Zealand. The work we do at RPE, where we go into secondary schools and deliver educational and skill-building programmes, gives young people the opportunity to discuss what healthy (and unhealthy) relationships look like. We also give young people an opportunity to engage in conversations around consent and sex, which are topics not typically discussed openly within the wider society, let alone in schools.

How can New Zealand foster positive change within the scope of sexual violence?

To see tangible change within New Zealand means we must first enable conversations around sexual violence. Currently, the covert nature of this topic undermines the magnitude of this problem and further perpetuates this harmful behaviour. It's important that young people, who are some of the most vulnerable

in society, are involved within these conversations.

It's quite ironic that as a society we may shy away from having these important conversations around healthy sexual relationships, yet we are subconsciously absorbing conflicting messages around what relationships should look like through film, music and social media. Therefore, it's important that young people are getting the right messages. One way of ensuring this is to make sure we are having these conversations.

Integrating these conversations around what healthy relationships and consent looks like through the schooling system, allows young people to develop important life-skills as well as being able to identify what sexual violence is, in order to look after both themselves and others.

Where can we find more information?

Feel free to check out the RPE website, www.rpe.co.nz for more information about this amazing organisation and what they do and how you can be a part of the change!

RPE is open to working with University facilities and departments, so feel free to contact us through our website. ■

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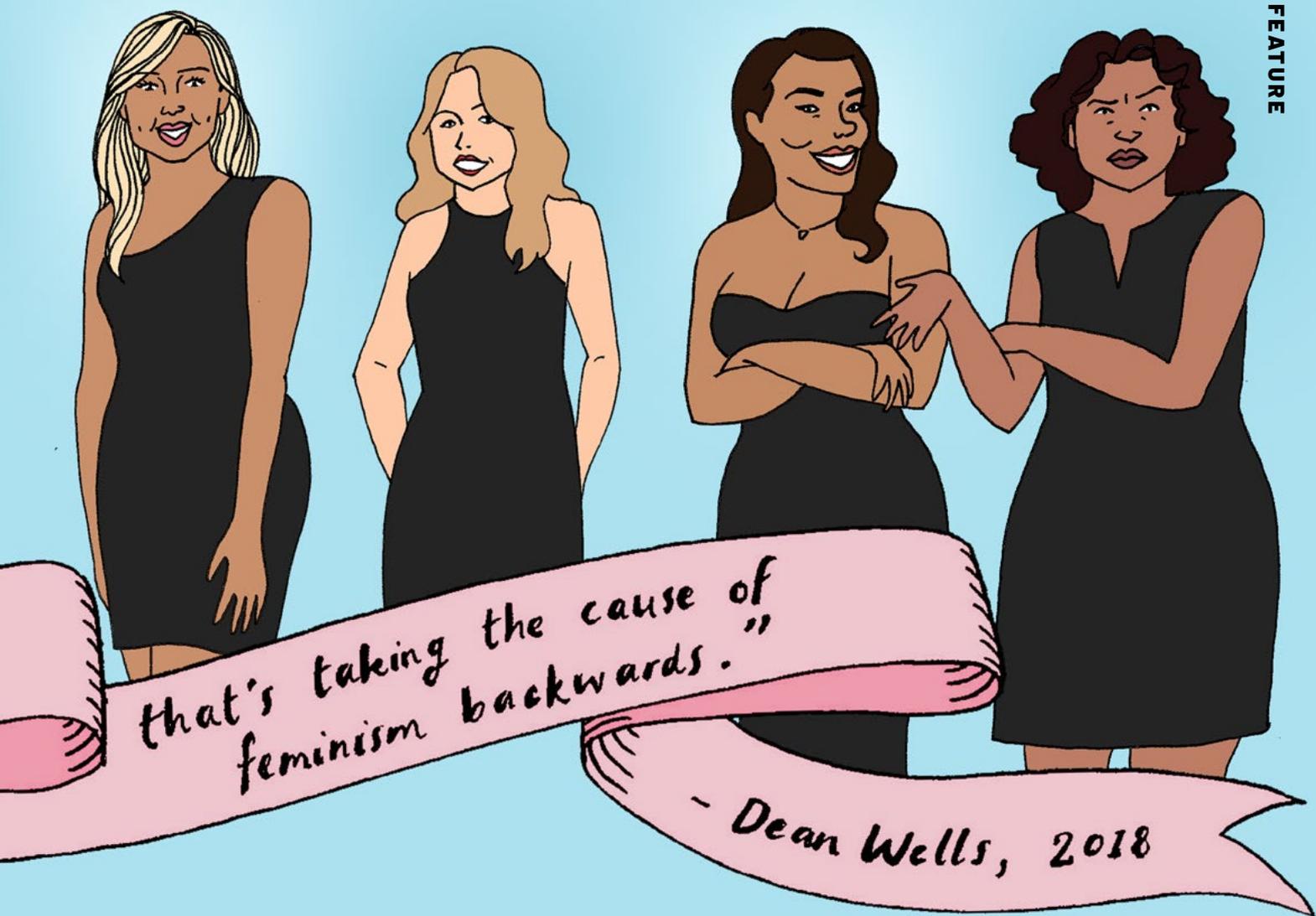
Sexism At First Sight

Milly Sheed discusses *Married at First Sight Australia*: A reality show exposing the dark underbelly of contemporary sexism; a denunciation of the “boys club” and all things underhanded.

From the *Bachelor* (USA or Australia, whatever your preference), to the *Real Housewives of Whatever*, to *Married at First Sight* (MAFS) — we all know (and love) reality shows. Sometimes a little too much. But it is often acknowledged that reality television shows, nowadays, don’t live up to the title of their genre. “Reality” often means the careful manipulation of circumstances, or the devious crafting of storylines in order to best satisfy the viewership quota. Over time, the ‘reality show’ has evolved into a phenomenon. We, the audience, are fully aware — apart from you innocent souls out there — that what we are watching has been brutally edited, chopped and changed to achieve the most dramatic effect; the biggest “shock factor”. However, undeterred by this, we still tune in week after week. It appears that the distance from the viewers’ jaw to the ground has become more important than circumstantial honesty.

I’ve found that, amongst other things, it is all about characterisation. The participant often has no say about the way in which producers and editors construct their personas during the show. A good reality show needs the staples — the villain, the innocent one, the one-who-loves-sex, the asshole. Think about it — how dreary would it be if, stranded on Love Island this season, were a group of fairly reasonable, level-headed individuals who respect each others unique idiosyncrasies and values. Highly unlikely. A juicy story must be achieved at all costs — so the viewers can greedily slurp and devour up the juice with ease. Admit it — you know this. But this doesn’t, despite our best efforts, stop us from clocking in on a Friday night with a cheeky glass of red to watch 90 minutes of our favourite reality show.

Despite these initial scrutinies about the nature of reality television, however, my mind was soberingly



altered when watching an episode of recently aired *Married at First Sight Australia*. There is no doubt in my mind that the attitudes and behaviours shown in relation to women on this particular show are *anything but* fabrication. If you claim not to have seen an episode of *MAFS*, out of all 32 drama-packed episodes, then I applaud you — you have officially fallen off the pop-culture map. But no doubt an article has come across your social media feed expressing some sentiment or other about the various scandals that have unfolded on our screens throughout the series.

The episode that inspired this article (and firmly got my feminist-senses tingling) concerns the infamous “Boys Night.” After watching it, I furiously typed out an email to my editor, pleading with him to let me write about it. With any luck — I can shed some light on the stark reality of what went on in this episode. For those of you who have not seen this episode — the remaining men in the social experiment, after 6 weeks of remaining committed and faithful to their wives-at-first-sight — a tall order, I know — were herded into a lounge with several cameras and plied with alcohol with the vain hope that they would embarrass themselves and say things they wouldn’t normally say. And boy, did the producers hit the jackpot.

Dean — lets call him the instigator because, well, he

is — who we have seen enveloped in scandal only a few episodes prior, when he cheated on his wife with another contestant, Davina — chose, despite the controversy that seems to follow him around, to not hold back his opinions in any way whatsoever. A discussion on “wife-swapping” quickly arose, thanks to Dean’s guidance. With slurred tones, “Right! If you could pick again, right now, who would you pick?!” Justin straight away piped up that he would trade out Carley for Ash. Then Dean shared with the group that he would, based on looks alone (which is the most important consideration after all, right?), take Carley off Justin’s hands. The boys laughed and high-fived. A few of the men looked disgusted but, scarily, this did not halt the conversation.

Meanwhile, at the “Ladies Night” on the other side of Sydney, the women, champagne in hand, cheer on the success of their relationships whilst seeking advice from each other on ways to resolve various mild conflicts within their marriages. In other words — what the experiment requires of them. With scenes switching rapidly from the boys night to girls night — the dissonance in approaches between the men and women towards the experiment was even more conspicuous. While the men were “bro-ing down”, the women exercised their integrity and abided by the rules of the experiment. It was at this point in the evening, that Dean is faced with an ethical quandary —

why did none of the other husbands choose his wife, Tracey, if they could have their chance again? He couldn't understand it. In exclamation, "Tracey's hot, guys! Why doesn't anyone want to bang Tracey?!"

Arguably worse than the conversation at the boy's night, was the confrontation the next evening at the weekly dinner party. Another participant, Charlene, unabashedly questioned Dean on the comments he made, after her husband, Pat, informed her of what had occurred. Many of the husbands had gone home to their wives and described the evening as "boring" and uneventful. But Charlene heard different. Dead set — Charlene asks Dean why he felt comfortable sharing his wife with the other men at the table. (*Charlene for Prime Minister!*) After countless aggravated denials, puffing his chest out, Dean replies, "Yes some things were said, but I'm not going to apologise for being a man."

This comment didn't come as a shock, especially considering Dean's previous one-liners on women when we first met him during the premiere episode. To name a few: a working woman "isn't natural" and women "like to have a leader". However, there was something else about this comment than the shocking ignorance of the former. Of course, a woman should never ask a man to apologise for his gender or sexual orientation — that is something you cannot assign blame to. But when you think that "being a man" gives you the entitlement to incessantly and systematically degrade women behind their backs — your wife nonetheless — then you and I have a problem.

I hope by now you are seeing red as much as I am. I cannot count on two hands the abundance of issues raised by Dean's words during the boys night. But I will persevere, and focus on two main problems I have with this. Firstly, this type of toxic masculinity forged in the tradition that is the "boys club" or the "locker room", although seen as acceptable in many facets of our society today, *is just not OK*. Secondly, it is this species of underhanded, cheap and humiliating sexism — I've dubbed it "contemporary" — that poses such a threat to the future of gender equity in

“The most terrifying thing about this contemporary form of sexism is so simple: the men doing it *think they are doing nothing wrong*”

New Zealand and societies around the globe.

