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/6

NEWS AND POLITICS

CRIMINALISATION, HIV, AND REINFORCING STIGMA

Danny discusses the laws stigmatisation of HIV+ people.

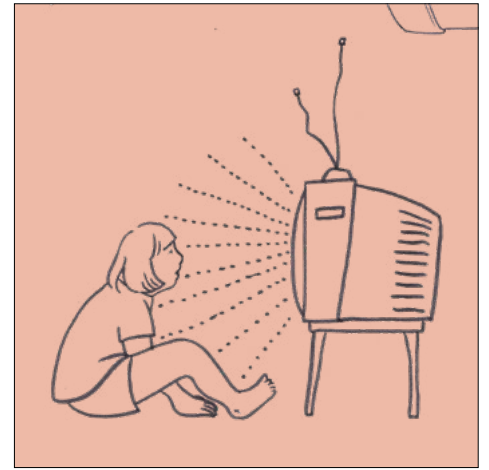


/10

COMMUNITY

BREAKING THE BOUNDARIES

Daphne interviews the creative director of Breaking Boundaries.

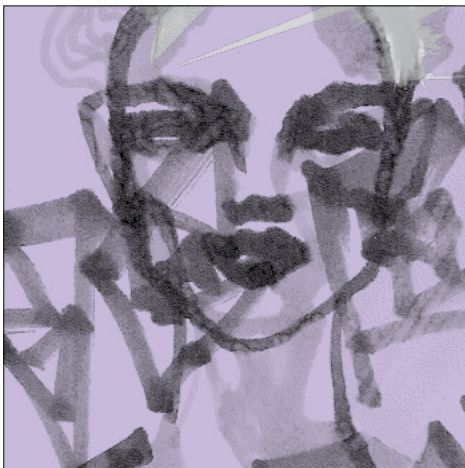


/14

FEATURES

HOW DO YOU SHOW KIDS THAT IT'S OKAY TO BE GAY

Rebecca discusses the importance of queer role models.

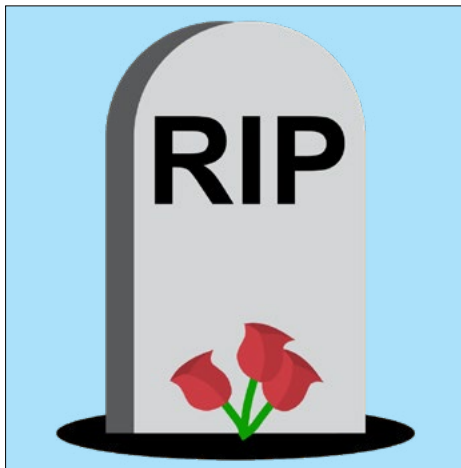


/26

ARTS AND LIFESTYLE

GIRLS LIKE GIRLS LIKE BOYS DO

Sneh talks about some LGBTQI+ queens in music.



/30

SCIENCE

DO YOU WANT TO LIVE FOREVER?

Morgan discusses the aging the most common and deadly disease.



/32

COLUMNS

HOLLYWOOD

Lachlan discusses the new *God of War* game.




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EDITORIAL

with Helen Yeung and Jasmin Singh

A GUIDE TO GOOD LUCK



Jasmin: Greetings and Happy Pride Issue! No update on the cockroach issue so far, but my mum (Hi Ma!) told me that she has seen big rats running around Albert Park, so be careful of the rats our dear readers. Now that the pest update is out of the way, we can focus on other things. We recently found out via Facebook that our one year friendiversary was 2 weeks ago. Although Facebook informs me I have known Helen for only a year, I feel like we are truly connected. As you've seen last week, we both loved neopets, and we've also recently discovered how we listened to emo bands in our youth and are equally excited to become the ideal aunties™.

Helen: Jasmin and I are the perfect virgo-sagittarius combo, trust me, I Googled this on astrology dot com, we're the dream team. We've been having a lot of issues and bad luck in and out of the office lately, and call us superstitious but according to our Chinese zodiac, pigs are in their obstacle months for career right now - maybe that's why? We've also interviewed various friends and family members for ways to ward off our bad luck, tune in below to see the list of things we're going to follow. Speaking of friendships, our amazing friend Bloom has submitted a piece for this issue on being an ally for Asian LGBTIQI+ youth, do read it to learn something new.



Jasmin: It feels like the obstacles are stacking up but hopefully our road to good luck will be smooth sailing. If you have any suggestions for what we can do to turn our luck please email us, we're willing to try new good luck remedies! We have a great spread of articles for this issue, Rebecca's Queer Role Models article was a funny and important read about the need for young people to understand the world of difference around themselves. Danny's article on HIV prosecutions was also an insightful look into the legal world and the stigma that it perpetuates.



Helen: If you've made it this far into reading our editorial, you too must be desperate to find a way to curb your bad luck. Some recommendations we've received include using crystals or a jar of salt to absorb negative energies, placing a small mirror by the door to ward off bad "spirits", wearing lucky colours for your Chinese zodiac, and placing a flowering cacti in the office which is supposed to bring good news. Fingers crossed everything will get better. Getting back to our Pride Issue though, I'm in love with the cover our visual arts editor designed which is inspired by AUSA's Mardi Gras Carnival. Go along for some fun games, prizes and rides in the Quad next Tuesday, 8th of May!



WORLD NEWS

A New Wave of Chinese Activism

BY EMILY YI

On April 13, Sina Weibo, one of Mainland China's most popular social media platforms which has nearly 400 million active users launched a clean up campaign, which was an attempt to rid the site of media related to pornography, violence or homosexuality under the guise of removing "vulgar" content. Although homosexuality is no longer illegal, it is still not largely accepted and has been the target of government crackdowns.

The campaign quickly received backlash from the LGBT+ community in Mainland China. There was a strong opposition from many of the users, who used the tag "I am gay" to protest the social media crackdown. The tag gained viral status and was viewed nearly 300 million times before being censored.

This level of activism did not go unnoticed with both Sina Weibo and the official newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party issuing statements. Less than a week after the campaign, Sina Weibo released its ban on gay content, with the newspaper claiming how "homosexuals are also ordinary citizens", affirming their stance on anti-discrimination based on sexual identity. However, following this, they also voiced that "[homosexuals] must bear their social responsibilities". Despite change being small, the collective action of individuals has clearly caused a shift in society. ■

The "Windrush Generation"

BY REBECCA STUBBING

UK citizens who are part of the "Windrush Generation" are being refused healthcare benefits, thrown in detention centres, and deported. Changes to UK law in 2012 require immigration documentation be provided in order to access most state services. Failing to do so can result in being denied access to vital services, and lead to deportation or incarceration.

The "Windrush Generation" describes a generation of people who migrated to the UK from Commonwealth countries and British colonies between 1948 and 1971 as part of an initiative by the UK Government to bolster the depleted workforce following WWII.

Immigrants under the scheme were given UK citizenship, recognised again under the 1971 Immigration Act which granted all Commonwealth citizens already residing in the UK the right to remain in the country indefinitely. No formal documentation was ever produced to recognise naturalised citizens under the act. Further to this, in 2010 former Home Secretary Teresa May ordered the destruction of the landing cards from the Windrush Generation migrant vessels. The Windrush Generation are UK citizens who have no proof of citizenship because they have previously never needed or been granted formal documents recognising their status, and are now being treated as illegal immigrants by the British government. ■



Kim Jong-un Crosses the Demilitarised Zone

BY ALISHA SIRAJ

Since the end of the Korean War in 1953, North Korea has been an impenetrable fortress of secrecy and isolation. Hidden from the rest of the world as it develops its nuclear arsenal and gains the unyielding devotion of an entire population. It's a world without social media, freedom of speech or any access to the outside world. Therefore, recent efforts in diplomacy have caused quite the stir around the globe.

Kim Jong-un has become the first North Korean leader to cross the Korean demilitarised zone, the most heavily guarded border in the world, into South Korea, where South Korean leader, Moon Jae-in, embraced him. At this historic summit, Kim and Moon agreed on a "new era of peace". With many declaring this to be an official end to the Korean War.

Some believe that pressure from Trump and strict sanctions imposed on North Korea is what led to these discussions, with Moon recently proposing that Trump be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The general populace are all too familiar with the turbulent personalities and damaging policies of both Trump and Kim. Something we need to consider as we approach the historic meeting between the two leaders in the coming weeks. When literally the world is at stake, hope is good, but scepticism is too. ■



Criminalisation, HIV, and Reinforcing Stigma

Danny Lam considers how the current law only exacerbates the stigmatisation of HIV+ people.

New Zealand has made a huge step forward in promoting HIV health by publicly funding Truvada for PrEP, a daily pill for HIV negative people that prevents them from contracting the virus. This is not however, the end of the road in what the law can do to help promote public health and eradicate stigma against HIV. New Zealand, like most other Commonwealth countries, maintains a harmful practice of prosecuting people who transmit the virus by not taking “reasonable precautions” to prevent transmission.

Last year, Mikio Filitonga was convicted of inflicting Grievous Bodily Harm and committing criminal nuisance when he transmitted HIV to his partner.¹ Perhaps it is understandable what motivates these prosecutions. A sense of betrayal. Injustice. Having your life changed forever. Dubious consent. But can the law really call this criminal, and sentence someone to long prison terms for unintentionally transmitting a virus? Or does this practice further stigmatise an already stigmatised minority within a minority? The way the legal and medical communities see it, criminalising HIV+ people simply furthers the ignorance and fear of HIV already widespread in society.

The current law in New Zealand

According to the cases of *R v Mwai*, and *Police v Dalley*, this is how the law stands in New Zealand. Semen or other bodily fluids that contain HIV are “dangerous things” which HIV+ people are “in charge” of. By not taking “reasonable precautions” to prevent transmission, the HIV+ person is “[en-dangering] the life” of other people.² This offence of “criminal nuisance” carries a maximum sentence of 1 year. If transmission occurs, then the HIV+ person may have caused “grievous bodily harm” to the other person. This carries a much higher maximum sentence of 7 years.³ On a side-note, the offence of criminal nuisance is in the same group of offences as the now repealed crimes of “brothel-keeping”, “keeping place of resort for homosexual acts”, “living on earnings of prostitution”, and other offences that sought to oppress sexual minorities and sex workers. Take from that what you will...

Another problematic area of New Zealand law is the complication caused by ACC. In *KSB v ACC*, a complainant claimed that she suffered mental trauma

from discovering that her sexual partner was HIV positive. She did not contract the virus. However, in order for mental trauma that is not caused by a physical injury to be covered by ACC, it needs to basically come from a sexual assault. The court, eager to compensate the complainant, found that not disclosing your HIV status, and not using “reasonable precautions”, could constitute sexual assault, by vitiating the consent of the other party. Nobody has been charged with sexual assault so far, but it is a dark cloud that looms over our law.

What’s Changed?

HIV is probably one of the most successfully treated diseases in medical science. We now know for a fact that HIV+ people who have an undetectable viral load (basically, if you’re on successful treatment), cannot transmit the virus.⁴ The risk is simply not there. What once was a diagnosis for imminent death has become a manageable condition. PrEP has now empowered more people to take control of their sexual health. It also means that unprotected anal or vaginal intercourse is no longer always risky in relation to HIV.⁵ We have not yet had a case to directly test how these new scientific developments will be dealt with in the courts. Last year at the 2017 HIV Treatments Update Seminar, Crown Solicitor for Auckland Brian Dickey spoke about the issue. He said that there is no telling whether or not an Undetectable Viral Load (UVL) means that a “reasonable precaution” has been taken. We are currently stuck with restrictive and outdated definitions of safer sex and “reasonable precautions” from the 2005 *Dalley* case: condomless oral sex, or penetrative sex with condoms.

New Zealand is however, starting to pave the way for a progressive policy on HIV. The Court in *Filitonga* has made several helpful comments, while still being constrained by the current criminal law. The District Court has finally admitted that criminalising HIV+ people for reckless transmission of the virus has no deterrent effect,⁶ which the scientific and legal community have been saying for years. It has been found that it has the opposite effect: making people

⁴ Australian consensus statement, “Sexual Activity Without Condoms and Risk of HIV Transmission in Serodifferent Couples When the HIV-Positive Partner Is Using Antiretroviral Therapy”, Alison J. Rodger et al. for the PARTNER Study Group, 2016.

⁵ Australian consensus statement, “Sexual transmission of HIV and the law: an Australian medical consensus statement”, Mark Boyd et al, 2016.

⁶ <https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/350057/sentence-reduced-for-man-who-gave-partner-hiv>

¹ *Police v Filitonga*, Mwai, Johnny Lumsden

² Section 145, s 156 Crimes Act.

