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ISSUE TWENTY-ONE

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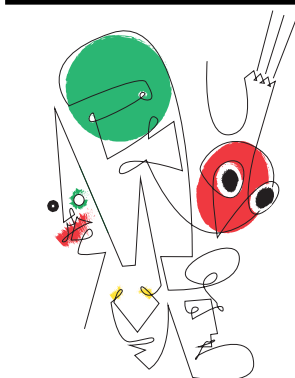
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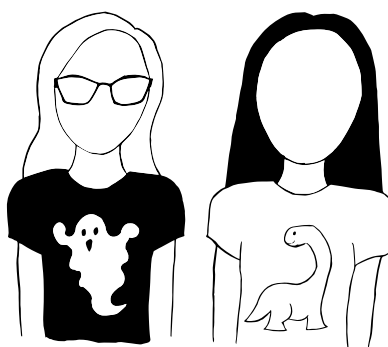
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Catriona Britton



Samantha Gianotti

All the President's Men

Following an election cycle punctuated by resignations and leadership roulette, our nation's future now in the hands of the country's crotchety racist grandfather—we're all feeling pretty thoroughly *spent*. New Zealand is in a state of limbo, and not the fun kind where the bar is high and you shimmy under with ease to the tune of "Witch Doctor", but the un-fun kind where the bar is low and you give it your best shot but you just wind up with your skirt over your head, a crick in your back and a tiny fart escaping from your clenched butt.

In light of the precarious position we find ourselves in, we thought we'd turn to pop culture to see how our leaders could be so much better—and so, so much worse.

7. The Mayor from *Jaws*

While some of our politicians have not always been sold on the concepts of women's bodily autonomy, climate change, or not telling your press secretary you slept well because you dreamt you were sleeping between her naked legs, old mate in Steven Spielberg's seafaring romp took a serious amount of convincing by way of severed limbs before he was ready to admit that keeping the beach open so as not to ruin the Fourth of July weekend was really, really fucking dumb. Not wanting to spoil people's fun leaves you with blood on your hands, terror on your beaches, and feverish, outdated Macarena-ing on your National Party campaign bus.

6. Billy Bob Thornton in *Love Actually*

BBT's fictional president doesn't even get a name and honestly GOOD FUCKING RIDDANCE because this Yank is a prized piece of shit. He reneges on agreements, makes moves on young

women, and, it now seems, gave us some all too prescient insight into the fresh hell that was yet to reach the Oval Office.

5. Emperor Kuzco from *The Emperor's New Groove*

Arguably the conduit for David Spade's best work, Kuzco is a megalomaniac who yearns for nothing more than to build Kuzcotopia, his own themed retreat and water park ("you're gonna pay taxes for that pool and waterslide mate" Billy English cries) atop a neighbouring hillside. However, he shows us that one does not need power, or wealth, or Kuzcotopia—one only needs some sweet, sweet hugs from John Goodman (see also *Monsters, Inc.*, *Monsters University*, and the recurring John-Goodman-as-big-spoon dream we've been having since 2001).

4. President James Marshall from *Air Force One*

Harrison Ford sternly declared "GET OFF MY PLANE" before killing Russian-terrorist Gary Oldman and casting his lifeless body into the cold, dark night. If that ain't a perfect metaphor for National tossing their bosom buddy David Seymour to the wayside, we don't know what is.

3. Steve Coogan and Owen Wilson from *Night at the Museum*

Old mates Octavius and Jedediah aren't strictly portrayed as leaders in the greatest trilogy of all time (Francis Ford Coppola whom?); however, they are the vocal representatives of their respective dioramas and who are we to say that such a position wasn't wrought by a free and fair democratic vote? These little dudes show us the value of working together with those different

from us; that even the smallest person can make a big change; and star in over two hundred pieces of fanfiction on archiveofourown.org, should you yearn to read lengthy make-out scenes in an Owen Wilson drawl.

2. President Thomas J. Whitmore from *Independence Day*

In the wake of an alien invasion, President Thomas J. Whitmore clutched a megaphone close and reassured the world that everything was going to be just fine. As we suffer through a year of neo-Nazi resurgence, the threat of nuclear war, and an American President that seems to Matrix his way out of every scandal, lie and early morning tweet, we really just want President Tommy J to kneel beside our bed each night, kiss us on the forehead and remind us that the world will go on turning. "We're going to go on," he says. "We're going to survive!" he says! "We're going to make out?" we suggest, hopefully.