I hear you asking — why does this matter? It's just a reality show. Men, and sometimes women, toss these sort of comments around on a daily basis. The sexism shown by Dean and some of the other men is by no means a new breed. It has been around for decades. It permeates our workplaces, bars, universities and even the public streets. But what is unique about this form of sexism is its subtlety. It doesn't hit you over the head with immorality — its not one of the more basic platitudes: "she belongs in the kitchen", or a more recent favourite: "grab her by the pussy", sentiments us women are accustomed to hearing. The most terrifying thing about this contemporary form of sexism is so simple: the men doing it *think they are doing nothing wrong*. This is certainly clear from the reaction of the husbands when confronted by Charlene during the dinner party — its just what boys do when they get together, isn't it?! This ignorance is dangerous to the future of gender equity. Unfortunately, *MAFS* has put a huge-ass mirror to our society, and the reflection is pretty shoddy.

So, my point? Sexism is on the move! From public declarations and legal inequality, to whispers between bros in bars, in our living rooms and under our sheets. I would perhaps argue the latter is far more sinister. Its prevalence lays in its difficult detection, and its guise lays in the age-old idea that "boys will be boys". This makes much harder to justify calling out. The concept that the bro code *must* be upheld, an idea championed by Dean. It comes at the expense of honesty within a relationship, and this is poison in a progressive society. A culture of "who's hot and who's not" is not only damaging to intimacy in relationships, but to an abundance of other issues like body-confidence and self esteem. We are society saturated by the effects of social media — it dominates every aspect of our lives. The last thing we need, on top of comparing ourselves with others on social media, are the men around us doing the same thing. We, as a society, *have* to measure our public (and private) comments against some sort of moral standard, otherwise it goes from blasé comments about other people's partners, to "jokes" about sexual harrasment and even rape.

This wave of feminism is going to move nowhere without the help of our male friends, boyfriends and husbands. Education is key. So to the gentleman reading — you are the hands and feet needed to fix this underhanded, devious age of contemporary sexism. I want this to light a fire under you, to empower you to, for god's sake, *shut this sort of shit down*. Its ramifications are detrimental to the path to gender equity, forged out by the women who have come before us. Don't let this be the generation that halts women in their tracks — by valuing momentary sexual objectification, and a big thumbs-up from the lads, over moral consideration and integral respect for the women in your life. ■



I was a victim of emotional abuse.

An anonymous writer discusses her experiences of being in an emotionally abusive relationship and the importance for everyone to recognise the impact.

In an alternate universe where every victim is safe from their abuser, not questioned and able to receive support from their network. I would be confident to stand up and speak about my experiences, but unfortunately, this has not been the case and I have to remain anonymous. In a white-dominated society like New Zealand, where women of colour already face a number of barriers, it's difficult to be heard and even more difficult to be taken seriously. Documented below is an account of what happened when I was only 19, it's been 3 years now and I'd like to share this with you.

Since I was a teenager my mother would warn me, "be careful of boys, you never know when they'll take advantage of you". I always took in her words with a grain of salt. I was young and thought I was alert enough to know if something bad were to happen. Years later I was proven wrong. You never realise how being young makes you susceptible and vulnerable to a lot of things. They taught us in year

10 health classes that "abuse" was always defined by physical actions, it meant bruises on your body and to call an 0800 helpline when you felt unsafe. It seemed straightforward, always something you could pinpoint with the human eye. But they never addressed a less visible side of intimate partner violence: emotional abuse.

I was only 14 when I first met him, he was in a long term relationship at the time with another girl. We ended up going to different high schools but met again through mutual friends at a music festival, I was 19 at the time. We started messaging and arranged to have coffee. It seemed like we had a lot in common: art, music, film, politics, feminism, we were both from Chinese migrant families too and bonded over our personal conflicts with conservative Chinese culture. Honestly, Auckland is such a small community it seemed like a miracle at the time to have found someone with similar interests and was from the same diasporic background. Little did I know it

would be my worst mistake to date. You know what they say, when you start dating someone everything is perfect, it's only up till you've know them for longer and all the true colours come out.

It didn't take long before the first red flag came up, it was a rainy day when he came to visit me after class. He was well known within the East Asian community at my university, we bumped into his friends who invited us to a birthday party later that night, I said I didn't mind going. But I was confused at the words that later escaped his mouth. He pulled me aside and told me I was too socially awkward and unable to interact with people, that it was better he went alone. Sure, I was upset but I overlooked it. At that very moment I even contemplated if there was something wrong with me. This didn't happen once but continuously through our relationship. I didn't realise I was actively being put down, my mental health was at one of its lowest points to date. He used that against me too, he treated my anxiety like a daily conversational topic asking if he could translate my experiences into an art project he was creating.

The mind games continued, and he would make me feel guilty about not being a "good girlfriend" and helping him. I was working a minimum wage customer service job at the time, trying to support myself and save up for future plans of going overseas. Once he found out I had weekly income, he constantly asked me to buy him food, cigarettes and alcohol, promising to pay it back, but he never did, even when we broke up. He constantly complained about not having money for daily expenses, he told me he didn't want a part time job as it was against his "anti-capitalist", leftist beliefs. Which I'm now relieved that I can finally say, what a load of bullshit.

“He constantly questioned my abilities of being a feminist activist, making up his own theories on feminism as he believed there was not a need to place women’s experiences first.”

When I refused to help him financially he would tell me I didn't care about him. The abuse wasn't just through financial control, he was studying at a well known media design school at the time, and would manipulate me into helping him design his art and ghost write his essays. Telling me it was my duty to help him, claiming I was selfish if I said I had my own work to do.

I was already involved in feminist and political activism during the relationship. I was halfway through my degree and specialised in women's issues within the Asia region. He claimed that he was interested in what I was doing, and learning more about feminism. I believed him and explained the basics of feminist philosophy. Little did I know it was another strategy used to put me down and raise his ego. He would ask about my research or an opinion on a social issue, then debate with me until he'd put me down in every single way possible. He thrived off the pleasure of "winning" a debate, later I would find out that he told a close friend of mine that I was "mentally capped" and incapable of "higher levels" of thinking. He constantly questioned my abilities of being a feminist activist, making up his own theories on feminism as he believed there was not a need to place women's experiences first. They say never trust any man who claims to be a "feminist", now I can safely say I am never going down that path again. Throughout all of this, I was unaware that he was eroding away my sense of self worth and security, which in turn had a significant impact on my everyday life.

It wasn't just my politics which came under attack. In the course of our relationship we spoke about our families and how we both wanted to be reconnected to Chinese heritage. He found out that my family carried out Taoist ancestor worship whenever we visited my grandparents' graves back home, he was really interested in it so I told him and his friends about the process. He started asking for more and more information about Chinese spiritual beliefs and values, which he had no knowledge of at the time, and coincidentally all of it turned up in his final year art project. I was sick to my stomach when I found out that my personal beliefs were stolen and aestheticised.

Towards the end of the relationship I'd picked up social smoking, drinking habits, I went out till 2am on most weekdays. I was told by him and his friends that I was boring when I didn't show up. But now it becomes clearer and clearer that I was manipulated into all of this. He never cared about me, the relationship was a game of power and control. He took advantage of my kindness and misused my trust. He started telling me that other women were attractive and how he had feelings towards them, including one of my closest friends at the time. I wanted to leave

but kept being manipulated into staying. Through the duration of our relationship he had ingrained himself into my circle of friends, making it impossible for me to escape his presence. I became helpless. I thought it all came to an halt when he cheated on me, finding out on social media that he was seeing my friend. I finally had the courage to block him. Putting a stop to what I'd had enough of.

Little did I know, he'd continue to harass me, continuously asking mutual friends about me and contacting me on other forms of social media. He'd joined the feminist group at my university for people of colour and integrated into the circle, I felt unsafe to set foot on campus knowing that a space I once felt comfortable in was taken up by my former abuser. I had no one to reach out to and no one to help hold him accountable. Friends around me never understood the seriousness and damage inflicted by this relationship, I wish they did. He reached out to me again a few months later, apologising for his mistakes, this would be the first of many. He said he still cared about me and had the audacity to ask for a second chance, but through an open relationship. At that point I'd distanced myself from everything and was lost in direction, I didn't give him a response, only to find out he'd told people he was pitying me because I was so "obsessed" him. I wasn't. I was uncomfortable, afraid and I needed people to see that I was reaching out for help.

I tried extremely hard to move on, I found a supportive partner and was finally in a good, stable relationship. For the longest time he still tried to contact me, using my mental health and social circle as ways to manipulate and blackmail me. I would see him at parties after he had a few drinks and he would become really physical, trying to hold my hand or wrap his arm around me. At first he hid the truth, telling everyone that we just "didn't work out" or that it was "complicated". He even told one person he "loved me" while all of this took place. It was these types of lies which he used to build his image within the community, later using it to portray me as unreliable and even malicious. Later he started telling everyone the relationship was a two-way street, that I was somehow to blame for his abusive actions. For the longest time he made me feel like I had something to hide about my past, but in reality I knew I had nothing to be ashamed of.

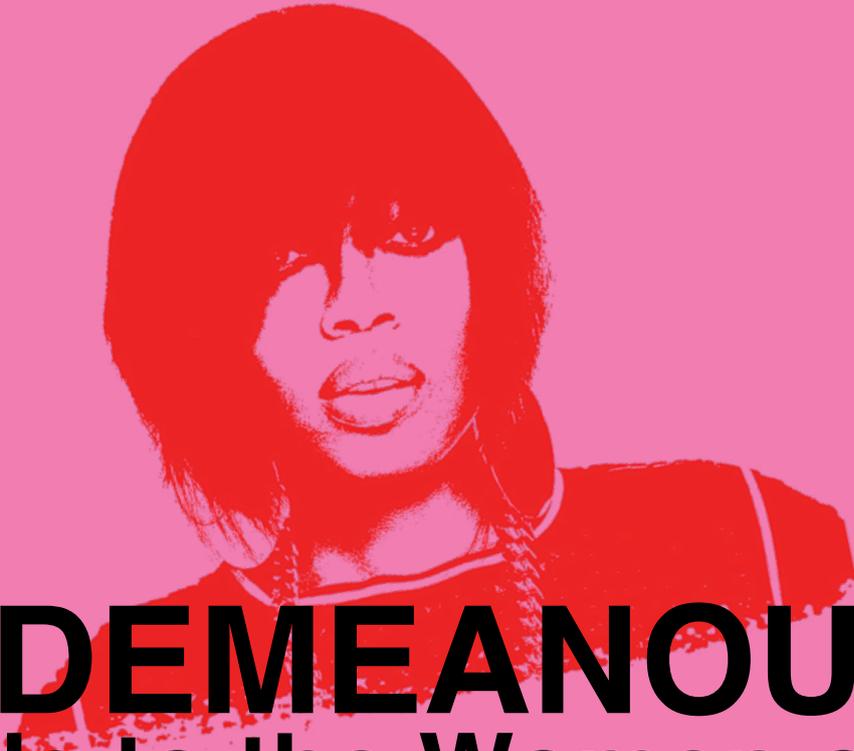
It's been two years since all of this has happened, and it still makes me anxious to bump into him at gigs or catch him with people I used to consider friends. In all honesty, I'm still trying to find closure. It was difficult to recall these events and write about them. But as time passes by it has become easier for me to speak about it. I'm grateful to have a group like Shakti Youth who have supported me through

“The abuse wasn't just through financial control, he was studying at a well known media design school at the time, and would manipulate me into helping him design his art and ghost write his essays.”

this. I can't stress the importance for everyone out there, especially young women, to learn about the symptoms of emotional abuse and the mental trauma it can cause. It sickens me to imagine how people I may never meet will continue to buy into his philosophy. And it sickens me more that his social media continues to reflect the same superiority complex he used to police my actions. This relationship has yet again reminded me that just like white men, men of colour are equally as capable of inflicting physical and emotional harm which continues to affect women in society. I would later find out how he had inflicted similar abusive patterns towards other women of colour in the community.