³ Section 188(2).

afraid to know their status.⁷ The Court of Appeal has also said that the jury must determine on the facts whether HIV infection is “grievous bodily harm”, which would open liability to an offence with 7 years maximum sentence.⁸ HIV is the only virus that counts as “grievous bodily harm” in the criminal law. Mr Filitonga was acquitted, on appeal, of causing grievous bodily harm and had his sentence greatly reduced to 9 months, after pleading guilty to criminal nuisance, carrying a maximum sentence of 1 year.

Currently, what we lack is certainty from the courts. Does a UVL constitute “reasonable precautions?”. If I am HIV+, can people complain about me to the police if I have condomless sex? What if they are on PrEP?

I question however whether we should eagerly await for the courts to settle this issue once and for all. In a recent New Zealand Law Journal article Jack Davies reviews the Filitonga decision and “looks forward to the courts addressing [further issues]”. There is all the framework available for the legislature to deal with this issue and prevent any further parties from having to go through the stressful ordeal of a criminal trial. Our new government has also expressed support for HIV issues as part of their “Rainbow policy”. As legal academics, we often think of court cases as a game that judges play, spitting out answers to our questions. We ignore the privilege of sitting in the gallery, not having our lives cross-examined and put on the line just to prove a point to the judge that doctors and scientists have proven time and time again in the laboratory.

How then should the law change to minimise stigma and maximise public health? Substantively, the law needs to recognise that reckless transmission of the HIV virus is not intended by Parliament to constitute “grievous bodily harm”. There is a separate crime of “infecting with disease” which requires malicious intent. This is the only transmission of disease which Parliament intended to criminalise, otherwise all unintended transmissions could be criminal. HIV prosecutions are therefore a product of societal stigma and ignorance. Even the complainant in New Zealand’s first HIV prosecution has now spoken out against such prosecutions. Marama Mullen, who is HIV+ herself, commented that the Filitonga case reflects a societal problem: an HIV+ gay man of colour is shunned by his community both for his sexuality and his serostatus thereby experiences shame and denial. Society then decides to prosecute him for the things he has done under the effects of stigma.⁹

7 (Sun Goo Lee “Criminal Law and HIV Testing: Empirical Analysis of How

At-Risk Individuals Respond to the Law” (2014) 14 *Yale Journal of Health Policy, Law, and Ethics* 194 at 194.

8 Jack Davies [2018] NZLJ 40. *Filitonga v R* NZCA.

9 Amelia Wade “HIV prosecutions are harmful, says victim” *The New Zealand*

Herald (online ed, Auckland, 24 March 2017). New Zealand in fact recently legislated for a way to manage risky behaviour. The Health (Protection) Amendment Act 2016 introduced an entire regime which can be used by medical officers of health to minimise risky activity. They can give directions to HIV+ people who are putting their sexual partners at risk to practice safer sex, refer them to counselling if they are struggling with their diagnosis, among other things. This process can escalate to a level where the court can make orders binding an individual to take certain actions. All of this can take place before any transmission occurs, rather than the criminal law which looks retrospectively and assigns blame. The best part is that all of this regime is confidential and any court processes are closed to the public. The media will no longer be able to publish stories about “aids killers” and sensationalise stories to scaremonger and further stigmatise HIV. While this regime has not been used yet, it is there and is much preferable to the criminal law. The problem is, this process runs parallel and separate to the criminal law.

New Zealand has many tools available and all the support from the new government to help end stigma against HIV. This is the next step after funding PrEP. We are at the perfect time, with new science, a new prime minister, and new attitudes to sex and sexual health, to lead the change to stop criminalising HIV+ people for transmitting the virus, and legislate to defer HIV cases to health law where it belongs. The community supports this, and we owe it to them. It is time to end stigma.

“We are at the perfect time, with new science, a new prime minister, and new attitudes to sex and sexual health, to lead the change to stop criminalising HIV+ people for transmitting the virus, and legislate to defer HIV cases to health law where it belongs.”

Our Karangahape

LILY HOLLOWAY

Karangahape has been a road of many faces (a Doctor Who road, if you will) – a fancy shopping area with department stores galore in the early 1900s, a cinephile's dream with five cinemas in the middle of the century, a red-light district in the 1970s (after motorway development slowed trade and displaced residents), to what is currently considered a diverse hub of queer and cultural activity.

While the street is certainly the subject of gentrification, as is evident in the neighbouring Ponsonby, Karangahape Road has stuck to its guns as far as its Māori name is concerned. It was and still is a recurring issue that Pākehā allege the name is too difficult to pronounce. There is even an old tale that a policeman, having to report a dead horse, dragged the carcass to Pitt Street to make the paperwork easier. All attempts to change the name to something whiter ('Elizabeth Street' I mean, come on people) have thankfully been thwarted. The word 'Karangahape' itself links back to Māori people's first arrival in New Zealand, when it is said that the tohunga (guide) Hape, banned from canoeing due to his club foot, rode a stingray to New Zealand

where he either made a karanga (call) to the gods or received a karanga of reverence from the people.

Karangahape Road undoubtedly has strong ties to the queer community. It is a hub of rainbow bars and clubs (Family Bar & Club, Caluzzi Bar & Cabaret, The Eagle Bar, Good Times Bar, gay saunas, sex stores and the previous location of Rainbow Youth to name a few), and is the location of the annual Pride Parade. On numerous occasions you can see the Ending HIV truck giving free testing or local businesses displaying their rainbow flags.

It is important to remember that Karangahape Road remains safer for some members of the queer community compared to others. Nonbinary and trans people still experience violence in the area, the street by no means creates a bubble of immunity to transphobic and homophobic bullshit. It can be said, however, that there is a sense of connection and community while partying with other queer people that is not found in other CBD hangouts – a sort of "Fuck you, outer world! You can't stop us dancing!"

The businesses in the area owe a lot to the 'pink dollar' which makes it feel like a kick in the teeth when documents discussing future area development vaguely refer to maintaining Karangahape Road as 'colourful' but 'safer' and 'family friendly', and make no concrete promises to protect the queer and culturally diverse people that maintain the integrity of the road itself. For many of Auckland's queer young people, Karangahape Road symbolises a haven for the outcast and disenfranchised, a place where we can fall in love with strangers (and maybe kiss them or hold hands, who knows?), make friends with whom we can participate in current queer culture with, support queer business, learn about our heritage, express our identities and hopefully feel a bit safer and more accepted.

So as Karangahape Road enters another phase of change, it is essential that the queer community knows its worth. We make up the heart of the district. Our needs matter and our voices should be heard. Our money and support actively shapes the road and we are not powerless in the direction it takes. ■

A Tutoring Revolution

YVONNE ROTHWELL AND JODIE LLEWELLYN

It seems absurd that a service that revolves around students and their needs has been turned into a money making operation. Obviously, businesses revolve around the needs of their consumers. However, tutoring companies are putting the needs of the consumer as secondary to their desire for profit. Students will always need tutoring services. Therefore, companies can rely on this demand and feel secure charging unreasonable prices.

The cost of tutoring can be incredibly high which excludes many students that do not have the financial capacity. The companies set the prices high to pay the tutors but with the intention of leaving enough to turn a decent profit. The companies will offer sessions in 'bundle deals' which they market to be affordable, however it forces students to sign on for more sessions than they may need in order to keep cost per session down. These 'bundle deals' are clearly a marketing technique under the guise of boosting profit. They capitalise on the hysteria of first year students that are unfamiliar with the system but desperate to do well. They do this by selling to them that tutoring is essential and you won't get an 'A' without it. The result is inflated prices that are unaffordable to those living on the average student budget. It privileges the few that have

the resources, and excludes the majority of students.

"Looking back on first year, I feel so stupid forking out that money for tutoring sessions with the companies on campus. I felt like I had to keep up with my friends and my academic pressures basically translated into financial pressures" -Anonymous

If you know a student in the years above you who has agreed to meet with you, you may be sorted for some commitment-free, cheap tutoring. However, this is rare and difficult to find for a lot of students, specifically International students, or those from those outside of Auckland. It can be particularly difficult to ask for help, especially if you don't know anybody. Accessibility is so important when it comes to services that have the potential to create such advantage and disadvantage in an education setting.

"I've never been one to put myself 'out there' so I felt like I was left behind by my more extroverted friends when it came to getting some help."

Market research shows that profit oriented tutoring is more fitting to the High School market. Parents are generally the ones pay

for the tutoring. Their disposable income can be greater and when looking for a tutor, their criteria is quite often quality as opposed to price. Furthermore, subjects that are studied at High School are broad and require skill to teach. Level 3 English is fundamentally different to a single semester paper that focuses on specific themes within a broader subject. All a University student is often looking for is a one-off session to discuss what a lecturer looks for in an exam script or essay, what parts of the course they should prioritise or even how to secure an A+. At University, students generally pay for their own tutoring and not all students are supported by a large disposable income. Affordability and flexibility are crucial components of the University tutoring market.

It is clear students are fed up with this ongoing issue, so we have created a solution. We have developed a social enterprise which is a platform to connect people who are looking for tutoring services with people who want to tutor others. It aims to connect students together and it does not take a cut from sessions to help prices stay down. Have a look at what we have done at www.passiton.net.nz Jump on board to put students in charge of tutoring. ■



Breaking The Boundaries

Daphne Zheng interviews Joni Nelson, the creative director of Breaking Boundaries.

I meet Joni on a windy afternoon. We push through the sea of well-dressed law students and convene at a quiet bench behind an asbestos-plagued building. As a local lesbian, I've attended a handful of *Breaking Boundaries*' events and thoroughly enjoyed myself each time. With the nervous energy of a first date, I tell her I've never done this before and hopefully the questions are okay. She assures me that she's been interviewed by big-shot journalists before and they used their phones to record the conversation too.

Joni is the creative director of Breaking Boundaries, the short descriptor being "a registered non-profit creative arts organisation for queer and trans people."

Casually self-deprecating, she admits her title is wanky, but it's what fits best for what the organisation does. She and a team of seven run several events over the course of the year, from gardening and cooking workshops, to open mics, board GAYmes nights (the pun's enunciation is difficult vocally, but the difference from a regular games night is essential) and producing theatre such as the annual *Legacy*. It's essential that *Breaking Boundaries* creates these social connections in a space that is both inclusive and safe for the queer community. To do this, Joni's model of work for running these creative sectors is "a lot of trial and error" and "responding to what people want: events that are new and interesting and creative. [At] our open mic, 90 people showed up, we barely had enough seats. And then sometimes you have a workshop and five people show up, so we're not done with failure!"

Joni explains running these events for the queer community has a simple answer. "What is there when you turn 20 and you're queer and you've aged out of this idea of youth? For me, I got into a long-term relationship coming out the end of high school. I wasn't on Tinder, I wasn't dating, and so much of queer people's interactions with each other comes through this act of dating. Making like-minded, queer young adult friends who are at a similar stage of life is really, really hard."

***Breaking Boundaries* emphasises its importance in reaching out and being accessible to all, part of which fueled the reason they participated in Pride this February.**

"We felt very at odds at what the festival was and what the festival means. So this year, rather than not being a part of it, we were going to enter our events to the Pride festival, and do the Pride festival [in a way] that we wished we'd seen or that we would've wanted to go to the years before."

I ask Joni to clarify on her conflicts with Pride. "In 2015, NPIP (now PAPA, a prison abolition group) jumped the barrier at the Pride Parade in front of police and corrections marching in uniforms with a banner that said, 'NO PRIDE IN PRISONS'. They were forcefully removed from that parade, and one of them, a young Māori trans-woman had her arm broken by security. That year, it was so divided. On one hand it was like, 'Fuck you guys, you ruined our parade. We LOVE that the police are marching [to show their support],' and on the other hand we had people saying, 'No, fuck you. Why do we have to get proud when we don't feel proud? Corrections march down the parade,

yet we *know* that transwomen are being held in men's prisons and are in extremely unsafe positions.'

"[In contrast to PAPA's protest three years ago,] this year two people jumped the barrier to unleash a banner that said 'STOP GIVING KIDS SEX HORMONES, PROTECT LESBIAN YOUTH.' That was awful for all those people who were there to walk in that parade and celebrate themselves who had to deal with seeing those people enter into their space—one of them (being a straight woman) wasn't even part of our *fecking* community at all—and just made that big and completely and utterly transphobic comment: not based in fact at all. Like, 'stop giving kids sex hormones?' They're referring to blockers, so young people who identify as trans get things that stops you from going through puberty. It has no negative effect on your health, it doesn't do anything to do [with what they're claiming], all it stops you from doing is going through puberty, and it stops that child from going through the trauma of your body doing the exact opposite of what you want it to be. No person can get access to testosterone or estrogen until they're 18 years of age. So all you can do in there is you block it and they can get to 18, they can go it's not what I want to do, they take them off of it and they can go through puberty at 18. It's no drama.

"Their whole premise is so badly informed, it's just not based in any sort of reality. What's also worth noting is that when they jumped into the parade, they were removed, but neither of those nice white ladies got their arms broken. The irony of them going in there and getting that space and being ushered out, versus the response to people protesting trans-women in male prisons and violence in that whole institution [has that response]?"