1. Queen Clarisse from *The Princess Diaries*

While Amelia Mignonette Thermopolis Renaldi is a fine leader in her own right, she's not a lick on her grandma. Now more than ever, we need Julie Andrews, wearing a matching silk pajama set, to surf on a mattress into the middle of our democracy and sing a duet about loving yourself with Raven-Symoné. We already know the words to the Genovian national anthem. We're prepped and primed and ready to go. •

EDITORS' NOTE: UNFORTUNATELY, SELINA TUSILA-MARSH DID NOT GET BACK TO US WITH HER WINNERS FOR THE POETRY CATEGORY OF OUR CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION, AS SHE IS NO DOUBT BUSY WITH HER ROLE AS OUR COUNTRY'S NEWEST POET LAUREATE. SO, WE TWISTED AN EDITOR'S DAD'S ARM TO DO THE JUDGING INSTEAD—AND YES, HE IS A POET AND HE KNOWS IT.

“TOP” OF THE FOOD CHAIN?

MICHAEL CALDERWOOD ANALYSES THE TRAGEDY OF THE OPPORTUNITIES PARTY

Universal basic income for young people. Higher taxes on property investors. Cannabis legalisation. Climate action. Fairer rules for tenants. Prison reform. The Opportunities Party had some innovative policies at the election that offered solutions to the problems facing New Zealand. However, they secured just 2% of the vote (after Gareth Morgan spent \$3 million on the campaign), far below the 5% threshold to win seats.

So why didn't these policies tempt voters to give TOP their party vote?

The answer is that people don't want some rich saviour who claims to have all the answers to solve our problems.

During the *The Spinoff's* election debate, Gareth Morgan conceded that he thought most voters were stupid. He obviously sees himself as smarter than everyone else. He's an economist.

He has a think tank. He's really rich. Who knows, maybe Gareth Morgan *is* smarter than all of us and knows how to solve our problems.

But that is not how politics should work. The solutions to the climate crisis, housing crisis, poverty, inequality, student debt and overflowing prisons won't come from a smart millionaire who claims to have all the answers. We will solve these crises through democracy, not technocracy.

All of the positive social change that we have seen over the past century—whether it is the welfare state, workers' rights, women's rights, LGBT rights, decolonisation, the fall of apartheid, and so on—came from people fighting for what was right. It was not the benevolence of politicians that gave us these achievements, nor was it thanks to a technocrat deciding that workers' rights would

maximize productivity or that LGBT rights would have a positive cost-benefit ratio.

The housing crisis, for example, is not just an issue of our Government not having the right policy solutions.

It's an issue of power, and the tenants in damp, mouldy flats and the young people looking to buy their first home don't have much power. Progressive change has always come from the powerless challenging those in power—never from the powerful deciding to change things out of the goodness of their hearts.

That is why TOP, Gareth Morgan, and anyone else who claims to be able to solve our problems by just doing quote-on-quote “what works” cannot win over many voters. Unless you're willing to challenge the powerful, your solutions will be meaningless to the majority of people. ♦



AUCKLAND EXPERIENCES FUEL CRISIS

BY JARROD FREELAND

Auckland experienced a serious fuel crisis after a pipeline failure in Ruakaka spilled over 80,000 litres of jet fuel, prompting workmen to shut its flow down entirely.

Throughout the past month, hundreds of flights operating out of Auckland Airport, both domestic and international, have been cancelled. Some incoming flights were diverted to Christchurch or Wellington Airport where they could be adequately refueled.

The delays have been a serious inconvenience to commuters, some of whom had planned their flights months in advance.

The fuel shortage was also felt at some petrol stations, as replenishing the airport stocks via convoys of fuel tankers took priority. Several Z stations ran out of 95 Premium gasoline—although supplies of 91 Unleaded, Diesel, and LPG were unaffected.

The pipe has since been repaired and, as of time of print, is running at 80 per cent ca-

capacity. However, fuel tankers still remain on the road to supply adequate fuel to Auckland Airport.

Northland Regional Council is currently investigating what caused the breach, which may have been the result of damage sustained up to several months beforehand. Extraction of swamp kauri in the area, which is usually performed using diggers and other heavy earthmoving equipment, is a likely culprit.

Refining New Zealand Chief Executive Sjoerd Post said to Radio New Zealand that experts would examine the piece of broken pipe in order to establish what happened, and what will need to happen in the future to prevent such a disaster happening again.

“Clearly there are quite a few parties who are really interested in that and we're drifting now into the realm of insurance and who is liable for what,” Post said.

“The start of all that process is simply to get an objective view on what happened to

that pipeline and why.”

Prime Minister Bill English, in a press conference calling upon Auckland motorists to avoid “panic buying” and needlessly stockpiling fuel, confirmed the Government received warning that Auckland's fuel supplies were vulnerable to failure of the sole supply pipeline back in 2012.

However, he defended, as security and upkeep of the pipeline was a private arrangement between fuel companies and airlines, they had not recommended any changes.