Although this past relationship has showed me the difficulty of holding an abuser accountable on a communal level, for those of you having a difficult time out there, do remember there is always someone willing to believe you, give you love, security and support. If someone ever approaches you to warn you about an abuser in the community, don't turn a blind eye. It's not a trivial matter, it's not gossip, nor is it a green light for you to contact the abuser to confirm what has happened. Please be mindful that you could put another person's safety at risk. There's consequences, and it's not as easy as you think for someone to have the courage to open up about their experiences.

And finally to all the women reading this, please always remember that you deserve plenty. You deserve someone willing to respect you when you speak, someone willing to respect your intellect and someone that doesn't tread on you like you're worthless. Speak up and don't ever let anyone tell you otherwise! ■



MISDEMEANOUR: An Ode to the Women of Colour of Feminist Rap

Lily Holloway expresses her admiration for Missy Elliott and the inspiration women of colour behind rap music.

Content Warning: Mentions of domestic abuse and sexualisation of women

My dad and I have an unorthodox method of bonding. Every time he drives me somewhere (hard to have a car as a city-dwelling student) he will ask me if I have any more tunes for him this week. Which artists do we prefer? Sex-positive, hustling, succeeding and unapologetically outspoken women of colour artists and their fuck-you-haters, I-am-the-BEST, get-out-of-my-face songs.

Though it might seem strange (especially to my blazered high school debating teammates on the rides to and from tournaments, sorry not sorry girls) belting out lyrics like, "My vag won best vag, your vag won best supporting bag" (Awkwafina) and "I come in peace, but I got shit that need to be released" (MC Lyte) with my dad is the highlight of any week. Cruising down the highway it feels like it is us against the world. Not to mention it never fails to boost morale when debating

against private schools who, when arguing against the benefit reveal they genuinely believe being homeless is a choice.

These women of colour live within the genre where men 'f*cking bitches and hos' is the norm and women (usually women of colour) are confined to playing the role of sexual object rather than sexual subject in both the lyrics and music videos of rap songs. It has become expected and accepted that male rappers will flaunt 'their' women in order to demonstrate their rap authenticity. It is undoubtedly important for this kind of music to exist in order to express frustration towards brutality, systematic oppression and to explore experiences of culture, class and gender. But women should be included in the conversations as equals, not expendable possessions.

It is predominantly women of colour who are degraded, reduced to twerking objects in the background and categorised as hypersexualised hoes, bitches, gold-diggers, and main or side chicks. Too often they are

displayed as though they were a shiny new Ferrari or expensive watch. The rampant fetishisation of Asian women and sexual commodification of African American, Latina and Hispanic women are both historical and continuing occurrences that permeate all areas of the industry. Having the main source of mainstream music that explores your culture simultaneously belittle and demean you is a struggle I, as a white woman, do not have to face. Disrespect does not only emanate from the lyrics and videos but seems to be very ingrained in the industry where women of colour are not granted the same resources or respect. So to give kudos to these rappers solely in terms of what it means for 'womankind,' is extremely diminishing. It is particularly crucial that we examine the representation of women of colour in the rap industry given that appropriation of rap culture is on the rise and the race/gender group that purchases the most rap music is white men.

Rappers like Missy, MC Lyte and Awkwafina (to name a few) challenge the idea that for women of colour to exist

“But women should be included in the conversations as equals, not expendable possessions.”

within the rap world they need to dress ‘sexy.’ While it is always a woman’s choice how she dresses and other rappers such as CupcakKe should not be criticised for opting to show more skin, it’s great to see that women of colour can exist within rap while presenting themselves in an array of diverse and empowering ways. The songs I love are sexually liberating, demand respect, demonstrate success, are proud of diverse culture and show that women get horny too (yes, fellas, you heard that right). In a larger sense, they also show the perseverance and success of women of colour in a male dominated field that lies within a systematically racist and patriarchal society.

I first encountered the world of feminist rap during high-school. I was confused about my sexuality, ashamed of my inability to be sufficiently feminine, extremely frustrated and determined to solve my problems without anyone’s help. Enter the answer to my prayers, Missy Elliott, in a shining Lamborghini drawn by winged lions surrounded by angels singing Aretha Franklin’s ‘Respect.’ Missy grew up surrounded by domestic abuse where both she and her mother were victims of her father’s physical assaults. They fled when Missy was only fourteen and, despite this adversity, she continued on to write, produce, and perform music with exceptional success. Missy Elliott’s music videos are something to behold and they (along with her fashion sense) are not held back by convention or expectation. Missy Elliott was the first body positive icon I had ever encountered. She is always certain of her appeal doesn’t need anybody’s approval to uphold that (“My curves they swerve, so superb” “Jiggle, jiggle, jangle/ Watch how my gluteus dangle”).

Missy’s sexuality has been of much tabloid speculation but ultimately, she does not seem to feel the need to

justify or clarify herself to anybody. As she says in ‘Gossip Folks,’ “stop talking ‘bout who I’m sticking and licking jus mad it ain’t yours.” As someone who was constantly under stress to find something satisfactory to say to people who asked, “Yeah, but what percentage are you?” this was monumental. Because of Missy, I now realise that my (unquantifiable) sexuality is my business and my business only. I am not obliged to make it palatable for others.

Missy’s music is also undeniably sex-positive. Not only do her songs show depict her being an equal and active member during sex, she downright expects it to be mutually pleasurable (which, let’s be honest, is a rarity). She changes sex and sexual acts from something purely revolving around a man’s enjoyment (a type of ‘pornographic gender relation’) into a celebration and something that has women as an active participant with both needs and wants. I have a lot of friends who would benefit from remembering Missy’s “I don’t want no one minute man.” These women of colour are taking back the sexuality that has either been condemned or exploited. Missy’s music celebrates women succeeding and making money, however they do it. Her feminism (as feminism always should) includes those in sex work, a demographic often exploited and objectified in the rap genre. In ‘Work it,’ she raps, “Girls, girls, get that cash/ If it’s 9 to 5 or shaking your ass/Ain’t no shame, ladies do your thang/Just make sure you ahead of the game.”

In her lyrics she goes head to head with problems faced by women and, in particular, women of colour. ‘She’s a bitch’ is about the tendency to label independent, successful women as bitches and in ‘Lick Shots’ her response to unconsented touching while she is having a good time in the club (an all too familiar experience) is “Fool

touch me that’s a no-no.” Missy is confident in a way that garners attacks of “bossy,” and “bitchy” (all too commonly attributed to outspoken women of colour) but does she care? In Missy’s own words, “you know I’m too cool for you anyway/I’m just a bad bitch.” She knows she is brilliant at what she does and will not let others tell her different. She is a full-time owner in her image and music and warns, “whoever bit my style I hope you croak from the rabies.”

Since high school, many other women have become tenants of my playlist. Of course there is the founder, Missy Elliott (who rooms with M.C Lyte in the penthouse). Salt ‘N Pepa are also there, serving as the playlist’s eccentric trio from down the hall. Beyoncé sometimes makes a cameo. M.I.A, Queen Latifah and Khia also pop by for occasional drinks. CupcakKe is a permanent resident who hosts the loudest parties. Azealia Banks was evicted for agreeing with Donald Trump’s immigration, while Cardi B’s application was immediately dismissed for transphobia. Awkwafina is the most recent addition, a queer and outspoken Chinese-Korean-American woman with a degree in gender studies and journalism.

These women of colour continue to shape me for the better. They are vocal and proud in a way that I hope to one day be. Pity the man who cat-calls me while listening to my “Fuck you” playlist. ■

Fuck You Playlist (a sample)

Work It – Missy Elliott

Blow – Beyoncé

Keep On, Keepin’ On – M.C. Lyte

The Rain – Missy Elliott

Son of a Gun (I Betcha Think This Song is About You) – Janet Jackson ft. Missy Elliott

Queef – Awkwafina

None of Your Business – Salt-N-Pepa

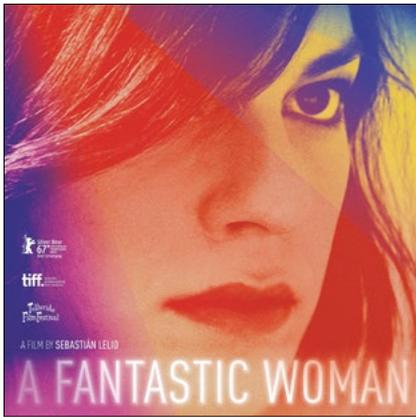
My Vag – Awkwafina

Gossip Folks – Missy Elliott

Respect Me – Khia

D***t – CupcakKe**

REVIEWS



A Fantastic Woman

FILM REVIEW BY EMILY HOLLAND



As I left the cinema after a screening of *A Fantastic Woman* at NZIFF last year I found myself utterly moved by what I had just seen. Director Sebastian Lelio deals with the toxicity of transphobia so carefully and so beautifully and now with an Academy Award to its name, *A Fantastic Woman* is sure to push issues of sexual discrimination further into mainstream consciousness.

Our protagonist Marina Vidal (played by Vega) works as a waitress by day and a singer by night. Lelio wastes no time in focusing on her tender relationship with older man Orlando. After Orlando falls ill in the middle of the night, Marina rushes him to hospital where he suddenly dies. In dealing with the aftermath of his death she is thrust into a world of exclusion, humiliation and hatred. Her sexual identity and her relationship with Orlando is brought into question both by the police and his family. Her grieving is made even more difficult as her right to say goodbye is so maliciously taken from her.