"People have this idea of the queer community as one big homogenised, 'The Rainbow Community!' Like, what the fuck is that shit? Is Pride for queer people? Or is Pride a PR opportunity for [corporations]? This year Pride is starting to have these conversations and they've done some work but I don't think we're there yet. I think that's why [*Breaking Boundaries*] still doesn't participate in the parade because I don't know what the Pride Parade means and I'm quite at odds with and whether we wanna march alongside the banks, police, and corrections.

"There's this internal conflict within our community, like there are these really transphobic facets [that] shouldn't have a space. I think [there are similar facets] where people are like 'what does race have to do with the queer community?' We get to put ourselves in a bubble so much, and it's important that there are those spaces that you recuperate and recover, but often times it means we miss where people are at, and we become so shocked that these people exist and these people are kind of the mainstream. The queer community still have so much growing to do and we're doing better, but there's still a lot of disparities, there's still a lot of hurt."

We close on the topic, and I move onto my next scheduled question. Over the last decade queer rights have improved immensely, in terms of cultural acceptance and our highly-publicised laws.

Joni agrees, but states, "With every new generation there becomes new issues as well which weren't

issues at the time. Yes, the visibility of transwomen has gone up, but so has violence towards trans-women, particularly trans-women of colour, to match that visibility. Doesn't mean that visibility is a bad thing, but it does mean that it's not enough."

Reflexively, how does Joni believe queer politics can change for the better?

"It comes back to that intersectionality of for some people, the space where we're at is all good for them, but in terms of access to healthcare and services and hormones—especially for our transgender community—issues of access, issues of representation, issues that people don't think of as queer issues. We're over-represented in poverty, in homelessness statistics, in suicide statistics."

Action is key. Joni can list several arenas in which queer politics can be improved off the top of her head. "We're not even going to begin to solve any of the structural issues until we start acting, [starting with the national census.] And now the census is a mobile app, so we have to tick male or female, it doesn't let you continue until you do. We're literally not being counted by our government. And there has been a working group to make that happen, of really intelligent queer and trans people who have given up their time and their expertise, and had those conversations. So it's the fact that it's not happened yet because they don't have the information, like people have a lot of work to make that just happen.

"Having gender neutral bathrooms in a space, in the university space still fails at that. They have created new buildings and still students [are] petitioning them for a gender neutral bathroom in the space in which they're in and they haven't gotten it. The simple fact of knowing there aren't a lot of gender neutral bathrooms in the campus, and [there were] some in the quad that were reverted back."

I point out the banners strung around our university that frown upon racist, homophobic, transphobic and ableist behaviour, but as previously pointed out, fail to make these changes to enact such an environment. Joni agrees. "We're feeling a lot of hurt. There is more openness but in other ways there is still a long way to go." Joni jokes on how to solve it all. "Overthrow capitalism, you know?"

So how does *Breaking Boundaries* reach out to these groups?

"For us, it's just been about fostering a space which is really aware, and that awareness comes from being constantly on game, constantly reflective of things. [We have to be] aware of our team members on individual levels: where they're at, the intersections they have in the spaces they hold, and holding platforms for them to speak for themselves and not have others speak for them. When we go to open mics, we make it really clear that it's a space for queer and trans people, and not racism, transphobia, homophobia, and if you do, you'll get called out. We want to sponsor people's events, support them by helping them with grant applications, resources, marketing and reach; not have creative control over it, but to just push people up and give them a platform." ■

Breaking Boundaries can be found at breakingboundaries.org.nz, or on their Facebook page. This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.



equAsian

Tell us more about how EquAsian started?

EquAsian was formed in 2014, emerging out of Pride Festival 2014 during a community meeting about the experiences of Asian people in the LGBTIQ+ community in Auckland. Participants at this meeting voiced the challenges they faced as a doubly marginalized 'minority within a minority' in the rainbow community. This meeting directly led to the establishment of EquAsian.

We are now a social support group in Auckland for LGBTIQ+ people of all ages who descend from all parts of the Asian region. Our main aim is to provide a safe, fun and inclusive community for LGBTIQ+ Asians to socialize and support one another. In a nutshell, EquAsian's philosophy is 'equal and Asian'. We're the only Asian LGBTIQ+ organization in New Zealand.

What is your role in EquAsian and what inspired you to work there?

When I first came to New Zealand most of the spaces were very Pakeha dominated. I was not out to my family and I was constantly looking out for support outside of family. I think people forget that Asians are collectivistic and not

individualistic. Before joining EquAsian every time I would tell someone about the problems I was facing at home and in my family they would just ask me to move out and live independently. It was so hard for me to explain that Asian culture doesn't work like that. I couldn't have left my widowed mother to live all by herself and leave her just because I wanted to come out as gay. After joining EquAsian I found people who had similar stories and were struggling just like me. I met some amazing people through EquAsian and we have all grown so much in life.

I think the mainstream gay culture is so much focused on perfect bodies, instagram photos and cis men. With EquAsian I wanted to create a space for people who don't fit very well with media's way of portraying gay men. I know some Asian countries have political tension between them but all are members feel part of the community. We never discuss any differences rather we focus on what could be shared between us.

What are some barriers facing Asian LGBTIQ+ individuals in Aotearoa? And do you have any advice for people who are

struggling with their culture and identity?

I think one of the biggest barriers is the lack of culture specific support when it comes to Asian LGBTIQ+ people. Also, the suburbs are constantly ignored, and most campaigns are focused on the central Auckland area. This makes it harder for many of us to access and receive support. For me personally I feel like never give up your culture or identity. Take all the good things from your culture. I know it can be a struggle to negotiate your cultural identity and sexuality but the best way is to live without judging yourself. Drop all the thoughts from your mind that tell you that you can not be what you want to be.

How can anyone interested to learn more about the organisation or get involved get in touch?

Find our facebook page - EquAsian at <https://www.facebook.com/equasiannz/>. You can also send us an email to add you on secret group on FB. If you'd like to help organise events send us a request. Email address is equasianinfo@gmail.com ■

Sixteen Ways to Be an Ally & a Buddy For Asian Rainbow Friends =)

Bloom lists how to be a good ally for your Asian LGBTQI+ friends

1. Be a listener.
2. Be open-minded.
3. Be willing to talk
4. Stop assuming that because we are "Asian" so we're come from a homophobic or backward place. Hey, stop! That's so damn rude! Remember Asians are diverse just like the west. We have different ways to rule sexuality and gender identity. Claiming that the West is the most progressive LGBT place is just another form of colonising us, Queer Asians, as the subordinates from the (queer) western eyes.
5. Be inclusive and non-judgmental
6. Stop being racist.
7. Don't assume that all of your Asian friends are 'essential' straight and 'conservative'. Stop stereotyping us in such a way. Someone close to you could be looking for support in accepting their sexuality/gender identity. Not making assumptions will give them the space they need.
8. If you like to chill out in the Queer-space and see someone who appears to be international students, please say hi and try to be friendly and inclusive to them. Writing as a queer international student, many of us (including myself) struggle to find the sense of belonging. We don't feel like we fit in to our international communities nor 'local' queer communities. We also try to cope with living in a foreign country where things are so different for us. So, please be much more emphatic to us, queer international students.
9. Don't stereotype that all LGBT + are the same or look stereotypically masculine/ feminine. What define them as "homosexual/ bisexual or queer" is whom they are attracted to not the way they dress!
10. Ask your friends what "pronouns" do they prefer such as "he/she/ they". It shows them the respect to their gender identities.
 - a. Don't ask invasive questions about genitalia, surgical procedures or similar to transgender friends.
 - b. Calling someone who is a transgender as "drag/ cross-dresser" is very offensive because "drag/crossdresser" presenting themselves the genders that they are not. Whereas, transgenders present the genders that they identify with. Referring to a trans person as a crossdresser or a drag queen or king implies that they are not truly the gender they identify with, and is extremely hurtful.
11. Anti-LGBT comments and even "light" jokes are harmful. Let your friends, family and co-workers know that you find them offensive.
12. Be aware of your own prejudices and bias, even if it is uncomfortable to do so.
13. Defend your LGBT friends against discrimination.
14. Believe that all people, regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation, should be treated with dignity and respect.
15. Don't disclose your friends' gender identities or sexualities to your family members or friends as you might put them at risk.
16. Don't put pressure on your rainbow friends to be 'out and proud'. It's too western. Remember our cultures work differently from the west. Most of us are still living with parents or family members. Hence, being 'out and proud' would put your (Asian) friends in danger. Just tell them to feel competent within themselves.

Refer to 0800 Shakti if your rainbow friends face any sorts of emotional, financial and physical abuse at home. ■

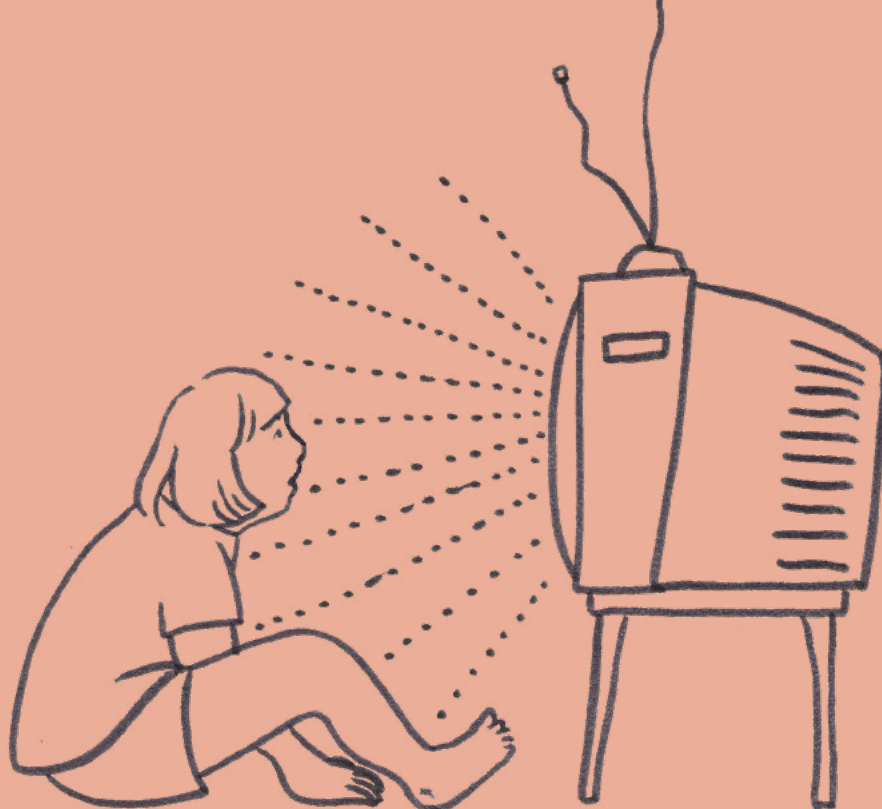
FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE

Shakti call 0800 for the 24hrs crisis help (<http://shakti-international.org/shakti-nz/>)

Rainbow Youth, it's charity which helps LGBTQ+ youth through its counselling service, resources and drop-in-centre Tel 09-376-4155, e-mail: info@ry.org.nz

OutLine NZ, a Rainbow charity which specialises in calling and face-to-face counselling. Tel: 0800 688 5463 OutLine, e-mail: info@outline.org.nz

NZ HIV Foundation aims to end HIV and teaches about safe sex practices. This is where you can book HIV test for free and grab free condoms too. E-mail: hello@endinghiv.org.nz, Website: <https://endinghiv.org.nz/> (0)09) 376 4155



How do you show kids that it's okay to be gay?

Rebecca Stubbing talks about the dilemma and necessity of being a role model for LGBT+ kids.

*TW: I use the reclaimed Q**** slur a lot in this piece. I'm really sorry if that means you can't read it.*

For two years now I have been working as an assistant drama tutor for primary school kids. A few weeks ago a girl turned to me at the beginning of class and said, "are you in love?". I don't know why she asked me this but she's five so there probably wasn't any reason in particular. I told her yes so she asked me who I was in love with and I said, "my girlfriend". She asked me her name I told her and that was the end of the conversation. The boy sitting next to her had been listening to this exchange and he said, "wait, you have a girlfriend? Are you... like a gay or something?". I said, "yes, or something."

When I was growing up, both of my parents worked full time and I had a nanny. My nanny is gay. Because of this, I have never lived in a world in which I didn't know that being gay was a thing and that it was accepted by my immediate family. I didn't know the word gay for a while I suspect, and I'm not sure where or when I would have learnt it. I distinctly

remember thinking though that my nanny liked girls and my mum liked boys, and that was an even split of the adult women that I knew; so the world must be split in half like this where half of all the girls liked girls and half of all the girls liked boys. I'm not sure how long I retained that belief either.