Despite the complexities involved in capping off and welding the affected section of pipe, Refining NZ completed repairs on Friday 23rd—three days ahead of schedule.

“In a sense the repair work on the pipeline is complete, bar the cosmetics of returning the entire farmland back to its natural state,” said Post.

Normal fuel supply to Auckland Airport should resume by 27th September. ♦

MĀORI PARTY WIPED OUT OF PARLIAMENT

BY ELOISE SIMS

Te Ururoa Flavell has bid a tearful goodbye to politics after the Māori Party were decimated in this year's General Election after losing all Māori seats to the Labour Party in a stunning defeat.

Flavell declared he would resign in an emotional speech to his supporters last week, having been defeated in the Waiariki seat by former TV weatherman Tamati Coffey by 1300 votes.

With only 1.1% of the vote nationwide, and Co-Leader Marama Fox falling to Labour's Meka Whaitiri in the Ikaroa-Rāwhiti seat, the Party was unable to secure any MPs in Parliament.

Hone Harawira of the Mana Party also lost out to incumbent Labour Co-Leader Kelvin Davis in Te Tai Tokerau.

In speaking with his supporters, Flavell said that the defeat meant he had "lost a bit of faith" in his people having lost the seat he had held for 12 years.

While he admitted he needed to take "a hell of a lot" of responsibility for the virtual extinc-

tion of the party, he felt Māori had lost their voice in Government.

"Tomorrow when you wake up there are likely to be seven seats back in the hands of Labour who are likely to be in opposition. So don't tangi back to me," he said.

"I feel heavy at heart, but the people have spoken, even in Waiariki they have spoken and I can't get away from that."

Critics pointed to the Party's record in Government as a reason for their defeat, with the Party having sided with National in the last Parliament.

In response, Flavell hit back saying he was "really proud" of achievements securing more than \$400 million in funding for Māori over the past three years.

Former Māori Party President Pem Bird said he was "distraught and disillusioned" by the results to Radio New Zealand, but urged the Party to make a triumphant return in 2020.

"I, myself, was going to go into retirement, but I'm not now. See you guys in three years' time when we're going to be celebrating the election!"

However, it will be a party without Flavell, with a new co-leader to be determined in the coming weeks.

Supporters have raised concern over the possibility of a National–New Zealand First coalition without a Māori Party in government, following New Zealand First's campaign promise to hold a referendum on Māori seats.

Others were left unsure as to why the party had been so comprehensively defeated, such as Kingi Biddle, claiming the "Jacinda effect" may have resulted in Labour's popularity.

However, he insisted the party would endure.

"The Māori Party is a kaupapa. It's something bigger than ourselves. I don't believe this is a full stop. This is only a comma." ♦

HOW WILL CHILD POVERTY LOOK UNDER A NEW GOVERNMENT?

BY LAURA KVIGSTAD

According to a UNICEF report released earlier this year, New Zealand ranks 34 out of 41 countries for managing the wellbeing of children, with issues such as child poverty, inequality, deprivation, and education being sore points for the nation's standing.

Issues of child poverty are expected to be high on the list for the next prospective government, after the recent election's preliminary results revealed a majority for National.

However, the make-up of the next government depends on New Zealand First, which will have a major say in how the next government will be formed, as it is a necessary coalition partner for both National and Labour. But what does this actually mean for child poverty levels in New Zealand?

The UNICEF report claimed that New Zealand Government ranked 35 of 37 on the number of children living in jobless households. According to the data, 16% of children are currently living in homes unsupported by members of the household, and instead supported through government funding.

National has promised to reduce child pov-

erty by 100,000 children before the year 2020, and has promised to lift 50,000 children out of poverty from April 1st 2018.

National's commitment to reducing child poverty—if they are placed in power—will be done through the implementation of several new policies.

National's Family Incomes Package would help 1.3 million families with \$1350 per year on average from 1st April 2018, by reducing income tax and increases to Working for Families and the Accommodation Supplement.

The income tax reduction would give anyone earning up to \$24,000 a year approximately \$35 more dollars a week.

It's worth noting that Labour has committed to the same child poverty reduction target as National.

The Labour Party have instead focused on keeping taxes the same, in order to put \$1.5 billion into education, families and health care.

Labour would extend the Working For Families package to an additional 30,000 households, and boost the funding families under the scheme receive.

Families receiving accommodation supplements would also receive a boost in funding.

The key difference between National and Labour's policies on child poverty is that while Labour would keep taxes in order to put funding into families, National would reduce the amount of money taken from households across the spectrum.

The Electoral Commission is predicting 384,072 (15% of total votes) specials this election, which may very well decide what kind of government will be formed. This is up from 12% last election.