While the film has its moments of overt violence, Lelio places more emphasis on the discriminatory gestures within everyday interactions; the looks, the body language, the verbal exchanges and remarks directed at Marina. Vega manages to arouse such a powerful sense of pain and compassion on our part with very minimal dialogue, Marina's suffering mainly expressed through her mesmerizing visage.

Although *A Fantastic Woman* tackles the grieving process, it maintains an air of optimism and an overwhelming sense of hope and beauty. Its scenes often transcend into the dream-like and surreal and it deals with its subject matter extremely carefully, refraining from stereotyping or self-perpetuation. We simply witness the tragic end of a loving relationship and a fantastic woman trying to come to terms with her loss in the face of discrimination. ■



Ed Sheeran

LIVE MUSIC REVIEW BY BELLE HULLON



I heard Ed Sheeran for the first time 6 years ago, in my best friend's car. I knew it was love when he sang the line 'They say I'm up and coming like I'm fucking in an elevator,' in his song from +, "You Need Me, I Don't Need You".

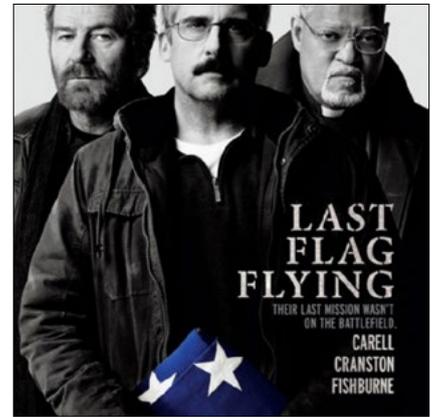
Last night, I finally saw him live. His worldwide Stadium Tour kicked off in Italy in March, and he's scheduled to play SIX shows in our little corner of the world. It feels like everyone in the country is going to get a chance to experience his genius live; and what a treat are they in for. After two fantastic opening acts (Lady Bird was a folk band with relatable content. Drax Project was a Jazzy electro-pop band that had an incredible stage presence)

At the start of the concert, he told the crowd that his only accompaniments would be his loop pedal and his guitar. That didn't stop him from cranking out some unbelievably boppy tunes that had the entire stadium jumping.

In addition to the flawless vocals, Ed also delivered comedic gold, offering hilarious anecdotes about his own concert experience and appreciating the superdads in the audience who had braved the crowds to get their kids the Ed Sheeran concert experience. There's definitely something to be said about a performer that can make you sing yourself hoarse, dance your feet numb and laugh all at once.

After nearly two hours of classics from all 3 of his albums, including "The A team", "Galway Girl", "Photograph" and "Perfect", he closed the night with a booming, energetic rendition of "You Need Me, I Don't Need You" - making a dream of six years come true; I finally heard the iconic elevator line live, up close...

... and it was **perfect.** ■



The Last Flag Flying

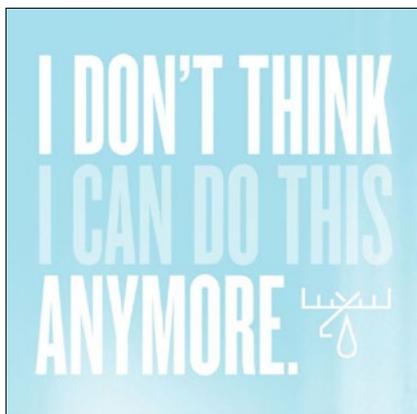
FILM REVIEW BY ANTON HUGGARD



It's often best to see a film without knowing anything about it first. I didn't even know I was going to see this movie but once I realised it wasn't *Airbud* and I was in the wrong cinema I tried to crawl out but couldn't find the exit. It starred Hal from *Malcolm in the Middle*, Morpheus from the matrix and that guy from the movie about Noah's ark but in the modern day.

The opening scene is cliché cowboy-movie-esque (bartender doesn't recognise patron as an old acquaintance) but I didn't mind because it's exciting to see Hal. *Raiders of the Lost Flag* is set in 2003 and is about three war veterans who served in Vietnam and get the band back together for the funeral of one their sons who died in Afghanistan. The basic plot is that the guy from Noah's ark wants to get his son's body back to his hometown by himself because he's lost trust in the government.

There were parts of it that irked me. When films are set in the past, there's a tendency to make a bunch of anachronistic jokes. A character says "You mean that [technology] does [thing]?!" and the audience, who have much better technology, find this hilarious and go into fits of laughter. It's a trope that needs to die. This movie, *Star Wars: The Last Flag*, couldn't resist making a joke about cell phones, which was disappointing because it's an enjoyable film. The message of the movie is that sometimes it's okay to lie, war is bad because people die and something about friendship. There are some funny bits and some bits that aren't funny but I laughed anyway to be polite. This is an example of text-book, competent film-making. *Flaggy Flag the Movie* isn't worth seeing in cinema, but get someone to drive you to video-ezy so you can rent it next time it's raining and you can't go and feed the ducks. ■



I Don't Think I Can Do This Anymore

Moose Blood

ALBUM REVIEW BY CHRIS WONG



Moose Blood's *I Don't Think I Can Do This Anymore* is their third full-length and it seems they may be starting to run out of steam at this point. Many of the tracks blend together with little variation, almost making it seem as if the album was one long 36 minute song. Part of this may be due to the tame and unimaginative drumming resulting from the replacement of their former drummer due to sexual harassment allegations, however that's not to be used as an excuse as a number of generic and uninspired ideas litter the record, with the album artwork also coming across as extraordinarily lazy, looking like a graphic design student's first homework assignment.

There are parts which are salvageable, with Eddy Brewerton's lyrics being the most openly emotional to date, describing the album as particularly "cathartic" to make. Opener "Have I Told You Enough" has a huge chorus as well as delightfully pleasing lead riffs, with Brewerton singing about his relationship with his daughter and the toll touring and his being away from her for months at a time has on their relationship. The upbeat follow-up track and lead single "Talk In Your Sleep" strides more on the pop-punk side of things, with Brewerton mulling over the difficult navigation of long distance love and the sacrifices he has to make, while "Can We Stay Like This" is another standout with its yearning and infectious chorus.

Overall, the record is a far cry from the band who broke out in 2014 with their debut full length *I'll Keep You In Mind, From Time to Time*, which has now almost become a modern emo classic, with Brewerton's voice lacking the raw emotional gut punch it once had. As there just aren't enough interesting or original moments on album to warrant consecutive listens, *I Don't Think I Can Do This Anymore* may well signal the start of Moose Blood's slide into irrelevance. ■



Can You Feel It?

Nomad

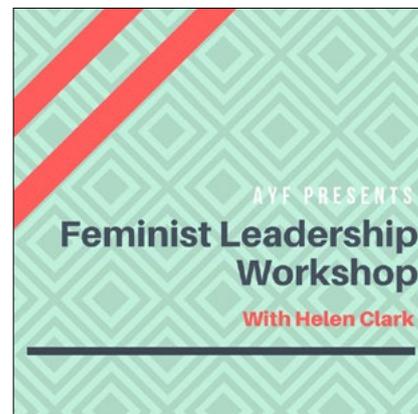
ALBUM REVIEW BY NEESA JAMIESON



Nomad is a talented homegrown New Zealand band that continues to steadily gain a huge following. Their differing musical backgrounds and personal tastes are reflected in both their older singles and in their new album *Can You Feel It?*. The album is a beautiful mix of alternative pop and folk, with an enjoyable familiarity, but not so much that it echoes that of a typical pop or alternative song. The band members Aasha Mallard, Cullen Kiesanowski and Will McGillivray all have capable voices that create incredible layers and harmonies, and the album is sure to help them gain a huge audience and convert some unsuspecting listeners to its more chill and melancholic vibe.

The album consists of twelve unique songs, with most of them being about different stages of love and how the consequences of several varying perspectives contribute to the feeling and outcome of a relationship. The album is concise, and each song leads effortlessly into the next. The two previously released singles "2 Flares" and "All of My Heart" demonstrate their flexibility, from a more folk-based sound to polished pop hooks, while I found "If I Could Fly" and "Navigator" to be the most charming tracks of the album. Each song is a relatable experience; from people who have been on the cusp of love, have fallen in love and everything in between. These songs are not just limited to experience, there are a range of emotions that are explored too, jealousy, regret, confusion, sadness, and your conventional existential whirlpool of emotions.

If you enjoyed the album, feel free to explore the music that they created beforehand as they too show off the depth of their talent and are equally as fantastic. ■



Feminist Leadership Workshop

with Helen Clark, run by the Auckland Young Feminists

WORKSHOP REVIEW BY MILLY SHEED



There is nothing like a whopping-great dose of inspiration and unbridled vision to kick off 2018. Auckland Young Feminists, an organisation founded last year, facilitated this incredible feminism-fuelled workshop to revive the much-needed conversation amongst young people that sexism isn't going anywhere. Sexism is alive and well and, yes, you will face it sooner or later— and it can cross all manner of intersectional boundaries.

The workshop delivered powerful messages with a youthful twist. The atmosphere was wholesome — comfortable and encouraging, like warm, buttery toast. The girl in front of me, the women on my left and my right — we were all on the same page, desperate to begin the next chapter together. A point of difference, in which I relished, was the unabashed way in which the speakers addressed real issues of oppression for women from all walks of life.