Having an out queer adult in my life growing up made everything so much easier. It didn't mean I wasn't freaked out the first time I thought a girl was hot, but it did mean I never freaked out that it wasn't a thing or that my family would kick me out. Because I'm so keenly aware of the effect having that queer role model growing up had on my understanding of the world and my understanding of myself, I feel a massive responsibility to be a queer role model myself. I had my nanny, but I've been wracking my brains and I really can't think of any other queer people that I knew as a kid. Even today, I have a very extended family, but even if there are some other queer relatives hiding in the tree, I'm certainly the only out one. I feel like it's so important to be visible, because even in 2018, you never know, you could be the only

queer person that a kid sees on a regular basis.

I asked a few queer people I know who also work with kids about their experiences to help me with writing this. None of them had out queer adults in their lives growing up and instead had to turn to TV to find people like them. I am a big believer in doing this, especially as someone who is on the asexual spectrum. I had Queer role models in real life but the only ace role model I ever had was Sherlock Holmes (until Steven Moffat ruined that for me). It is especially hard to find queer representation in media that is aimed at kids though, which further enhances the need for real life role models. The 2017 GLAAD 'Where We Are on TV' report found that for the 2017-2018 broadcast season, 6.4% of series regulars on prime-time scripted TV shows are queer. This low number is in fact the highest percentage of queer characters there has ever been on TV. There isn't any data about the exact number of queer characters in kids/family programming specifically, but I'm going to make an educated guess that it couldn't possibly be more than that.

The need for real life role models is clear, but wanting to be the queer role model kids deserve and being able to deliver are two very different things.

There's the very real issue that a lot of people are squeamish about letting kids know that queer people exist. Groups like One Million Moms in the US and the large number of angry parenting websites that came up when I googled "number of queer characters in kids' media" demonstrate the sheer quantity of "queerphobes" with children. Even discounting extremist hate groups, the number of normal adults who think that non-straight romance is somehow intrinsically explicit and inappropriate for kids is baffling. Someone my age who I was friends with at the time once said to me that Disney shouldn't

make Elsa (from *Frozen*) gay because it wouldn't be "suitable for kids". This all translates into me feeling extremely nervous that if I were to encourage kids that there doesn't have to be a prince and a princess in their story, they would tell their parents and I would get in trouble. My boss is actually gay, and yet angry queerphobic parents are so well publicised that I'm afraid of them even though I know I'm not going to get fired for being too queer.

Another issue is just knowing what it looks like to be a queer role model. Do you challenge your colleagues every time they suggest a scene should be about a mum, a dad and some kids? If you do, do you have a word to them afterwards or do you interrupt them while they're talking to the class and risk undermining their authority? Do you try to dress and act extremely coolly, so kids see how hip queer people are? Do you loudly argue about queer issues with your Catholic relatives at family events so that your younger cousins know someone is going to stick up for them if they ever need to come out? Whether you had a gay nanny or you watched a lot of Will and Grace growing up, it's difficult to be able to pinpoint specific things they did that made your journey easier, other than just being there. It's difficult to know how you could replicate that to help others.

Maybe at the end of the day all you can do is to be there, be yourself, and look out for the weird kids. One of the people I asked for their thoughts when I was writing this was my old nanny and she said, "children and young people benefit greatly from the knowledge that the world is filled with difference," which I think just about sums it up. Maybe you just have to answer truthfully when they ask you who you're in love with, and hope that it might help one of them one day. ■



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Christianity, Homosexuality and Folau

Brontë Page explains how she reconciles Christianity with homosexuality, and weighs in on the Folau controversy.

Over the last month the divide between Christianity and the LGBT+ community has once again become highlighted in national media. This happens pretty regularly but most recently, this week with the Israel Folau saga. For those of you who don't know, Israel Folau is a Christian, Australian, rugby player who recently in response to a question on his Instagram stated that God's Plan for "gay people" is "HELL. Unless they repent of their sins and turn to God." This led to a large amount of controversy. Lots of different public figures have come out both in support of and against Folau's comments and general public debate has been immense.

When controversies such as these come out in the media it can lead to queer people of faith, such as myself, feeling caught between the two worlds. You have defend your sexuality to other members of your faith and your faith to other members of the LGBT+ community. It leads to a lot of conversations and a lot of questions. The main two I have gotten recently are: "Do I believe that Israel Folau is correct that God condemns homosexuality?" and "What do I think of Folau's comments in general?" These are my opinions.

Do I Believe that Israel Folau

is correct that God Condemns Homosexuality?

The quick answer is no. There are two major broad schools of thought surrounding homosexuality in the less LGBT+- affirming sects of Christianity. The first is the conservative "*homosexuality is inherently immoral stop being homosexual or you will burn in hell, lets hate everything to do with homosexuality*" camp. I think it is incredibly easy to refute this stance. Firstly, because there is literally no passage in the bible that even really implies that homosexual ATTRACTIONS are a sinful act. But more importantly, because hate is just not the overarching message of the Bible.

In Matthew 22:36-40 the Pharisee's asked Jesus what the greatest commandment was and this was his response:

"'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Not: "Thou shalt not lie with man, as with woman: it is abomination". Not: "Go and tell all the Homosexuals

that they are abominations and they're going to hell". No Jesus told us to firstly love God and secondly love each other. And that is more than enough in my mind to combat the most conservative Christian views.

But what about the more "moderate" view that homosexual tendencies are not sinful but homosexual acts are and that we should "love the person but not the sin." This view is rooted in approximately 6 verses which consist of:

Genesis 19:1-38: The Story of Sodom and Gomorrah

Leviticus 18:22: "Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable."

1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men."

1 Timothy 1:9-10: "We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers ... for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality"

Jude 6-7: A reference back to Sodom and Gomorrah

Romans 1:25-27: "Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error."

So I am never going to make myself out to be a biblical scholar and instead I recommend you watch "The Gay Debate: The Bible and Homosexuality" by Matthew Vines. However, if you don't want to go look up the video here is a summary. Vines effectively summarises that for each of the verses that condemn "homosexual acts" they do not address homosexuality as we know it today. In the Old Testament, the Genesis story of Sodom and Gomorrah concerns a gang rape and the Leviticus verse is comprised of old temple laws that do not apply to modern-day Christians.

During the time that the New Testament was being written there was no concept of 'homosexuality' like there is today. The Apostle Paul, as he wrote the verses, would have had no conception or even a glimpse of the idea of the LGBT+ as it exists today as a group of people to whom their same sex attractions are a fundamental, unchangeable part of their identity. The same way that Paul probably couldn't have conceived of the idea of cellphones or Facebook or even a lightbulb.

So, what did the "homosexuality" that Paul was writing about look like? It looked like Roman and Greek men engaging in pederasty. Pederasty was a common

practice where older men would engage in sexual acts with young boys (usually non-consensually, with slaves.). When looked at in this context it is unsurprising that Paul would condemn these acts...we do today as well.

Across all the verses that people claim talk about homosexuality, do you know what's missing? Any comment on whether homosexual acts in a loving, consensual, married homosexual relationship are a sin. Why? because it just wasn't a thing back then. Homosexual couples couldn't even begin to have marital sex until 2013 when marriage equality was passed. We shouldn't consider concepts sinful just because they weren't around 2000 years ago.

The final thing I'll say on this is that one of the key messages of the Bible is that God IS Love; He is the biggest champion of it in the entire universe. It seems almost completely crazy to me that knowing that there are people out there that think that he would have an issue with homosexuality, which is nothing more than a slightly different form of love.

The Israel Folau Saga and the Surrounding Controversy.

I think from the last section it is pretty easy to see that I don't agree with Israel Folau's interpretations of the scriptures. However, that isn't my actual issue with his actions.

I am more than willing to admit that Folau is trying to do the right thing and follow God and the interpretation of the scriptures in the way that has been taught to him. He has likely never had a reason to examine these scriptures more deeply than face value and

"Everyone ends up frustrated and no progress is ever made. We then let the issue drop until it inevitably crops up again and the cycle begins again. It achieves almost nothing and serves to continue to push the two sides further apart leaving more and more people trapped in the middle and harmed by the hurtful words from both sides."

while that is unfortunate, it does not make him a bad person, he just holds the beliefs that he does and is trying to follow God in the best way he knows how.


What I do not agree with, is his choice, as a prominent figure in rugby, Pacific Islander and Christian communities to choose to voice his opinions in such a public and careless manner. Because as much as we often get caught up in academic debates about freedom of speech vs freedom from discrimination vs freedom of religion, comments like this have actual pernicious harms for particularly young members of the LGBT+ community and particularly for young members of both Christian and LGBT+ communities.

Hearing influential members of the community say that homosexuality is a sin does very little to "save" anyone. Instead it places huge burdens on young people who are often already struggling and can drive them away from God or to Suicide. This is completely against the aims of people like Folau or really any Christian that aims to follow Christ's teachings of loving God and loving each other. Those wider harms are the things that public figures like Folau or anyone else need to keep in mind when sharing the Christian message on a wider stage. Does what they're saying bear good outcomes or bad ones? Be-


cause if one thing's for sure, Matthew 7:18 (A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit) is pretty clear on that.

I think the final issue with Folau's comments is that it feeds the continual fire of Christian/LGBT+ issues. Every time issues like these crop up in the media this happens: the statement is said, people start vocally pushing back against Christianity and the other people vocally start pushing back against the LGBT+ community. Everyone ends up frustrated and no progress is ever made. We then let the issue drop until it inevitably crops up again and the cycle begins again. It achieves almost nothing and serves to continue to push the two sides further apart leaving more and more people trapped in the middle and harmed by the hurtful words from both sides. Christians shouldn't keep letting a mere 6 verses distract us away from the 31,096 other verses of the Bible and what's really important. Loving God and loving one another. It's time we find a middle ground and a better way.

On that note, a new LGBT+ Christian Club is in the process of being set up. If you would be keen to be involved email lgbtchristiansuoa@gmail.com ■



Kīwaha o te wiki
saying of the week:



TŪWHITIA TE HOPO!

ENGLISH: FEEL THE FEAR AND DO IT ANYWAY!

Example:

Student 1: I'm so nervous about our test today bro.
I don't think I'm ready for it!

Student 2: You'll be sweet, my bro. Tūwhitia te hopo!
Feel the fear and do it anyway!

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The Gay Agenda – Sashay Away?

An anonymous writer ponders the veracity of the stereotypical media portrayal of gay men.

With a culture of acceptance and diversity being for the most part embraced in 2018, you would think that terms like the Gay Agenda would be mostly extinct by this time in modern history. The Gay Agenda is a term used by the religious right to suggest that members of the LGBT community have a secret cause to convert everyone to homosexuality or to spread homosexual norms. With the rise of powerful political figures such as Mike Pence and continued comments from figures such as Israel Foleu and Brian Tamaki that suggest that sexual orientation diversity is immoral, I began to wonder, as a gay man, did I just miss the agenda? For the Pride edition of Craccum, I, a real life gay, am on a search to find out, is there really a Gay Agenda?

I began my search where all good searches start, Netflix. Nothing says 'I'm not ready to begin the actual work' like Netflix. Luckily for me, Netflix have just rebooted Queer Eye, a series that originally aired in the noughties. Queer Eye follows five gay men – the Fab Five – as they sprinkle their gAy MaGiC™ into the lives of straight men who have been volunteered by their family or friends for a makeover. According

to Queer Eye, as a gay man, there were five realms that I could inhabit. Culture, Fashion, Food, Grooming or Interior Design. I began to question the role of these realms within the Gay Agenda. Was I only allowed one realm? Did I get to self-select my realm or was it like a sorting hat sort of situation? I realized that some realms were more significant than others. Karamo, the culture expert, didn't exactly appear to do much whereas Bobby, the interior design expert appeared to single-handedly refurbish an entire house by himself. Was this the gay agenda? Redesigning houses and making unfashionable straight men presentable? I turned off Queer Eye finding myself with more questions than answers.

Netflix, sensing that I was watching television for gays suggested that I watch RuPaul's Drag Race. Was RuPaul's Drag Race how gays were going to take over the world? The episode I watched revolved around the new Drag Queens of the season, completing challenges and then presenting runway looks to the judges, headed by RuPaul. Were the sass and humour and entertainment of it all just a clever rouse to make society more accepting? Did the show

almost suggest that gay men were... likeable? Maybe this was the Gay Agenda: infiltrate audiences with drag queens competing in lip-sync battles to Nicki Minaj. The guest judge of the week was Christina Aguilera, was she in on the gay agenda too? I began to wonder if RuPaul's Drag Race was not an entirely truthful portrayal of what being a gay man was.

Whilst Netflix had shown me the gay agenda on screen, I wanted to see what Instagram had to offer. Gus Kenworthy, Winter Olympic skier and all-round babe, had just adopted a dog that he rescued from a Korean dog farm. The dog, dubbed Beemo, already had 131 thousand followers. Was Beemo a part of the gay agenda? Was Beemo there to mind-wash the masses with her cute appearance? Kenworthy, along with his partner and adorable puppy are very digestible forms of gay culture; they are wholesome, attractive men who don't spoil the archetype of gay men. Perhaps this was part of how gay culture was seeping into society, through men who could even appear to be straight where it not for the partners they had.