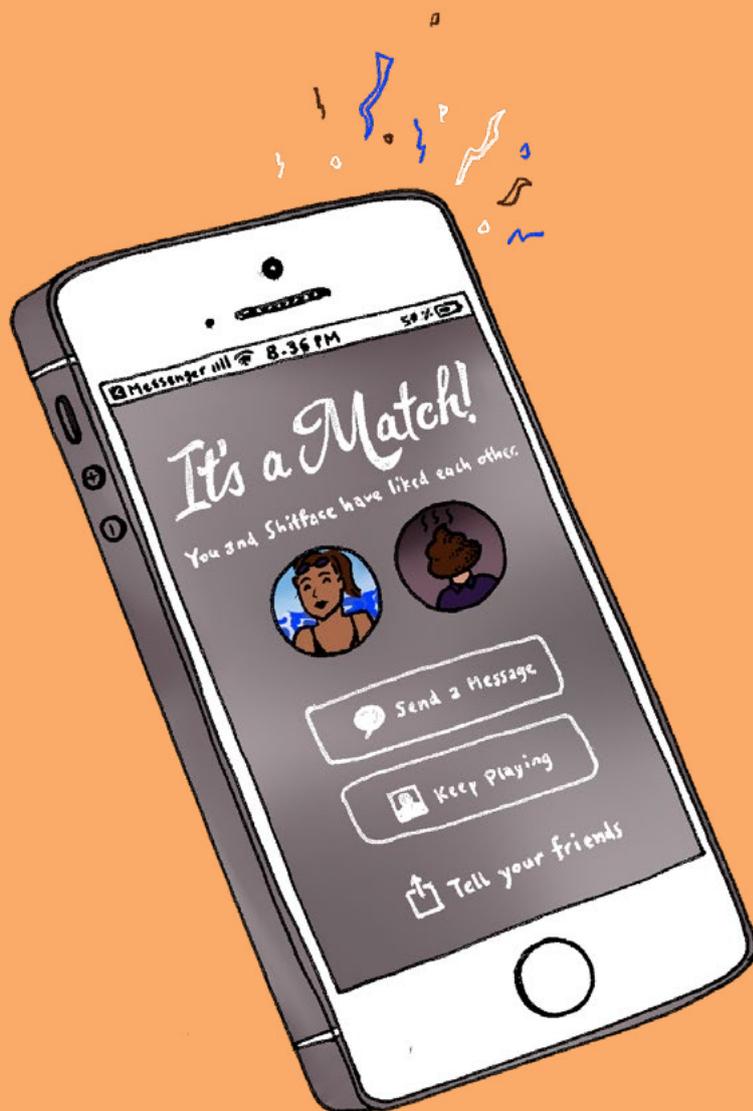
There was discussion of the relationship between gender inequality, cultural barriers and socio-economic prejudice — and a true focus on how gender discrimination is not the only battle our future female leaders will come up against. The audience was encouraged to feel uncomfortable in privilege, as drive to, instead, use it as a platform to tell a story. To tell the stories of the women around us who deserve to be heard and remembered for making a change.

Aunty Helen didn't disappoint. The women in the audience were hungry for her words. As an undoubted idol, she thoroughly emboldened us to not simply sit at the boardroom table, but kick the door down on the way through. She confessed that finding a path through the patriarchal-wilderness was not an easy feat, but we should wake up everyday knowing that each one of us can make a difference.

This workshop was a triumph. I am not alone when I say that we all left the room feeling re-energised to become female leaders in our own right. Auckland Young Feminists may be young in tenure, but certainly a lion in their ambition. ■

Your Guide to (some) Dating Apps

Our beloved contributors gather and review some but not all dating apps



Grindr

BY ANONYMOUS



I hate Grindr. Even when I sort of like it, I hate it. There's something inevitably seedy about it. Unlike Tinder, which operates on this mutual 'I-swiped-right-you-swiped-right' operation, Grindr presents you with 200 men who are shown to you in order of closest proximity. You don't have to want someone to talk to you, you don't allow them to talk to you, your profile is on display, you're on display. Anyone can message you. This can be great in facilitating open messaging, but

you don't get to control who you want to talk to or what they say.

I've never quite understood why men have felt the need to send you a dick pic uninvited. No one would think that appropriate anywhere else. I didn't ask for this, I don't trust you as a result of this. Maybe Craccum readers like unsolicited dick pics? Maybe you met your future partner from a dick pic? Feel free to prove me wrong.

Grindr is for Queer men what Tinder is for straight people. That guilty pleasure app. You say you shouldn't need it, you spend hours on it, you get disappointed by it, you ultimately keep it. Grindr is generally hook up orien-

tated. This can be great if that's what your after. It can however lead to men looking for connections that are false and misguided. If you're on Grindr for love, chances are you're going to leave disappointed.

Grindr, like tinder, filters your prospective partners based purely on look, you deny people before you've even met them. As more men use apps, gay clubs and bars become fewer and fewer. Queer men no longer have to leave the house to meet each other; they find each other -and 200 others - in the grid. Love can be found on the couch while you order UberEats. Grindr, like most dating apps, forces men inside to find love. Grindr. Even when I sort of like it, I hate it. ■

HER

BY BRIDIE BISHOP



(I stay for the crazy questions)

We've all heard of Tinder, Grindr, and Bumble. But you may not be familiar with Her – a dating app for queer women and gender non-conforming folk (although the poorly chosen name doesn't really reflect this). Before anyone gets too excited, the app is so buggy, it's nearly impossible to use. And before anyone suggests the problems are down to my shitty Samsung, I wrote an essay about these apps last year. Her has a rating of 2.6 on Google Play, and many of the reviews reflect the same problems I faced.

Here is my condensed list of grievances:

The app uploaded the same selfie five times onto my profile – and it stayed like that for a WHILE.

Upon returning to several chats, I was horrified to discover that the one or two carefully chosen emojis in my messages had been changed into multitudes of question marks. Hence: "hey how's your day going?????????"

It can't handle two conversations at once – one message intended for one person is sometimes sent TO THE OTHER PERSON.

Weirdly, there is no capacity for your profile

Tinder: An Unfortunate Review

BY BELLE HULLON



Disclaimer: This is a heteronormative recount of tinder in my experience as a woman seeking men - that being said I acknowledge that these experiences may vary based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

When I first decided to write this review, I asked a few people in my vicinity about how they would sum up Tinder in a few words. My poor ambushed workmates had looks of mild revulsion on their faces as they responded:

'Overpromises and underdelivers.'

'Desperate'

'Difficult'

'A cesspool.'

Tinder calls itself an app for connecting people. I call it dating life in app form. There are the men, who just want to do the sex. There are the women, fielding desperately the propositions from men for sex. It's a complete clusterfuck of dtfs and heys.

to have a bio. You can create text boxes alongside your photos, but lots of people don't do this, so there's not much to go on.

If a match is made, and neither party talks for a few days, the app will automatically send a message on your behalf. Soon your inbox is filled with "Are you smarter than your parents?", "Burritos or Burgers?", and "Was Pirates of the Caribbean ever a good movie?".

Every day you will receive a notification where the app will ask all users the same question. These questions are so crazy in their range – they can go from "would you always rather be hot or cold?", to, "when was the last time you cried?". From "What's your favourite sandwich", to, "what song reminds you of your ex?". One was, 'I'm not even kidding, 'who's your favourite family member?'

Several of these questions ask, 'tell us your coming out story', or, 'how did you come out?' I have a bit of beef with this, because it implies everyone is out and proud, when many people may still be closeted in certain circles of their lives.

Perhaps the most disturbing is that it sometimes forgets important indicators of identity. For example, my friend identifies as genderqueer, bisexual, and in an open relationship. One day they clicked on their app to find that their identifiers had been changed to make them a straight, single, woman. This made my friend rightly upset – just how long

...and we can't stay away.

I should preface with an excerpt from my Tinder bio: 'Just looking for friends who value kindness and enjoy spontaneity.' That being said, I still got propositioned for sex about 85% of the time. Even the people with 'just looking for mates' on their profiles seemed to cave in to their basal instincts and drop a sexual implication or send me a cheeky 'keen on some fun' within the first five messages exchanged.

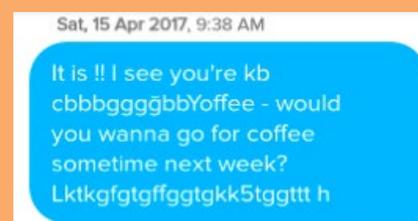
I've been on Tinder on and off for 5 years now. I have met a long term partner on there – we moved in together and adopted a cat. I have met awesome friends on there. I've had the odd hook up. It reduces you to the face, the body, your potential as a pleasure provider. See herein lies the problem: I know I can provide the pleasure. Any woman can. Now why would we willingly be reduced to being treated like a human fleshlight for the pleasure of a white 19 year old in a long Hallensteins T-shirt and drop crotch pants, holding a Tui in at least one of his grainy profile photos? You already know he's going to show up, do a unique jackhammer rendition in record time.

For the purpose of research for this article, I decided to try the desktop site that was recently released. Let's save you the drama

had it been like that? And like, important sidenote, why would the default setting on a queer dating app be *straight*?!

All these bugs made me revert back to Tinder, where I had way more luck matching and talking with people. I even matched with someone I had been chatting to on Her, and we spent time lamenting about the bugs on it. When I did eventually ask this person if they wanted to hang out, I made a mistake that was very much all me. Half way through my message I was walking and talking with a friend, unaware that my screen wasn't locked and my holding of the phone was causing a horrific button-mash situation. I ended up sending them, and this is verbatim:

'I see you're kb cbbbogggbbYoffee – would you wanna go for coffee sometime next week? Lktkgfgtgffggtgkk5tggttt h.'



FACEPALM -

But hey, we did go out for coffee, and now their one of my best friends... No thanks to Her. ■

of refreshes, missing replies and frequent vanishing matches. Avoid. I also dropped a cool \$16, and tried out Tinder Plus. For science, of course. What an experience. I have 4600 matches, and that's with my fairly picky swiping. Beyond wading through the explosion of 'hey' openers, it's been fun. The plethora of people that are sent your way! It got the point where I created a drinking game to help make the process of working through the sheer volume of people more enjoyable. Drink every time you get a 'hey' as an opening line. Down your vessel every time someone opens with a proposition for sex. Drink every time some1 typs lyk diz. Take a shot when his profile photo is a shot of his heavily modified honda civic. Drink every time anyone mentions travel, music or 420 in their bio. Down your vessel if they mention all three. Next thing you know, it's 1am and you're plastered off your face, alone in your room with your phone sticky from wine and beeping with a low battery – and you're no closer to finding a mate than you were when the bottle was full. Perhaps I'm being cynical, or maybe I've been on Tinder for just a bit too long.

Ultimately it comes down to what you truly seek because only by being honest with yourself can you be honest with these people you are hoping to connect with; and only then will you be able to answer the age old question – DTF? ■

Sacred Water

Adorate Mizero reviews *Sacred Water* and the white colonial gaze in African film.

When I was told that I would get to watch a film that is part of this year's African Film Festival I jumped at the chance, knowing how hard it is to get access to African films in New Zealand. The film that I was invited to watch is documentary *Sacred Water*. The film uncovers the heritage of sexuality, with a specific focus on female pleasure during sex. *Sacred Water* refers to *kunyaza*, female ejaculation, also well known as the "squirting orgasm" in Rwanda. Written and directed by Olivier Jourdain, the documentary follows Vestine Dusabe, a radio DJ who talks about the techniques of *kunyaza* and love making on the radio. She also spends time teaching people at their villages and high school girls about Rwandan sexual traditions like *Gukuna*, a ritual where young women prepare for sex using herbs and massage.

I originate from Burundi, which shares a deep history, culture and language with Rwanda, which also added to my initial enthusiasm for *Sacred Water*. To even think that Rwandans/Africans were talking about sex, especially women having sex, was evidently uncomfortable but very much intriguing. Sex wasn't a topic that was openly spoken about growing up in an African Catholic household until it's time to talk about marriage and babies. Thinking about *Sacred Water*, I wondered how was this something that could be captured on camera? I had to watch it to really believe it.

The excitement and intrusion I had in anticipation of watching *Sacred Water*, quickly turned to confusion. What I had seen in the trailer didn't exactly add up. Vestine Dusabe wasn't actually the female hero driving the tale, openly discussing women and their pleasures, she was more so reinforcing patriarchy and gender roles. When we didn't get to see Vestine's joyous face on screen, we were with Rwandan men as they discussed how embarrassing it was if they couldn't make a woman *kunyaza* and the satisfaction for them to be able to. When women and young girls did get to talk, their conversations around sex and pleasure centered around why it was important for them to prepare themselves and their bodies for intercourse with the man that they would one day share their life with.

When it came to understanding what was being said around *kunyaza*, it was difficult to fully grasp as the language used was layered in metaphors and similes. Although poetic, it counter-actively added mystery and a sense of prudishness in the interactions and conversations

Rwandans were having on screen. This in turn reinforced that topics like sex and sexual freedom are still very much discussions that are uncomfortable to speak about in a matter of fact way. Even when it came to basic science, one man Jourdain interviewed couldn't identify the vulva from the vagina.

When looking at other reviews of *Sacred Water*, there was focus on the 'surprise' at how "modern" Rwandans are when it comes to sex. Suggesting that by default, Rwandans are old fashioned and not nearly as advanced as people in the West. It's exhausting that stereotypes around primitiveness and civilisation are still being used to frame non-western countries and 'other' parts of the world. It's especially exhausting when one considers Rwanda's colonial history. Having a French speaking European man write and direct a documentary about Rwandans is an important fact to consider when watching a film like this. It's obvious to see that this male perspective, colonial and white gaze had an influence on how this film talks about women, sex, (heterosexual) romantic relationships and pleasure.

Unfortunately, this anthropological approach has been taken for far too long. The National Geographic issued an apology recently in "The Race Issue", for the way that they've been for so long othering people of colour and treating them with an uncomfortable curiosity and primitiveness. It's only till now, almost 130 years after the first National Geographic was published, that this realisation has been made. In other mainstream western media channels, news stories continue to squint through the same gazes in the way they present news stories centred on people of colour. Public figures continue to perpetuate harmful stereotypes and audiences continue to mimic them with ease.

While it's incredibly problematic that white people are writing/directing documentary films like *Sacred Water*, this is a window for audiences to see how colonial cinema is still being produced. It also underlines the importance of representation and why, specifically in response to this documentary film, we need to have Africans not just in front of the camera, but also behind it. This approach will have a great impact on showing that we can explore and document countries, cultures and communities without further objectifying and othering them in the process. ■



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The Pill for Men

Cameron Leakey discusses male contraceptive options and a future where the onus for contraception is not placed solely on women.

Traditionally, sexually active men have had limited options for contraception. Condoms remain currently the only effective and reversible form of contraception that are specifically for men; at present women have to bear the brunt of responsibility for preventing unplanned pregnancy in a majority of relationships, whether that be by taking the oral contraceptive pill, using an IUD, or an injectable depo injection. The form of contraception used is a personal choice for women, men or couples; no method is wrong and options exist in order to allow women and men the option that is best for them. However with women bearing the majority of the burden, men are welcoming new prospects for contraception, could we see men carrying responsibility for contraception in the next ten years?

Oral forms of contraception are based on hormonal methods. When women become pregnant, their bodies produce hormones to a certain level which indicates to the ovary that the body is already carrying a fertilized egg and thus a new egg should not be

However with women bearing the majority of the burden, men are welcoming new prospects for contraception, could we see men carrying responsibility for contraception in the next ten years?

released. The original women's contraceptive pill worked by mimicking the level of hormone in the female body so the body is essentially tricked into believing it is already pregnant, at present, the female contraceptive pill contains a lower level of the hormone that comes with less side effects but the same level of contraceptive effect.

Whilst it is somewhat easier to suppress the production of the one female egg that women release per month for fertilization, men produce millions of sperm per day with an average of twenty five million sperm released per ejaculation. This means it can be harder to suppress production. Sperm production must be reduced to at least one million sperm per milliliter of ejaculate or less. All new oral contraceptives for men must therefore work on a hormonal level; blocking testosterone to a low enough level enough so that sperm production can be reduced.

The last time that male contraception was mentioned in the news was 2016. A clinical trial for a new hormonal contraceptive – a combination of long acting progestin, norethisterone entantate and a long acting androgen, testosterone undecanoate, that was administered by injection, was stopped following reports that the men in the trial were experiencing side effects. The side effects – acne, altered libido and mood swings – are just a few of the many effects that many women currently experience on conventional contraceptives. Men were ridiculed for not being able to handle what their female counterparts have had to endure since the development and release of female targeted contraceptives. The study however, when released, suggested that 75% of men were willing to continue the trial and that the Safety and Ethics team had canned the trial, stating that there were 900 adverse events that were directly attributed to the injection. This number of adverse events is deemed too high for any clinical trial.

In 2018, things are looking a bit more advanced. Currently there are three contraceptive methods for men that are going ahead in clinical trials, a topical gel, a

hormonal contraceptive and nonsurgical vasectomy. The Topical Gel is comprised of Nestorone and Testosterone. Nestorone is a progestin. Progestin essentially shuts down the gonadotropin hormones in the body that are responsible for stimulating testosterone production in the testes. As a result, sperm production decreases. However as testosterone levels are decreased, this presents new challenges. Low testosterone is associated with decreases in muscle mass, fatigue and decreased libido. Subsequently, testosterone, an androgen, is included in the gel to increase testosterone levels slightly and decrease the side effect profile. Clinical trials are strong for the gel so far. 90% of men had a sperm count low enough to guarantee contraceptive effect. The gel is now currently going to a new international trial with several trial sites. This gel is currently the most viable option for male contraception and it's not even a pill. In ten years time, the nestorone and testosterone gel may be on the market.

The male contraceptive pill under trial contains dimethandrolone undecanoate. This compound again works like the gel; the compound contains both progestin and testosterone like compounds. The common issue that is faced with an oral dosage of a male contraceptive is that the compound is metabolized so fast, that the suppression of sperm production does not last long, meaning that several pills would be required per day for effective contraception. This compound does not face this issue; a trial has proven that the drug stays in the body for eighteen hours. So far, the drug has passed trials to prove that it is safe, next will be trials to prove that the compound is actually effective in decreasing the level of sperm production. Something that has not quite been done, whilst this drug may be on the horizon as a viable contraception option, it is still far away from being on the market, with researchers indicating that trials will need to be continued to find the best dosage of the drug that presents with as few side effects as is possible.

Non-surgical vasectomies are another promising area of male contraception. The practice is known as RISUG – reversible inhibition of sperm under guidance. Researched initially in India, but now also in the United States, the practice involves injecting a polymer gel into the vas deferens that blocks sperm for entering into ejaculate and being secreted during ejaculation. This differs from the permanent vasectomy which involves cutting the vas. RISUG has proven

The more contraceptive options available, the better the choices for men and women alike, including relieving women of the onus of birth control efforts, as well as improved family planning outcomes globally.

to be 98% effective and like condoms, with no side effects. Currently pharmaceutical companies are seeking approval for this method as a permanent form of contraception, with clinical data further on to prove that the method is reversible. RISUG presents great option for men who are non-compliant with their medicine and want a non-hormonal form of contraception. The next step is gathering the clinical data to support that this practice is reversible and ready for the market.

Whilst any new contraception methods for men are not available in 2018 and certainly won't be available anytime soon, there is research that is bringing these options forwards. Studies suggest that contraception options for men could decrease unplanned pregnancy rates by 5% in the U.S. and up to 38% in Nigeria. The more contraceptive options available, the better the choices for men and women alike, including relieving women of the onus of birth control efforts, as well as improved family planning outcomes globally. We could truly see The Pill for men in the future, just not anytime soon. ■

HOLLYWOOD

Each week **Lachlan Mitchell**, glorified tabloid writer, tries to cover up that he is blatantly copying Vanity Fair.



Please trust me on this, I'm begging you

I've been watching a lot of *Flavor of Love* lately, as one naturally finds themselves doing during any sort of downtime. But I am also spurred by the realisation that 12 years on, there may be some people who have never partaken in the drinking of the grail that is watching this show. It is a learning experience that only 2006 and, to a lesser extent, 2007 have deigned to give us so far. How can a reality show that features a freshly taken shit on the floor, DURING an elimination ceremony, be so beautiful?

Flavor of Love is very much a product of our universe and yet it seems to exist entirely outside of it, like an antimatter being that has somehow not made contact with anything composed of our universe's matter. It is totally a product of the decade's standards on gender & racial politics, and the absolute pinnacle of anything that has ever been said about *The Bachelor* and all of its incarnations. I am completely serious when I say that if you want an example of an intersection of misogyny, racism and even some light transphobia, within 'early' reality TV, this is your dream citation. For each of its three seasons, 20 women are invited to Flava Flav's house and he proceeds to utterly objectify and simultaneously infantilise them for 10 or so episodes, not even bothering to learn their names. He literally names a woman 'Somethin' because he can't find one defining characteristic about her to remember!!! Oh lord. But to the show's credit, everything is completely transparent; there is no veneer of grace or glamour. The girls themselves are equally unashamed in their social climbing ambitions and some, as the producers needed a couple of fall girls in order to maintain the illusion of reality, suffer for it. There's no question amongst the blessed population that have seen the show that it is anything less than peak misogyny, and there is always the uncomfortable backdrop of how VH1 presents Flav's racial identity to the audience. But that's not really what I'm here to talk about.

Obligatory social consciousness moment done with, the show exists outside of our universe in the sense that it doesn't seem remotely real. This show came at a time where the medium of reality tv was adjusting from its explosive toddler years into the more slickly produced remnant we have today. It was a time where *Being Bobby Brown* was of

massive cultural fascination, seeing the decline of Whitney Houston on a weekly basis was something America could not do without. The only explanation I can think of is that the Matrix simulation that governs our lives followed the example of Paula Abdul crying after being booted from the Bratz movie (watch the video) and said 'I can't go through this.' I mentioned the shit on the floor, yeah? That's just the beginning. There's so much wonder and magic within this mansion, detached from the moral confines of Judeo-Christian ethics and the literal confines of time and space. It gave rise to the characters of Hottie, Goldie, Buckwild, Pumkin and, of course, New York. If you have not seen a gif of New York doing *anything*, I don't know what internet you are using. It certainly isn't the one I use. I don't quite know how to detail this show in all of its grandeur. Do I talk about how in the first ten minutes of the show, Goldie is already pissfaced from the free alcohol? Do I talk about how by the second episode, more girls (and New York!) are ready to rip each other's face for a chance at Love? The episode where they cook fried chicken, but Hottie microwaves an entire frozen chicken for two minutes and serves it? The infamous spit scene? The fact that he dumps every winner before the reunion episode? So much goes on, so much to retain to memory. While Season 2 & 3 escape the cultural consciousness, the entire breadth of the episode list is worth watching, if only to reinforce to the brain driving your body that yes, this is happening.