My thoughts wandered on my journey and rested at Brian Tamaki. Brian famously suggested a few years ago that gays were responsible for the Christchurch earthquake. Was this also part of the agenda? Was part of being gay causing natural disasters? I have absolutely no idea how I was supposed to cause a natural disaster? Did I miss the handbook when I came out that taught me how to cause these disasters?

I reached the end of my journey. I spent some time soul searching by a lake. And then it hit me. All of my adventures searching for the gay agenda had led me to realize. The gay agenda isn't real. It's just another term that describes the growing acceptance and

inclusion of gay people within society. The idea that minority groups are trying to influence and take over society are only ideas perpetrated by powerful individuals realizing that the world is longer controlled by people who are white, straight and male.

Ultimately the gay agenda is the same as the straight agenda, or any other agenda for that matter. People don't go about their lives trying to take over society; they just want a part IN society. And that's where the Mike Pence's and Brian Tamaki's of the world don't get it, that acceptance and tolerance of diverse groups creates strength, and that there is no agenda. The only gay agenda is living in an accepting society. ■

“All of my adventures searching for the gay agenda had led me to realize. The gay agenda isn't real. It's just another term that describes the growing acceptance and inclusion of gay people within society.”

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REVIEWS



Annihilation

FILM REVIEW BY DARIO DAVIDSON



With a refreshing new take on the alien invasion theme, Alex Garland has given us our first serious contender for 2018 film of the year. I knew this film was going places because as far as I could tell, this was the only Netflix original film so far that wasn't downright awful.

Set in modern times in Florida, USA, *Annihilation* is a story about Lena, who is played by Natalie Portman. The twenty-something geneticist soon finds herself involved in the government's discovery of an ominous phenomenon that has dire implications for planet Earth. This film is a rare pleasure, in that it is equally composed of classic sci-fi elements and refreshing new takes on the genre. Much like *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *Contact*, this film explores our likely reactions as a species to the news that we are not alone in the universe, presenting these with a range of character archetypes.

It was also a pleasant surprise to see a plotline that gives us a virtually all-female cast in a very organic way; something that the action-heavy, sci-fi thriller genre has been lacking for years. Another fantastic characteristic of the film is the set, where unlike many modern blockbusters it wasn't shot in front of a green-screen ten feet away from the set buffet tables, but was largely filmed on-location in Berkshire, England. This shows in both the feel of the shots and the full immersion of the actors in their scenes. One of the best aspects of this movie is that it doesn't pander to its audience, and doesn't care if you're following it or not, it continuously gives you more mystery and tension throughout.

For a frame of reference, Alex Garland also gave us *28 Days Later*, which went on to redefine the genre and spawned a slew of copycats, and its safe to say, *Annihilation* is another film of this calibre. One star for every time I thought I knew what was happening and was proven wrong. ■



Halsey

CONCERT REVIEW BY BELLE HULLON



She had four outfit changes, introduced us to her dad, did a running loop around the arena to interact with fans on the upper deck, and did it all with an impish smile on her face.

Halsey graced Auckland with her presence last Thursday, bringing her Hopeless Fountain Kingdom World Tour to our corner of the planet. Along with special guest Kehlani, Halsey pulled off the stunning feat of being sexy, kind and infectiously joyful with ease - the audience was rapt when she told us stories about her songs and shared small anecdotes about life on tour. The visual effects alternated edgy and dark, to bright and wholesome and then back to a dark place again; it spoke of her music - its vulnerability and power all at once.

She sang a nearly ridiculous number of songs during the 3 hour show, starting with the haunting 'Eyes Closed', and ending with arguably her most popular track, 'Hurricane'. All in all, the setlist comprised of 25 tracks, including 'Gasoline', 'Bad at Love', 'Alone', 'Now or Never', 'Roman Holiday' and my personal favourite, 'Heaven in Hiding'. It was during 'Lie' that she and her backup dancer performed an explosive dance number in a water pool setup, drenching front row fans and leaving the arena awestruck.

Near the end of the show, during an outfit change, she screened a tribute to fans - a beautiful montage of footage of her fans across tours. Over and over again during the show, we were reminded that this was an artist who cared about her fans. The video was the icing on the cake, a case of her mirroring our affection for her back onto us.

It was a beautiful night, with an overarching theme of empowerment and finding joy - Halsey gets what it means to be a work in progress and she isn't afraid to join your battle. ■



KOD

J Cole

ALBUM REVIEW BY RUSHIKA BHATNAGAR



The trichotomous *KOD* - billed as "Kids on Drugs," "King Overdosed" and "Kill Our Demons" is meant to be, just like J Cole's previous four studio albums, a moral learning tool for his listeners. The new album explores his (relatively) self-righteous opinions on drug abuse and addiction as a part of African-American culture. While these ideas are not presented with contempt, my only criticism on the album remains that these ideas somewhat come across with a lack of sympathy to the dynamics of drug abuse in America. In saying this, *KOD* is J Cole's fifth consecutive #1 album on the Billboard 200 and will most likely - and deservedly - be his fifth platinum record. As always he is confident in presenting his lyrics and brings to the table his usual willingness to address difficult subjects.

'ATM' is an early favourite, it's one of his catchiest records to date, as the compounds of several bridges, refrains, and a speedy flow equate both a turn-up anthem and (an entertaining) financial help module. But tracks like 'The Cut Off' and 'FRIENDS' which both feature Cole's alter ego 'kiLL edward' are definite standouts too; the first of which gives us a slower flow and dark vibes and the latter gives us masterful rhyming, a steady beat and the crux of his argument 'Meditate don't medicate.' A plausible yet outdated and ignorant treatment plan. Regardless his alter ego is one to watch out for and the upcoming kiLL edward album will give us more of this new, dark and cold Cole.

Overall he has given us his absolute best. This is the most well-rounded J Cole has sounded as a rapper, singer, and songwriter. It's fascinating to watch an artist becoming better at their craft, displayed through attacking subjects far more challenging than past material. The album is enjoyable and one I highly recommend to all fans of rap music. Whether or not you like J Cole, his talent is not one to be avoided. ■



ruiner

nothing,nowhere.

ALBUM REVIEW BY CHRIS WONG



ruiner, the debut album of Joe Mulherin's emo-rap project nothing,nowhere. follows last year's *Reaper* EP and establishes him as one of the major players at the forefront of emo rap, a genre which has been quietly bubbling about in the underground, particularly on Soundcloud, for a while now.

Produced by Mulherin himself and prominent Soundcloud figure Jay Vee, nothing,nowhere's take on emo rap is slightly more pure and rooted in Midwest emo than his contemporaries such as the late Lil Peep, Trippie Redd or Lil Uzi Vert, mixing its American Football and Mineral emo-inspired guitar leads with trap 808s. The record is also his first release on major indie label Fueled by Ramen after leaving Pete Wentz's DCD2 Records, exposing him to a much wider audience and providing him with the opportunity to prove himself to new fans.

Throughout most of the record, Mulherin covers his commonly touched upon topics of never being good enough, and feeling like a failure and an outcast on tracks like 'sinker' and 'reminiscer', as well as on the opening sample of 'outsider'. On the standout 'hammer', Mulherin changes up his attitude confidently comparing himself to Santana and Bernie Sanders on the hook, "Play the guitar like a young Santana / Reppin' VT like my name Bernie Sanders / Livin two lives like my name Danny Phantom / All my shit bang like a motherfuckin' hammer" showing some diversity, while other tracks such as 'ruiner' and 'sayer' touch on themes of heartbreak. The track 'rejecter' however sounds like an emo Justin Timberlake-esque throwaway with a rapped falsetto chorus which comes off as somewhat cringe-worthy, while the inclusion of a needlessly clunky baseline doesn't do the track any favours either.

Unfortunately Mulherin plays it safe too often on the record, without a sense of progression from his older projects, resulting in a debut which frustratingly doesn't do him justice. ■



Avengers: Infinity War

FILM REVIEW BY MARY GWENDOLON



Well kids, what can I say, they knocked it out of the park.

Infinity War is the lofty peak of the very lofty mountain that Marvel has been steadily climbing for 10 years, since the release of Iron Man in 2008. 18 movies, 11 television series, and 29 Marvel Cinematic Universe original comic books have led to this auspicious occasion. A lesser franchise may have crumbled under the immense pressure of that build-up, but Marvel is no lesser franchise.

The movie follows the assorted superheroes of the Marvel Cinematic Universe as they work together to defend six incredibly powerful gemstones from -called the Infinity Stones- from a big grumpy purple guy called Thanos, who wants to steal them and use them to kill everyone.

When I say the movie "follows" the assorted heroes, what I really mean is that with the skills of a master calligrapher deftly writing out invitations to the royal wedding, the movie manages to follow the approximately 21 main characters in a way that both makes sense and gives them all the time and gravity they deserve. Every character had their own personal journey in the movie, emotionally and physically. Every character got to be hilarious; every character got the chance to make us cry. Let us all immediately drop what we are doing and applaud the Russo brothers and award them "Good Director" trophies for this buckwild achievement.

My biggest fear since October 2017 has been that no other Marvel movie would ever as good for me because *Thor: Ragnarok* is so funny and so incredible that I doubted anything else would ever come close. But folks I can tell you this, *Infinity War* dealt with so much emotion and so much plot and it also managed to be repeatedly hilarious.

No let downs here, just good good space times. ■



Strong Girl Bong-soon

TELEVISION REVIEW BY HELEN YEUNG AND JASMIN SINGH



Strong Girl Bong-soon is an amazingly cute Korean drama, now available on Netflix. It follows main character Bong-soon (Park Bo-young), a young woman who has super strength and is hired by An Min-hyuk (Park Hyung-sik) the rich CEO of gaming company Ainsoft, to work as his bodyguard, with her main role as aiming to help him figure out the mastermind behind the ominous calls he'd been receiving.

Through the drama we are presented with Bong-soon's dilemma of whether she should live her life as a "normal girl" or utilise it on defeating the injustices prevalent in society. Her super strength lands her into trouble on multiple occasions, including angering a gang leader who later turns into a religious man, and winning a "chicken fight" with Min-Hyuk's assistant which lands him in hospital for the majority if the drama.

Although the show definitely had its good moments, with the "strong female lead" as Netflix claims, showing some satisfying moments where Bong-soon defeats disgusting men, it also disappointingly relies on problematic tropes which are often common in East Asian dramas. For instance, the common trope of men "helping" women discover and harness their capabilities, acting as a saviour to her problems. While Bong-soon was said to have had these powers all her life, it was surprising how her adult self had no control over them, allowing Min-Hyuk to swoop in and "train" her to fight properly. Not to mention how he merely viewed her as an object of fascination, perhaps the East Asian version of a manic pixie dream girl?

Another disappointing point for both of us was the storyline which followed a series of kidnappings of young women in Bong-soon's town, revealing a kidnapper which planned to perform a ritual to kill seven women based on a famous play. Scenes following this storyline again followed a common trope in EA dramas, depiction of violence against women for gratification.

All in all, we recommend you to give this a watch. We both want to be like Bong-soon. ■



An Interview with Imugi 이무기

Anuja Mitra interviews Imugi, Auckland's upcoming dance duo.

From the release of their first single “Dizzy” to their EP *Vacasian* (now available on Bandcamp, Soundcloud, Spotify and Apple Music), Auckland duo Imugi 이무기 have been quietly making waves. The smooth grooves of Yery Cho (vocals) and Carl Ruwhiu (production) have earned them frequent gigs, a 95bFM live session, and a spot on beehype’s Best NZ Albums of 2017. I sit down with Carl, who attended my Year 13 pre ball, and Yery, with whom I once performed a skit about racism that made our drama class “woke” well before the term was invented.

First things first, why “Imugi”?

Yery: Imugi is Korean and it means “little dragon”. It’s like in this transitory state between a serpent and a dragon. I feel like we’ve grown into the name more and more, but when we first chose it, it was kind of spur of the moment.

What’s the worst mispronunciation you’ve heard of it so far?

Y: “Ee-moo-jee”. Like “emoji.”

Carl: I swear I heard someone say “I-moo-jee” once.

Y: Like “iCarly”!

Describe your sound to someone who’s never heard of you.

C: Dance-y and saturated. I feel like in a lot of music right now minimal instrumentals are popular, but we wanted go against that with something really saturated and textured. We’re also pretty accessible.

We’re going for the vibe where it can be played in the background of a cafe.

Y: It’s definitely not classic “turn up and get lit” music. It’s like lounge music to chill to.

How did you two get into music?