I can only do so much to convince you to take part in this unparalleled mess. There is so much to take note of – both on a legitimate level of cultural analysis, and as an audience member who just wants to be a messy bitch by proxy. It's just something you have to take part in, the ritual that allows you to grow up. This is what Peter Pan has avoided all these years, the reason he is forever an imp. All I ask of you is that you do not repeat his mistake. Please watch this masterpiece of self-destruction. Leave your sensibilities at the door and become an ingredient in the *Flavor of Love*. ■

ECENTRIC LIFE ADVICE

Each week **Astrid Crosland** provides instructions on how to improve your life in some small, but important ways.



Six: How to Set a Mood

The intricacies of courtship frequently involve preening, resource management, and dance. Furthermore, one or multiple courtiers intend to express their availability and aptitude for partnership in their surroundings, showing pride and personality in the numerous things one places conspicuously around ones nest. There are a few items I recommend you display selectively when you are introducing a prospective partner to one's home as they will say more about you than you may intend to reveal. I advise you to consider most carefully your candles.

Every home ought to have candles tucked away somewhere. You should carefully select your candles based on their material properties. While synthetic “dripless” candles are the default composition widely available, I urge you to seek out alternative compositions that suit your intended use. I prefer beeswax candles as they have some of the same dripless characteristics that appeal to a broad market but are not made from petrochemicals. They also provide a light honey scent and can be tinted and scented to any desired combination.

Pillar, taper, or jar candles should be selected depending on your intended use. A jar candle offers a long burn time and does not require a separate holder. The heavy base also acts as a stabiliser and the walls of the jar reduce the area of exposed flame. A pillar candle holds many of the same advantages as a jar candle but additionally provides a lovely cup of wax for the flame to illuminate, giving a soft filtered effect to the candlelight. A pillar candle ought to be placed on a flat holder in case a breach develops in the walls of the candle and molten wax flows through. Taper candles are perfect for ceremonial or esoteric purposes, they are available in many sizes and formulations. While each taper candle requires a dedicated holder, the wax can also be encouraged to make artful drips by tilting the angle of the candle. This is perfect for sealing rites or perfecting your mark. ■





PRUNE JUICE

Self explanatory, the drink helps you cleanse and digest. Each week **Sherry Zhang** breaks down life's incongruous mess into digestible chunks.

Watching my parents watch theatre

Family trips never go well for the Zhangs. 15 fights before we leave the door. Someone's forgotten their phone, I've lost my socks, Mum needs to put the laundry down. Did my dad put the rice in the rice cooker? Shit where's my brother. Fuck we've driven off without him. Nah just leave him we are running late. My mum's tired, she's not feeling it. Let's just go home. Fuck it let's just go home.

I didn't have the best relationship with my parents growing up. Stemming from misunderstanding: different cultural expectations that lead to constant fighting. I remember being jealous when my friends would talk about their family trips, to their bach at Mangawhai heads. We couldn't afford to go away, my parents worked. And I wish I could spend more time with them, but then I just grew angry. I grew into the very hormonal angsty teenager. And it was easier to distance myself from them, because otherwise we'd just fight.

We are extremely private to each other, the Chinese concept of face, image. I never told my parents I was struggling with depression and anxiety. The school did. I have a genetic disposition to it from my mother, she doesn't talk about it either but I'm not blind.

My dad gets free tickets to a Chinese theatre variety show at Aotea Square. I frown at it, the shitty graphic design, the gaudy red and yellow font. But I pause, because it is so pretentious of me to judge the show. Things have changed a bit since I finished High School. I realised the internalised racism I held, in the way I'd reject my Chinese culture. I'd reject any form of Chinese Media. And this didn't help that the really FUCKING WHITE media and theatre industry in Auckland only encouraged this distance I'd created. As if 'that' kind of art and media was better. There is only so long you last after Walt Whitman and Jack Kerouac when you realise that these old dead white men meaning nothing to you.

If I really wanted to create art, I must connect to my heritage. Understand those who lay the path for me. I say I'll go with my parents, and I think they are secretly pleased I was spending time with them. I am secretly pleased they were spending time with me. We secretly hide our excitement.

My mum dresses up, she never dresses up. She thinks she

looks too old, or ugly. She has these beautiful vintage 80's clothes in her closet, shoulder padded lilac suits and flowing maxi dresses. She wears baggy black work clothes all day. She shyly shows me the new dress she brought herself, "It was still on sale don't worry," she apologises. I wish she'd treat herself more and stop apologising for taking time, money, space for herself. The black and white lace dress sits perfectly on her shoulders. My mother has always been beautiful. I felt like she could see a little bit of what I see tonight.

My dad put on a polo shirt. He asked me if he should tuck it in or leave it out. He pats at his protruding belly and laughs. I laugh as well, I say, "tuck it in. You might as well show it off, plus you look more like yourself that way."

I wonder if my parents would be happier if they were back in China. They could wear all these nice clothes, and not feel apologetic. Have better paying jobs and more friends. I don't think many understand what isolation does to a family that is culturally different to the majority. The class divide immigration can create.

We drive over the Harbour bridge. It's all golden and blue and boats. We are late in classic Zhang family fashion. The only time I ever got called into the deans (primary through high school), was the magic of how I could be late for every single first period, and how I'd mysteriously miss these periods as well. My dad was my ride to school. We get into a classic Zhang family fight. My dad thinks he knows where the theatre is, I think I know where the theatre is. I pull out my NCEA geography scholarship card. He pulls out the I'm driving the car card and you're on your learner's card.

We keep fighting about this until my mum needs to pee so we now fight about the nearest bathroom. I am right about where the bathrooms are. My dad is right, Aotea square is that direction.

We rush in, everyone else is late too. Chinese people run on a different scale of time. We are early to the round dinner table. Late to everything else. We run on a lunar calendar that's why.

And the show starts. The dancers are beautiful, and I marvel at them with my dad. Thinly veiled comments of, "wow they're so good at dancing, , great posture great figure yes it's cause dance is great fitness." Just like how I watch The Bachelor with him and we pick the hottest girls. I wonder when I will come out to him. Probably never. I wonder if he already knows.

A song from my childhood comes on. A song about why the sun shines and the grass is green with yodelling from an ethnic group. And I'm thrown back to watching the variety shows for Chinese New Year with my parents, staying up to catch the time zones.

And then it's the closing act and a handsome old fox in a navy suit comes on. And everyone loses their shit. I'm telling you everyone, the 70-year-old grannies you see with their Tai Ping bags on the bus are losing their shit. Everyone is cheering. My dad is pointing at him, but I'm not looking at him.

I'm looking at my dad.

He tells me how he'd play this 80's pop star on cassette, lock himself in his room as a teenager and sing to his songs. My mum is so excited, she hasn't said much this whole time, but she's suddenly like a little girl. She looks at us

almost as if asking for permission, and then runs down to the barrier to lean over the ledge to wave to the popstar. Everyone has put their phones away, the whole theatre is singing... shouting the lyrics. I don't understand the songs, any of his songs. But I understand the absolute electricity. The connection. These families who are separated from their culture suddenly have this genuine reminder of community, of free spirited youth. Of letting go, of being understood. Of not being asked 3 times to repeat their name. This show is telling them yes you can scream the Chinese pop ballads you loved as a teenager, without feeling embarrassed. You can be proud.

My dad is still now. He turns around and tells me that my grandfather sang this song to him on the night my he was going to hop on the plane and immigrate to New Zealand. My grandfather passed away 14 years ago now.

I keep watching my parents watch theatre. And it's so magical. And I breathe it in. Because it's so priceless. And even though I'd never have a heart to heart with them, this felt pretty close to that.

We drive home and in classic Zhang family style, the car nearly runs out of petrol right before the bridge. We get into a fight as to where the nearest gas station. This time my mum is right. ■

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GUEST COLUMN

Our guest column writer **Sarah Tribble** talks about her lifelong journey discovering her sexuality.



The Greater Good Part II

What you are about to read is to be my last column before the regularly scheduled columnist returns to reclaim their page time. Thank you so much for having me, Craccum — I have been honoured to be your guest, and hope I have left a tiny legacy as that asexual girl who talks about her love life too much. That being said, I am about to backtrack on pretty much everything I have established about myself, which is why I saved this article for last: lay the foundation, then level the city. Surely some Roman emperor said that or something.

I've spent the last few weeks of writing this column -- and the last few years of my life -- telling everyone that I am asexual, and using my experiences with that identity to create visibility for the asexual community. Until I met my partner 18 months ago, I never had any reason to question that identity, and it wasn't something I would have wanted to do, anyway. Coming to a solid, and more importantly, happy conclusion about your sexuality after spending years toiling over your difference and 'otherness' is an enormous relief: why would anyone decide to question themselves even further after all the hell they've already been through? Yet the genesis of my relationship sent me reeling, and not just because my lifetime of hopeless romanticism was finally bearing fruit. I was having an identity crisis.

Having an identity crisis seems to be the new millennial trend, so I know I'm nothing special, but at least I'm hashtag relatable. To be perfectly candid, this is the first time I'm giving this crisis any serious thought, which strikes me as such a superbly millennial confession: 20-year-old ignores emotional issues until she is provided with an audience at whom she may vent her musings. Classic Gen Y. Before I met my partner, I had very much made peace with the idea that I would probably be single forever. I had achieved a state of zen in regard to my depressing belief that no one was going to want a partner who didn't want to have sex. I was perfectly happy to live out the rest of my life as a single wonder woman with loads of close friendships, several cats, and a multi-million-dollar publishing deal to keep me warm. In this safe little bubble, I didn't even have to think about it: I wasn't sexually attracted to anyone. I never had been, and had never had any cause to wonder whether I ever would be. I was secure in my sexuality.