C: When I was 13, my brother’s friend came round and installed FruityLoops on my family computer, so when I was a kid all I would do is play on the computer. It wasn’t until Year 13 when I took it more seriously. I showed a couple of people some songs I made and they were like “this is actually good!” and I was like “wow, okay! I’m getting somewhere!” I ended up taking a big break from music production and got real into rock and learning instruments, then I studied Audio Engineering for a year. It was really good coming back to production after that with a new outlook on it.

Y: I always loved music, kind of like any other kid. Being in my first band in Year 13 (even though it was really shitty) gave me the confidence to say “I want to pursue this more”. In the band, it was mostly me and my friend who wrote lyrics and one day I thought, “I can sing okay, why can’t I just sing my own lyrics?” I guess it was starting to work on music by myself that helped me work with Carl. I was just going on that journey of trying to become a better writer by being more honest and not censoring myself.

Can you tell me a bit about your process of making a song?

C: Usually I’ll make a beat like 20 or 30 seconds

long, send it to Yery over Facebook and she'll record a little vocal demo to it. Then we'll meet up and try to flesh it out into a full song. Sometimes Yery will come up with a beat and vocal idea herself and we'll work on that as well. We've worked with Carlos Barnett on our EP, which is awesome — He records his own songs but also produces stuff for Harry Parsons and he has a really good ear for technical stuff.

Are there any particular artists or genres that influence your music?

C: I'm really into funk and soul. I'm a synthesiser nerd; I love that side of production. I'm into a lot of the artists on Stone's Throw records — They're a record label based in LA and they do a lot of experimental beats, funk and R&B. I love Young, Gifted and Broke as well. They were, like, from Avondale and it was really inspiring seeing someone who hasn't grown up far from you doing really awesome things with music.

Y: The first people I really looked towards for song-writing and craft were Frank Ocean, Erykah Badu and Jhene Aiko. A more recent artist I listen to is SZA, who says that when you strip back everything — reverb, mixing — all you have left is your words. So you don't have to be saying anything profound but you have to mean what you say. The artists I've always looked up to and loved are women of colour who sing and song-write and do everything by themselves, like ABRA. That's such a cool thing for a woman to be able to do in this day and age.

***Vacasian* explores a lot of themes relating to immigration and cultural alienation. Can you tell me about that, Yery?**

Y: I feel like it wasn't a conscious choice to be drawn to those kind of topics. Everything on our EP ended up unintentionally lining up, like the artwork and the message and the spoken word all came at different times, and the only explanation I can give is that's just me, that's just my experiences. When we first started I would be hyper-conscious of my identity, like "we're going to play this gig but I'm just this short Asian girl." But now if just one Asian girl messages me after and says "I really related to what you were saying and I've been through the same thing as you" that really makes me want to keep doing what I'm doing. It's always going to be political, because my identity and everything I've been through is tied to identity politics. Some people don't want to talk about these things, but what's the point of not talking about something that's right here and part of who I am?

Carl, your music production is amazing. Do you have any tips for someone just starting out who wants to do what you do?

C: The technical side of it is pretty difficult to wrap your head around, so I think having an experienced

person you can ask questions to would be a big help. From a creative point of view, though, you just have to be making something that *you* like. That's one of the biggest things for someone starting out: Make music for you, not other people.

What's next for Imugi?

C: The first upcoming thing is this gig on Saturday [14 April], probably one of the biggest gigs we've ever played. It's the 95bFM bCard Launch party, and when I saw a massive poster for it on K Road I was like "holy shit, we're playing that." We're also working on a project at the moment. I don't know if it's going to be an EP or just a few singles, and I don't want to give away too many details, but it'll be the next level up from *Vacasian*.

Y: We're also going to be opening for MC Meta. It's very humbling to be playing alongside this dude who's basically a pioneer of Hip Hop in Korea and been doing it for a while. They just hit us up and said they wanted someone not only to tie into the music but this thing about culture and biculturalism. So it'll be cool to link up and hopefully get some guidance from him! ■

IMUGI IS PRONOUNCED "IMM-OO-GEE". GET UPDATES BY FOLLOWING THEIR FACEBOOK PAGE.

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Girls Like Girls Like Boys Do

Sneh Patel talks about some much-adored LGBTQI+ queens who are at the forefront of a progressive shift in the musical landscape today.

In today's music industry, there is no denying a social stigma still exists around artists that come out as members of the LGBTQI+ community. This hasn't stopped some musicians, who have continued to produce music that reflects their lifestyle. Musicians using their platform to normalise gay relationships are important if we want to move away from the heteronormative music industry that we have today. Here are a few of my favourite LGBTQI+ queens and some of their best songs about women loving women.

Halsey: Ashley Frangipane, known by her stage name Halsey, is an openly bisexual singer that has been creating music since 2014. In the music video for her song, *Ghost*, we follow as Halsey's girlfriend breaks up with and leaves her in Japan. From her most recent album, her song *Strangers* features another bisexual singer, Lauren Jauregui from Fifth Harmony, where the two sing of a relationship that drifted apart. Halsey has never shied away from her bisexual label, and consistently uses her platform to bring awareness towards the issues that matter to her. I have heard from a number of Halsey fans and it is incredible how she inspires them all with so many considering Halsey a part of their "coming out" story. Halsey and her music helped them stay true to themselves by showing them just how okay it is to be out and proud.

Kehlani: Kehlani Parrish and her music has been blowing up recently with the artist having visited New Zealand three times within the past nine months. Her song, *Honey*, is a fan favourite with its slow acoustic instrumentation and lyrics describing how she likes her woman like she likes her honey whilst going on to detail her dream girl. Her song *playinwitme* with KYLE is a song I really enjoy, where she questions a woman flirting with her who apparently doesn't even like girls. A few weeks ago, video footage of Kehlani on stage with Demi Lovato on tour came online, where

the two shared a very sexy and suggestive encounter on stage. This was followed by a series of tweets (which have since been deleted), where she specified that she was queer. She doesn't like labels such as straight or bisexual, so sees queer as the perfect way to describe her attraction towards people. Kehlani is a part of the movement to reclaim the q word, which is viewed as a slur by some.

Hayley Kiyoko: Although she has been making music for a very long time, Hayley Kiyoko's rise to fame began in 2015 with her hit single, *Girls Like Girls*, the chorus of which repeats the line 'girls like girls like boys do'. Earlier this year, she released another banger, *Curious*, where she questions an ex-girlfriend that has moved onto a heterosexual relationship. Unlike many musicians that have come before her, Kiyoko is able to write songs about women loving women, and she never changes her lyrics to represent straight relationships. The rest of her album continues to reflect her feelings towards women, with *'What I Need'* another stand out single. This song also features Kehlani, and together they express their feelings towards girls that are uncertain in their relationship. Kiyoko is very open and very unapologetic about her sexuality, and seeks to use it to normalise wlw relationships in the music industry.

Courtney Barnett: Unlike the artists I mentioned above, Courtney Barnett's sexuality isn't immediately evident through her music. She doesn't sing about girls despite being an openly gay woman, but it's not like she's singing about relationships with men instead. In fact, most of her songs don't have anything romantic about them. Nevertheless, her song *'Pickles from a Jar'* is actually about her long term relationship with singer-songwriter Jen Cloher, who she mentions by name in her song *'Dead Fox'*. Barnett's cover of *Never Tear Us Apart* was used by Apple in their ad for the iPhone X in Australia, the video for which comes

out in support of marriage equality which was only legalised in the country late last year. Regarding this, Barnett once said "our country is so backward on things like marriage equality, and equality in general".

Lynn Gunn: Frontwoman of American rock band PVRIS, Lynn Gunn, is another musician whose sexuality isn't evident through her music, but is still a large part of the band and who they are. Gunn herself admits that she didn't have any gay role models to look up to as she grew up, and as a result, she was never sure if it was okay. Gunn believes she needs to be open and honest about being a gay woman, so she can also be a role model for her fans. Meet and greets with Gunn often involve fans who tell her that they came out after inspiration from her. In her own words, "the more its talked about, the more accustomed people become to it and it's not an issue anymore". A few weeks ago, Gunn did a piece with Playboy, where she represented her more masculine side during the photoshoot. She once reflected on how the lyrics she writes are often gender neutral, saying that it's unintentional. Their music instead refers directly to the person she is singing to, and she doesn't want to change this the way others do. ■

PLAYLIST

Halsey - *Bad At Love*
 Openside - *No Going Back*
 The Internet - *Girl*
 Tegan And Sara - *Boyfriend*
 Jay Som - *The Bus Song*
 Janelle Monae - *Don't Judge Me*
 Kehlani - *Undercover*
 PVRIS - *You and I*
 Courtney Barnett - *Nobody Really Cares If You Don't Go To The Party*
 Years and Years - *Sanctify*
 Hayley Kiyoko - *Sleepover*
 MUNA - *I Know A Place*

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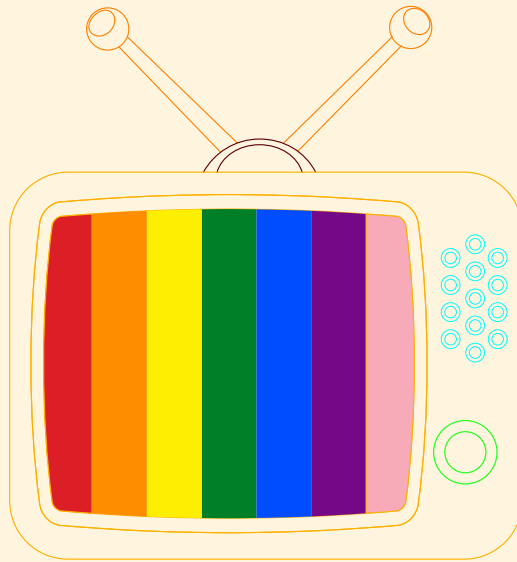
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Queer and Out of Touch

James Neumegen discusses the brand new chapter in entertainment which champions queer representation.

Queer representation in the media was once a thing of myth. Yet, there are signs that times are changing with queer stories and characters more increasingly featured on our screens and in our ears. For people like me, whose interests have tended to fall outside the mainstream, either by being considered too “traditionally feminine”, or by featuring too many boys kissing other boys, this development is exciting and satisfying. I encourage all readers to get on board the queer magic carpet ride.

I have never been a person who has been able to keep up with the scene. My moment of realisation for this was back in 2012 when Korean pop group *Girls' Generation* released the song *FLOWER POWER* off the *Girls & Peace* album. I, of course, believed it to be a wonderfully catchy dance song. This was before we started referring to things as ‘bops’. I believe we were calling them ‘jams’. These were grim days. I was soon informed that the song was generally loathed, and was consequently shunned by my peers from giving any further opinion on music. I looked at my copies of *‘That’s Entertainment!’* and my extensive playlist of background music from the original Japanese version of *Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon*, and understood that I really should have come to the conclusion that I simply wasn’t up-to-date, and probably never was. I would like to point out that as of last month, I have added Lady Gaga’s *Bad Romance* to my mp3 player, so I’m definitely catching up. These days I’ve embraced this aspect of my personality, always a step behind what’s cool.

However, to my surprise, I recently found I was ahead of the curve in one respect all along. *Call Me by Your Name*. This Northern Italian film directed by Luca Guadagnino was originally released at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival in Salt Lake City, but has recently been making mainstream cinema releases around the world and here in New Zealand – possibly at a cinema that’s relatively near, or far enough to make you consider whether it’s worth the drive. I would encourage readers queer and otherwise to see and embrace it.

“There has been so little queer entertainment in the mainstream that I believe I do have an obligation to support works that diversify our entertainment so that we never have to see another Adam Sandler film.”

Now, I went to an all-boys high school and was subsequently deprived of my bubble-gum coloured Karen McCombie and gritty Jacqueline Wilson books, but the school librarians did make sure to put queer novels on their shelves, or at least provide titles if the school did not have them in stock. This led me to the original *Call Me by Your Name* novel by André Aciman. The novel depicts a rather nerdy, and mildly insufferable 17-year old boy named Elio, who strikes up a romance with a slightly older man named Oliver when Oliver becomes Elio's family's house guest for the summer. The book is sensitive, sincere and emotional, and I wholeheartedly recommend it whether you've seen the film or not.

As the plot goes, naturally a game of tennis leads to a bout of swimwear paraphilic masturbation from Elio, which is eventually mutually returned by Oliver. The book is filled with quirky scenes along these lines, but it manages to be rather sweet natured about it, including Elio trying to resolve his sexual frustration by having sex with a peach, which Oliver later then, of course, eats. I would like to remind readers at this point that peaches are a strong source antioxidant vitamin C and contain moderate amounts of healthy sugars, and that semen does technically contain protein which satisfies a reasonable area of the food pyramid.

The slightly off-kilter fairytale vibe to *Call Me by Your Name* appealed to me as a teenager, and I have a suspicion this book might have developed my own taste for older men, but this is beside the point. It became part of my Queer Culture Anecdote Database™ for many years. It was always a highlight of my repertoire whenever a conversation steered into queer literature that never failed to make people chuckle, or vaguely disturbed. But now it has gone and become a big mainstream film that everybody and their Queer Eye for the Straight Guy loving auntie has heard about. Thus, I was finally actually ahead of the pop culture game for once.