Getting a boyfriend changed everything, as is often the case. As the weeks and months went by and the connection I was forming with this person grew deeper and more

personal, I started to experience something I never had: I was *sexually attracted to this person*. I literally had no idea what was going on because I had never been sexually attracted to anyone in my life, so needless to say, this kind of freaked me out. Since then, I've come to think that I might be **demisexual**. Demisexuality lies on the asexual spectrum, and sort of falls between sexual and asexual: someone who identifies as 'demi' only experiences sexual attraction to another person after a close bond has been developed. Given that I had never been in a long term relationship before this one, it made complete sense that I wouldn't have identified any signs of demisexuality until this point, yet when the thought occurred to me that I may not be strictly asexual, I fiercely denied it. I did not want to be demisexual. Nope. Nuh uh. No thanks.

Why not? There's nothing wrong with demisexuality, if that's what you're thinking (it certainly wasn't what I was thinking). I didn't want to be demisexual for two reasons. Firstly, I had become so secure in my self-image as an asexual person that the concept of my identity being fluid was daunting. I had spent years understanding and accepting myself, and I didn't want to go through that whole process again. Secondly, because of my passion for asexual representation, I was reluctant to change the term I identified with and told people when I come out to them, because I felt obligated to remain a voice for my community. Asexuality is, in my opinion, a basis for other identities on that spectrum, including demisexuality. I spent a long time searching for representation of asexuality and, upon failing to find it, I pushed through my anxieties about rejection and everyone hating what I write to try and create the beginnings of a safe space for other asexual people to experience and enjoy representation, too. The question I had to ask myself became this: should I continue identifying as asexual because it's for the greater good?

Like I said, this is genuinely the first time I am giving this conundrum any serious thought. Good idea? Probably not, yet here I am. For now, although I am aware of the properties of demisexuality that I exhibit, I want to keep using the 'asexual' label. After all, Tumblr told me that you get to choose your own labels, and Tumblr is obviously the gospel truth. For real, though: there is definitely nothing wrong with being demisexual. I want to make that explicitly clear: that's not what my identity crisis is about. If I wanted to be fastidious and use the label most accurate to my symptoms, I would call myself demisexual, but it doesn't feel like me. Evidence might suggest otherwise, but I identify as asexual. That's me. That's who I am. ■



auckland university students' association

Kia ora UoA!

We hope you all had a lovely 'break' - and welcome back to semester!

Along with eating lots of Easter chocolate, we have still stayed busy working at AUSA! We thought we would give you guys a little update about some things going on at the moment.

First, as we'll talk about more on the next page, over the holidays the University has made a proposal to shut down five libraries - Epsom, Tamaki, Fine Arts, Music and Architecture. We are lobbying the University and running a campaign to Save our Libraries. Please get amongst and sign our petition, which we're taking to the high echelons of the University!

There has also been a proposal to significantly restructure the Music school. This would result in top lectures losing their jobs, and changes to the Music degree itself. AUSA has been working with the Music Students' Association to ensure that students' voices are heard!

On the bright side, there have been some more positive changes proposed by the University recently! After

lobbying and talking to the University about it for years, there is finally a proposal to extend lecture recordings to all undergrad classes. This is an awesome proposal - we are excited to see where it goes. AUSA's reforms to the class reps policy and guidelines also passed through University Council. This will now mean that all taught postgraduate courses with more than 15 students will have class reps, and will also see improvements to the way that SSCC meetings are run.

But aside from University politics and policies, one of the other major things we're focussing on this year is making being an Auckland University student more fun. So this week we're running Sex Week! This is a week all about promoting sex positivity and taking the taboo out of sex. We've got an Erotic fan fiction night on Tuesday, and Dirty Bingo on Wednesday, and more! All our events are free and open to everyone.

Good luck for all the tests and assignments you have on this week. Remember, AUSA is here to help! So if you need a food parcel, or just a chat come pop into AUSA House!

Anna and Jess



MPs and DBs



Politics
Week



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SAVE OUR LIBRARIES

As some of you may or may not have heard The University has released a proposal to close five libraries. These are the Fine Arts, Music, Architecture, Epsom and Tamaki libraries. We are deeply concerned about this proposal for three main reasons.

First, this would significantly impede students' access to resources. Most library resources will be moved off-site. Further, for the Arts based subjects, physical copies of texts are particularly important, as students sketch, trace, and perform off hard-copy works.

Second, libraries are a central hub for the student community. In these smaller faculties, the library is the most valuable space of communal learning within the school.

Third, the collections themselves are extremely valuable. The fine arts collection in particular is a collection of national significance, containing many rare and precious books that cannot be found anywhere else. It is a resource that is also invaluable for the wider arts community in Aotearoa.

There has been no student consultation on this plan. However,

er, we also know that the driving factor behind this is a lack of funding for Arts based programs at the University.

The proposed changes would see thousands of books destroyed or moved into storage away from the students who need them in order to study. These spaces are valuable hubs of knowledge and community and AUSA is saddened by this proposal.

There has already been significant push back from students and we are urging the University to reconsider, not just for the sake of the resources themselves but also of the sake of the skilled and knowledgeable specialist librarians who will lose jobs due to the proposed cuts.

If you would like to have your say head to

<https://saveourlibraries.squarespace.com>

or email our Culture and Communications officer Caitlin Watters at cco@ausa.org.nz



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WHAT ROMANCE FILM REPRESENTS YOUR LOVE LIFE?

Our local oracles *Annalise Boland & Bianca D'Souza* have studied the stars this week and provided us with predictions for our future. Stay tuned for a weekly update on your stars.



ARIES

(MARCH 21-APRIL 19)

CAROL (2015)

Aries, you need to take initiative when it comes to your romantic feelings and not be afraid of expressing your love. The complexity of your feelings may overwhelm you as you tend to shower the ones you love with affection and sometimes may do so excessively. Aries tend to be passionate lovers, don't be afraid to share your kinks!



TAURUS

(APRIL 20-MAY 20)

10 THINGS I HATE ABOUT YOU (1999)

You tend to have trouble keeping your emotions in check, Taurus. You require time to create an environment with your partner in which you feel completely and utterly safe. Taurus' are always extremely sensual and when given the time to fool around they have wild sexual encounters that their friends are vicariously living through.



GEMINI

(MAY 21-JUNE 20)

ROMEO AND JULIET (1996)

Gemini's fall in love through open communication, verbal and physical contact with their partners. You may find it hard to settle down in a relationship and enjoy the thrill of a fling as you are described as flirtatious. Gemini's can have a bad habit of getting through obstacles in a relationship by turning to sex. Try to face your obstacles head on and then enjoy the make-up sex!



CANCER

(JUNE 21-JULY 22)

TWILIGHT (2008)

As a very emotional sign, Cancers require their partners to be able to understand them through non-verbal cues. To a Cancer, it is obvious that when they say something is "okay" that it is clearly not okay so you need a partner that knows better. Cancers are known to be gentle and caring partners however in the bedroom it is a different story!



LEO

(JULY 23-AUGUST 22)

MOONLIGHT (2016)

Always the leader Leo, you will tend to also take on this role in a relationship. When you're in love you are fun, loyal, respectful and overly generous towards your significant other. Your passion and sincerity will show your partner that you do value them as they may find themselves overshadowed at times. Don't be afraid to try new things in the bedroom!



VIRGO

(AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22)

BLUE IS THE WARMEST COLOUR (2013)

Virgo, your self doubt will be holding you back in romantic relationships. You prefer stable relationships over casual flings as you always get more invested than you believe. Virgos' are always charming and great at getting what they want through pouty looks and sexual teasing.



LIBRA

(SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22)

SAY ANYTHING (1989)

As the most romantic of the star signs, Libras have no trouble finding love. You may have had trouble in the past of being more invested in a person than the person was to you. Your ideal partner is someone who keeps you on your toes (in bed as well as in your date life)!



SCORPIO

(OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21)

BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN (2005)

For Scorpios, love is an all-or-nothing situation. Once you find someone who is willing to put up with your attitude you hold on tight - to an extent. You want an intense love, one that gives you meaning to life, rather than a brief fling. You are known for being crazy in the bedroom, and you need to find someone who can keep up with your wild kinks.



SAGITTARIUS

(NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21)

BEFORE SUNRISE (1995)

You probably have the caption, "Loves going on adventures" on your Tinder bio. Your ideal partner is someone who is completely devoted to you and who is willing to follow you around whenever you have the urge to run away. Because your adventurous side extends into the bedroom, you get bored easily if you and your partner do not switch things up every once in a while. Try something new and you may surprise yourselves!



CAPRICORN

(DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19)

KAL HO NA HO (2003)

Relationships only interest you if there is some drama in the mix. Anything else and you'll be bored. Your ideal partner is someone who idolises you but who also isn't afraid to call you out on your own shit. Although you love being an organised person this doesn't extend so well in the bedroom. Try being more spontaneous and you'll find that the sex is more enjoyable in the long run.



AQUARIUS

(JANUARY 20 TO FEBRUARY 18)

CALL ME BY YOUR NAME (2017)

The most important thing for you in a relationship? Loyalty. Also great sex. But mostly loyalty. Like the character of Elio, you crave something more than average in your love life, but this does come at a cost if you let yourself get carried away. Maybe a trip to *Peaches and Cream* will benefit both you and your partner.



PISCES

(FEBRUARY 19 TO MARCH 20)

TITANIC (1997)

For you the ideal love is an all encompassing, deeply intense romance. You are adventurous and free spirited in your relationships, which is why you are suited to being with someone who is more level-headed and less dreamy. You are known for your wild kinks so you need a partner who will embrace this.

THE PEOPLE TO SUPPORT (AND LOVE).

Editors

Helen Yeung and Jasmin Singh

Designer

Nick Withers and Daphne Zheng

Section Editors

Community Editor

Emelia Masari

Arts & Lifestyle Editors

Rushika Bhatnagar & Chris Wong

Contributors

Cameron Leakey, Alisha Siraj, Helen Yeung, Jasmin Singh, Fatima Mohammadi, Uma-sha Gunarathne, Hayden Noyce, Naomi Simon-Kumar, Bonnie Crawshaw-McLean, Emelia Masari, Lily Holloway, Milly Sheed, Adorate Mizero, Belle Hullon, Bridie Bishop, Emily Holland, Anton Huggard, Chris Wong, Neesa Jamieson, Bianca D'Souza, Annalise Boland, Sarah Tribble, Astrid Crosland, Lachlan Mitchell, Sherry Zhang

Cover Artist

Jenn Cheuk

Illustrators

Daphne Zheng, Iva Anjani, Jenn Cheuk

Social Media Team

Jenn Cheuk, Ali Raja, Alisha Siraj, Uvini Panditharatne

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 CraccumMagazine

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Editorial Office

4 Alfred Street,
Private Bag 92019,
Auckland

Advertising

Aaron Haugh
marketing@ausa.org.nz

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