I was casually outlining the peach-masturbation-snacking scene to a friend, who suddenly interrupted me to tell me, "Isn't that the plot of *Call Me by Your Name*?". Excitedly, I asked if she had read it, to which she replied that she had seen the movie. I was confused and delighted. How could I have not heard of this movie? Was I going to have to read other books to pretend I'm well-cultured now? My anecdote is now common knowledge.

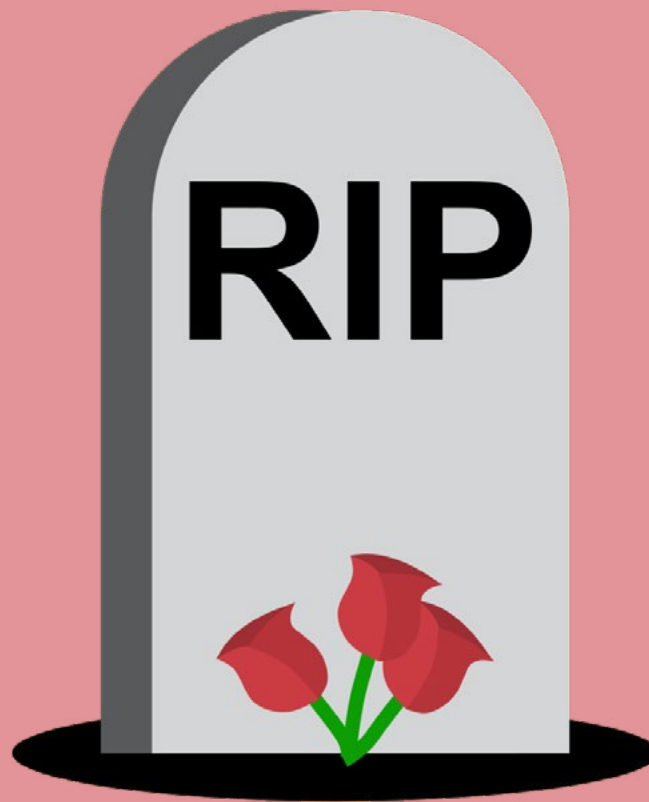
But how thrilling was it to be ahead of the game. My queer interests finally starting to be cool. Queer stories finally starting to be told on a mainstream level. It just goes to show the increasing presence of queerness in entertainment. Queer people, and queer stories have existed as long as anything else but have often not had the opportunity to be shared.

Recently, *Love, Simon* has become the first studio

“Now, I went to an all-boys high school and was subsequently deprived of my bubble-gum coloured Karen McCombie and gritty Jacqueline Wilson books, but the school librarians did make sure to put queer novels on their shelves, or at least provide titles if the school did not have them in stock.”

teen film to feature a gay protagonist. To further my point of how out of touch I can be, in my research for this piece, the title is indeed not *I Love Simon*. *RuPaul's Drag Race* continues to grow its ratings despite accidentally forgetting to crown Shangela and Kennedy Davenport with Trixie Mattel in the show's first triple-crowning. We're moving beyond "Is Chandler gay?" jokes from *Friends*, and lazy tokenism like Stanford Blatch. We're finally getting real queer stories about real queer people. With movies like *Call Me by Your Name* being acknowledged by critics and fans as simply a well-made movie, winning Best Adapted Screenplay at the Academy Awards along with a whole host of other nominations after last year's *Moonlight*, we now know this is no one-off fluke. *Call Me by Your Name* joins the rank with *The Departed* or *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* as an equal. These are films for everyone, not just a queer audience.

There has been so little queer entertainment in the mainstream that I believe I do have an obligation to support works that diversify our entertainment so that we never have to see another Adam Sandler film. But, I will be certainly making sure I find the time for it. It's finally time for the people like me who've been left out of the pop culture loop for a while now to take our place, and I'm sure it's not just a moment, but a brand-new chapter in entertainment. ■



Do you want to live forever?

Morgan Dolfing discusses why you should say yes to being cured of the world's most common, most deadly disease - aging.

Eternal life has long been confined to the realm of the imaginary, and is often treated unkindly in those imaginaries. Many societies have synonymised it with dark magic, mad science, or unattainable godliness. Yet, what if I told you that within your lifetime, a visit to the GP could end with an offer to put you through a course of injections to keep you from aging, and maybe the most important consequence of aging - death? You're probably already doubting as to whether or not you'd take this injection, due to the aforementioned societal influences painting immortality as evil. Hopefully, by the end of this article's objective analysis of the nature and dangers of aging, your doubts will be dispelled.

So what is aging? What happens to make us grow old and, eventually, die? Simply put aging is a process of deterioration which the human body's

design cannot account for. Any engineering student will tell you that when left to its own devices, a system will slowly break down - the more complex and stressed the system is subject to, the quicker this breakdown occurs. Human bodies are both unfathomably complex and subject to some very strenuous conditions, so it seems this breakdown would be inevitable. However, the fact that every single one of us has grown from an embryo all the way into adults is absolute proof that the human body is capable of more. We can heal and we can grow, these are the very reasons that we survive as long as we do in the first place, and there is no practical reason that we should lose our ability to do these things. Yet through our lives, we become less capable of 'regeneration' until some malfunction we can't overcome causes enough irreparable damage to put a permanent end to us.

If we are capable of growth and repair, why do we suddenly become not capable? Surely if a system can repair itself, it should be able to sustain that repairing ability. The only explanation is that there is some kind of 'programmed problem' we develop at an older age that affects the whole of the population. There is some evidence that this is true, and as with so many genetic quirks, this can be predicted with a simple thought experiment: If no-one died of aging people would still die due to accidents and virulent diseases, amongst other things. If every year in a person's life had a chance to kill them, the older they are the more likely they would be to have died simply by virtue of having 'rolled the dice' more. It follows that there will then always be more young people than old people, and thus more young people will reproduce. As a very large part of evolution is reproduction, and more young reproduce, genetic disorders which affect the old will not be 'cared about' as much by evolution as those which affect the young. This compounds until those disorders allowed free accumulate, and you get programmed mortality.

So, aging is a degenerative disease caused by genetics, which is actually very similar in nature to disorders like Huntington's Disorder or Cystic Fibrosis. Except, whilst Huntington's affects only one in every 15000, aging affects 100% of the population with a 100% mortality rate. When you rob aging of the mysticism that is always inevitably attributed to it, it is clear to see that aging is, by orders of magnitude, the most horrific and constant disease that has ever plagued humanity.

A common belief most people have to cope with aging is superstition - that aging and death are natural, and therefore right and good. Yes, it is true that aging is certainly perfectly natural. It is as natural as the plague, or as the aforementioned Huntington's, yet we have accepted neither of these two 'natural ends' in the same way we've accepted aging. To draw an arbitrary line that aging is somehow more sacred than any of the other 'natural' parts of life we have already done away with is simply inconsistent.

Another primary argument is that if everyone lived forever, surely the Earth would buckle under the weight of an even more rapidly growing population. I could raise any number of practical arguments for why the end of aging would not necessarily lead to ecological disaster, but instead I will address the moral rot at the very core of this objection. To argue that people should age, and die, so that the population doesn't grow out of control is morally wrong. It's unjust to say that a certain number of people *should* die, for there is no world in which enforcing that decree is okay. Perhaps we should instead refrain from killing people and put our efforts into building systems which can allow for growing populations.

Aging is a disease just like any other. It is caused by genetics and people are developing genetic treatments right now in an effort to cure it. If you strip aging of the legend humanity has built of it, it is just another disease, albeit the world's most awful, and it needs to be treated as such. So, why not take the treatment, and cure yourself of the world's most common, most killer disease."

When you rob aging of the mysticism that is always inevitably attributed to it, it is clear to see that aging is, by orders of magnitude, the most horrific and constant disease that has ever plagued humanity.



HOLLYWOOD

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



I'm Masc Now

So I got the new *God of War* game the other day, as I had a shitload of unused credit on my EB cards and I had been very much looking forward to the next instalment of Big Daddy Kratos, THE hyper-masculine icon of 2010. It had been an eon since I had so willingly indulged in what the heterosexuals of the world had been putting out, so I was curious as to how one of my favourite games of yesteryear would be translated in this soft reboot. Just as the titular God of War had entered the new realm of the Norse gods, I decided it was time to find out what these strange beings were putting out for consumption today.

I had some scepticism about *God of War* before it was released – mainly concerns about where to take the finale of *God of War III*, even with the stinger that (spoilers for a near decade old game) his suicide did not take. How do you top the feeling of beating Zeus to death with your own hands, the blood literally blocking out the screen? But I also had concerns that the infamously brutish franchise would be falter at the challenge of telling a compelling story, fearing that it would opt for the safe choice of rehashing the Tarantino meets Kurosawa revenge fantasy that made millions upon millions of dollars.

Oh, how I was wrong to have doubts.

I am not going to use the grandiose word of masterpiece, for that is something that only belongs to *Showgirls* & *Mommie Dearest* in my mind, but it is... masterpiece adjacent. I'll write a column about these two beauties at a later point, so back to *God of War*. It is more than compelling, it is a narrative in the realest sense of the word. The dynamic between the extremely reticent Kratos, forever atoning for his past, and his wide-eyed son of incredible potential, never feels like one misstep was taken in its construction. The fact that it is set inside Norse mythology is important, but when you consider the game outside of its aesthetic qualities and the setting, it seems like only a mere contributor to the real heart of the story: the bond between Kratos and his son.

It breaks down the qualities of Kratos that we took for granted in earlier games – his violence given true analysis, how such actions would realistically be taken by someone in their world. His status as a hyper-masculine figure is given both sympathy and clarity – you cannot expect to raise a child healthily if you are emotionally disconnected, both from yourself and from your own son. It teaches about forgive-

ness, forgiving yourself but also forgiving the world around you for being what it is, so long as you strive to be better than what you see. That last sentence really only makes sense once you have played the game, but once you do, wow. They almost word for word borrow a very famous line from *Bojack Horseman* (coincidentally, where I got the name of this column from!) and it is incredibly effective. Watching both characters grow is a joy, because you feel each moment on the journey: this is a spoiler-free article, but believe me when I say that there are times I wanted to slap the shit out of both of them, and other times where I wanted to give a hug.

However, you know what the other joy is? The reason you're actually playing the game, wonderful story aside? Beating the absolute SHIT out of every manner of troll, ogre, draugr, deity and demon alike. Is this how heterosexuals feel every single day? No wonder they are so rampant across the planet. The power fantasy is what keeps you going – you want to fuck someone up? Get out your axe and throw it at them. While simultaneously shooting lightning and fire at the mythological creature that dared to stand in your way. Or you could just rip their jaw out of their skull. Or tear them apart from the shoulder! Oh, the Places You'll Go when it comes to wanton violence against entirely deserving enemies. But again, this is where the reboot has a leg-up on the previous instalments in the franchise: they are deserving solely because of their threat to your survival. A man, mortal or deity alike, does not prove themselves to be anything but a monster when they hurt without reason. Vengeance does not serve anyone – it is a lesson Kratos speaks to the viewer as much as his son. While the intentional irony of condemning the violence while celebrating the power fantasy is not lost on me, it is a remarkable step up from the developers who basically said 'You want to fuck, kill, conquer and destroy with no real consequences? Go ahead' and revelled in it. Not that it didn't make for amazing gameplay in the previous entries, but it is this new maturity that really sticks with you.

\$120 is a massive asking price, which really necessitates a whole other article about gaming in NZ, but if you can spare the cash (or the trade-in credit like me!), please get this game. I'd recommend waiting for the price to drop, but if you get it now, all the power to you. It is well worth it for the story alone, but the environment is unparalleled.

Also, don't forget to watch *Showgirls*. Thanks! ■

ECCENTRIC LIFE ADVICE

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



Nine: How to Consolidate Your Past

We all have nights where we lay awake. The curtains cannot be adjusted to cover the slice of light insistent on piercing the darkness. The covers are too warm. The room is too cold. You lay on your back and it aches. You lay on your side and your arm goes to sleep. You lay on your front and cannot breathe. There is a voice in your ear whispering “remember when you called your favourite teacher mum? When you slipped on the stairs at school? When you thought you were straight?”

This voice can be attributed to the Good Grief Goblin. This creature is spawned from mistakes of the past, dwells where you least expect it, and feeds on retroactive embarrassment. Luckily, the Goblin can be sent back under the bed, where it belongs. The Good Grief Goblin is stunned by hearing the phrase “good grief!” As in: “good grief! I was six!” or “good grief! It was snowing!” or “good grief! I didn’t know I had options!” The Goblin, unprepared for its favoured prey to acknowledge the past, let alone elaborate on it, will try to make you feel badly about the small embarrassment, often bringing up other tangential regrets.

“Good grief!” you should say, “I did that! I said that! I didn’t know better and it hurts now but I can’t go back! I did that thing and I have changed, I have grown, I am a better person!”

If your Goblins are many, persistent, or just plain mean, throw back the curtains. Goblins of many kinds are sensitive to moonlight, though they often need reminding. Hopefully, the moon will hang just right in the sky for you to gesture at it grandly, and declare, “the moon changes every night but it is always the moon. Sometimes it seems to be consumed by the darkness or hidden behind the thickest of clouds but it always comes back. I am like the moon. You can nibble away at me but I will always shine.” ■



PRUNE JUICE

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



Online Shopping (part 2 of Retail lyfe)

"He took out a pile of shirts and began throwing them, one by one, before us, shirts of sheer linen and thick silk and fine flannel, which lost their folds as they fell and covered the table in many-colored disarray. While we admired, he brought more and the soft rich heap mounted higher — shirts with stripes and scrolls and plaids in coral and apple-green and lavender and faint orange, and monograms of Indian blue. Suddenly, with a strained sound, Daisy bent her head into the shirts and began to cry stormily." - The Great Gatsby

Everyone has their signature move. Something they do that is so zany, so viscerally molecularly them. Moments you will remember them by. Like my best friend jumping drunk off my three-story roof because I said "Don't overthink it. Hesitation is what kills you." What I meant was general life advice, to be applied when chasing girls, or choosing majors. But I guess it worked because she landed with a roly poly, let herself back into the house, and bled a little up the stairs. If you asked me to describe my dad, my first thought would be his ass swinging in front of the TV in his blue pyjama bottoms while doing Tai Chi. I guess it shows a great deal of my character when "that's so sherry," means being hunched over your laptop, yelling about being stressed but really spending 3 hours on ASOS.com. If you ever wondered "hmm what is sherry doing right now," I bet you \$500 that she's probably in her signature position: online shopping.

I don't know what happens, when I have a spare thought I find myself on Thelconic.com. You'd think I was sponsored to write this piece, what with the amount of name dropping, plug-plugsplugs I'm doing. Even in the space of writing this piece, I've probably already glanced at Glassons and taken a quick geeze at Princesspolly. And it's not like studylink is keeping this habit afloat, because I'm not buying anything. That's the big problem. I'll spend hours adding things I could never afford to my wishlist. My saved items list on ASOS.com has 46 items, as of 10AM today. I'm spending all this time gazing at beautiful things, these slightly different cuts of white t-shirts: but this one is Tommy Hilfiger so it's slightly different to this one from Wrangler. But bitch ain't popping out her visa debit.

If you're tscking at me, "what a waste of time man!" You're right! But I'm not alone in this addiction to the illusion of substance. It's a side effect of postmodern simulacrum. Consumerism pumping the appearance of growth. Other big words I learnt when I took a stage 1 English paper, got freaked, and changed majors immediately. Take a big long gander at your lecture

theatre. From the back row to the front span the expanse of your kingdom. You'll see the rows of laptop screens, illuminated discount codes, mustard cardigans, and shopping carts of shit-you'll-never-actually-buy.

Is this a by-product of childhood hoarding? I loved Pokémon and digimon, and I collected Carebears. Things of no use, no realness. Under my bed, I kept my favourite things. I could never throw away spare buttons, and I never used my favourite stickers. I'd keep them perfect in their little plastic bags. Eyeing, but not using. Perhaps this is the mentality of my communism-era parents. We'd save all the plastic bags in the house, and all the containers in the house are margarine jars, biscuit tins and takeaway plastic boxes. Mum would take me to the mall only on the condition we were just browsing. Our favourite past-time was window shopping. We'd go to Farmers, and look and touch the things we might buy on boxing day sales. But probably wouldn't. The two of us would frustrate my dad to no end, we'd spend hours at the mall and come home empty handed. He'd say, "what was the point of all that?" What is the point of spending hours shopping but not buying anything? I guess it's a little magical, because for a few hours you could have all the money in the world and buy all the nice things. That is, until you place everything back. Until you empty your shopping cart and close the tabs. Looking at fancy dresses, I'm living through 30 tiny glittering parties I could wear them to.

I build it up in my head, so much that retail therapy is like a syringe of velvet crushed heroin. When I finally decide to buy something, a shirt that I've been eyeing for months on end mainly because it says I'm saving 40%, it's like a shot of silk and chiffon. I don't like that shirt that much, I've overthought it, and it's supremely average. But it says I'm saving money, and I get so excited when the postman/woman comes delivering my wrapped present.

When I'm stressed from an exam or assignment hand in, I get so pissy that I've spent so much time procrastinating by online shopping, I lose it. I've literally had assignments due in 3 hours, and I'll buy a sweater to stop my brain repressing finishing essays by thinking about merino knitwear. I dropped 200 dollars on Asos.com once when I caught feels for someone and didn't want to process it. Online browsing: my signature thing.

"They're such beautiful shirts," she sobbed, her voice muffled in the thick folds. "It makes me sad because I've never seen such — such beautiful shirts before." (The Great Gatsby) ■

AUSA PRESENTS...

14-18 MAY 2018 | UOA CITY CAMPUS

CULTURE WEEK 2018

Immerse In A Week Of Diverse Cultures

Mōnitē Pasifika

May 14, Monday | 11am - 1pm
UOA City Campus - Quad
Immerse in Pasifika culture

Te haora o te reo Māori

May 15, Tuesday | 12 - 1pm
UOA City Campus - Quad
Immerse in Māori culture

Cultural Showcase

May 16, Wednesday | 11am - 1pm
UOA City Campus - CAI Quad
Immerse in Kiwi and World cultures

International Food Festival

May 17, Thursday | 11am - 5pm
UOA City Campus - Quad
International Food Vendors

Cultural Potluck Party

May 18, Friday | 7 - 10 pm
UOA City Campus - Cap'n Gown
Taste food from around the globe.
Bring a finger food!



your student
experience



Save Our Libraries Rally

A massive thank you to all the students who came to the rally to Save Our Libraries. It was incredible to see the student voice in action. We had around 1000 students, alumni and members of our community protesting against the University's proposed library closures. Although the VC vacated the Clocktower (and tried to lock us out!), we handed the submission to him at University Council last Monday.

We want the University to involve us in this decision, rather than say it's not "appropriate" for students to be formally consulted. We want the University to protect student study spaces. We want the University to show us they care about the Arts, our specialist librarians, and our education.

We're also calling on the Government to better fund our Unis. A free first year doesn't matter if there's not enough money to even keep libraries open.

You can find our submission on the Save Our Libraries UoA Facebook page, and on the AUSA Facebook page. We gave this, along with a petition signed by 4000 students, and around 1000 independent submissions, to the VC.

The fight doesn't stop here. We'll continue to lobby the Uni and the Government, and make sure students' voices are heard. Please continue to send us your submissions- this has impact across all of the community so don't stay silent!



POTOS SUMMER SHIMIZU (INSTAGRAM.COM/SUMMER.SHIMIZU)



Advocacy Aunt

Hi advocacy aunt,

Q. I really want a job! I can cover the basics but have to force my friends to shout me jugs at Shads every weekend. I don't want my post-uni life to be like this either! What can I do?

A. If only Welfare AUSA provided Shads allowances, huh? Well, I'm sure you've already heard of Student Job Search, but that's always a good start. One of our advocates got a job through SJS dancing in a chicken suit outside a pub for a whopping \$25/hr - the money was worth the shame! The Uni has some good resources - MyCDES, as well as faculty newsletters for business and law students. There are the classic online platforms, Seek, TradeMe and Parttimer.

Don't forget to make sure your LinkedIn is up to scratch if you're a run of the mill law and commerce student whose ambition is Google but will likely end up in the chicken suit.

Most importantly, make it known to everyone around you that you're looking! Some of your friends might be like "I get it Steve, you're broke and jobless, aren't we all?" but likely someone will pull through and be like "my brother's wife's best friend has a job at this pub dancing in a chicken suit. You in?"

Q. I don't have enough money to pay for both my rent AND my food this week. Can you guys help me out? I can cover the rent but I have heaps of assignments coming up and I don't wanna be hungry while writing about the 'History of Food Preparation in Ancient Greece'

A. Oh man, those Auckland living prices are getting us all down. The student life stretches us all to the limit at some point, so we have heaps of stuff to help you out! The first place to turn is AUSA Welfare. We can help you out with a food parcel or a monetary grant to cover urgent and unexpected problems. Come have a cup of tea and a chat with us at AUSA

Advocacy and we can help you sort it.

Q. Another student keeps harassing me around uni. I've started watching my lectures at home to avoid them, but the Copyright Warning has me going stir crazy and I just want to see my friends again. What do I do?

A. First things first, that's not okay. Your safety comes first, and if you feel like you can't deal with the situation, we are here to support you. The Proctor is your first port of call, and can start an investigation to suss it. If you're feeling a bit shy, come in to AUSA Advocacy first and we can help you through. But if you're really feeling the feels, make sure your first step is to the duty counsellor to make sure you're doing okay. Even if it's just to rant about how you get that the material is protected by copyright and has been copied by and solely for the educational purposes of the University under licence BUT WHY IS IT AT THE START OF EVERY LECTURE RECORDING! ■

HOROSCOPES

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

Aries, you are full of energy this week and should focus on any challenges or tasks you have been procrastinating. The tasks you have set yourself will take some time to complete therefore you must not be impatient as the overall process will be rewarding. Don't forget to take breaks between this hectic week as you do not want overwork yourself.



TAURUS

APRIL 20-MAY 20

Taurus, this week is your time to relax and enjoy yourself. The hard work you've put in the past has paid off and allowed you this time to rejuvenate yourself. It is an ideal time to book that vacation you've been thinking about for awhile now as there is no time like the present! Make sure to divide your time smartly between family and friends.



GEMINI

MAY 21-JUNE 20

Gemini, your adventurous nature will take you to new places this week that will provide you the opportunity to meet new people and experience new ideas. If you are lacking that creative spark do not fear, in time you will find yourself again as your curious nature will take you down new paths. The spotlight is on you this week so be wary of the many eyes on your back.



CANCER

JUNE 21-JULY 22

Cancer, you cannot avoid confrontation forever and to truly move forward in life you will need to confront your fears. This week will test your ability to let go as you tend to hold on tight to things that make you feel safe. As a gentle and nurturing sign it is not in your nature to hurt others however when you do, you have a hard time admitting it. Be brave and learn not to take your insecurities out on others.



LEO

JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Leo, this week you may be lacking motivation to pursue your goals and dreams. Remember that you are a bright individual and that you are able to move on from your past mistakes. Take time out of this week to reflect and acknowledge how much you have grown. Now is the time to organise your time and make plans as the leadership role you have been waiting for will be yours. Learn to be on your own this week as it will only strengthen your abilities.



VIRGO

AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Virgo, this week you may be feeling underappreciated and stressed, it is important to communicate that to those closest to you. The week will start off tough however if you continue to persevere and remember to embody kindness and patience you will end up on top. You may find it hard to walk away from a certain situation and the longer you stall may result on a missed opportunity.



LIBRA

SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You are open to expanding your mind and horizons this week. Although it would be nice if this meant you jump online and book a plane ticket, realistically you can manage with watching your favourite travel show or spending hours googling your favourite obscure topic online. After all the pushing and pulling you've been doing in your relationships lately, it's time to look at yourself from a different perspective. An exciting event that's coming up may give you the answers you've been searching for.



SCORPIO

OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

This week, allow yourself to be genuinely intimate with the people you meet. Let them open up to you on their own terms. You are a perceptive and honest person, so this can come naturally to you if you let it. If you are open and honest with others, they will do the same to you.



SAGITTARIUS

NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Even though you feel like you don't have your life together just yet, don't stress - it's the intention and the effort that counts. Keep showing up even though it seems like all you've been getting are setbacks - know that the tides will eventually turn in your favour.



CAPRICORN

DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Try going back to basics, Capricorn. Find joy in your daily routine to help relieve some of the pressure you've been under lately. Try to take care of yourself not from a place of duty and obligation, but from a place of joy and pleasure. Now is a perfect time to fall in love with yourself.



AQUARIUS

JANUARY 20 TO FEBRUARY 18

This is a perfect time for starting any creative projects you have been neglecting lately. Although you have been faced with more responsibility than lately, you are clearer about your own capabilities and you know you can handle whatever comes your way. However, you can also benefit from some structure, order and self-discipline right now, particularly when it comes to relationships.



PISCES

FEBRUARY 19 TO MARCH 20

You have been feeling stronger on a mental level lately, dear Pisces. Now is a good time for making plans and forming strategies. Avoid getting too caught up in what others are doing, thinking, or saying as now is the time to focus on your own needs instead of others.

THE PEOPLE TO SUPPORT (AND LOVE).

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