New Zealand First Leader Winston Peters said he would not give answers on the prospects of a coalition until talking to the board of New Zealand First, the supporters and organisations around the country.

The deadline for the count of special votes is 2pm on October 7th, with the final declaration of the election result due on October 12th. ♦

NEWS EDITOR'S NOTE: AT TIME OF WRITING, NEW ZEALAND DIDN'T HAVE A GOVERNMENT (LOL). HOPEFULLY WE HAVE ONE BY NOW.



THE ROHINGYA REFUGEE CRISIS

ULYSSE BELLIER TALKS TO A REFUGEE WHO ESCAPED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN MYANMAR

In the quiet lobby of one of Auckland's biggest skyscrapers, Anayet Ullah, 23, is telling me the story of burned villages, refugee camps, and his settlement in New Zealand.

The young Rohingya man was born in a camp in Bangladesh, but his parents married in Myanmar (formerly Burma).

"In 1978, my [Rohingya] parents were forced by the [Burmese] Government to flee in order to save their lives," Anayet explains.

"This crisis... has been going on for decades."

In late August, the Myanmar Army launched another campaign against the stateless Rohingya Muslim people—the group, denied any citizenship rights under 1982 Myanmar law, were recently deemed by the United Nations as one of the "most persecuted minorities in the world".

The current military campaign has involved burning the Rohingya villages (located mostly in the Northern Rakhine townships in the west of Myanmar), kidnapping and murdering men, and forcing women and children to flee to neighbouring Bangladesh. Around 1.1 million Rohingya people are estimated to be in grave danger.

According to Myanmar officials, the campaign is in retaliation to Rohingya "Salvation Army" attacks on Myanmar police forces. Yet the United Nations have called it a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing".

Anayet arrived with his parents in New Zealand in 2009 as a quota refugee.

"We left two of my older sisters in the refugee camp [in Bangladesh]... they are still there," he remembers.

"We were happy we could be out of the camp, but imagine [leaving] a place where you grew up, you lived... We arrived here, no one understood us."

"It was really hard the first couple of weeks, for me and for my entire family, to adapt to the New Zealand culture. It was a new world we never heard of... we were like aliens."

As one of the 750 refugees New Zealand

accepts every year, Anayet spent six weeks in the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre in South Auckland.

Here, he was introduced to "Kiwi culture and customs, and generally oriented into life in New Zealand," as Gemma Snowden from the NZ Red Cross Refugee Resettlement Programme explained.

After this, Anayet started high school in Auckland, living with his family. He had to study hard to catch up, due to the basic level of education in the refugee camp—and became a Prefect in Year 13.

"When the doors of opportunities open, you try to do everything—because I have seen a life that a normal human being would not try to live," he told me.

During his high school years, an outdoor trip in the South Island "changed [his] life".

"I spent 21 days here ... the most memorable days of my life," he said with stars in his eyes. "This [was] where I built up my confidence."

After that, Anayet got a scholarship to study Computer and Information Science at AUT, before getting a job at AIG in Auckland CBD.

He speaks slowly and quietly, but doesn't stop.

"It is really hard to talk about these things, but I feel a duty to raise my voice. If I don't, who will be the ambassador of this [cause]?"

For many, including Anayet, this latest military campaign by Buddhist Myanmar is entirely driven by the army to get rid of Rohingya through any means possible.

But on the other side of the border, Bangladesh—a poor Muslim nation—refuses to welcome fleeing Rohingya refugees.

Ahsan, Anayet's older brother, was shot dead by the Bangladesh security forces during a night in the refugee camp, while he attempted to find his medication.

As a result, his mother developed a mental disorder, which is why his family was shortlisted by UNHCR to find asylum in

New Zealand.

Yet so many of Anayet's family are still on the ground in a rapidly deteriorating war-zone.

In the past few weeks, Anayet's uncle, aunt, and their families fled their villages to seek shelter on the Bangladeshi border. He sends money to them as they live in refugee camps, which they can use to buy small cell phones to keep in touch. However, in Myanmar, the use of a cell phone needs to be kept secret.

"It is a big crime for Rohingya to have a phone there," Anayet explains. "They might even be killed [for it]."

He tells me being Rohingya is worse than being a second-class citizen.

"We got a different colour, a different skin. This is why they think we do not belong to Burma."

"For us, Rohingya people, they use the words 'kala', 'Muslims'...but the meaning is worse than 'n*****'."

Aung San Suu Kyi, the de facto leader of Myanmar and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991, made a speech on the crisis on September 19th after weeks of silence.

However, she refused to acknowledge any wrongdoing by the army toward the Rohingya—a word she also declines to use.

For Anayet, there is no solution in sight.

This is why he is part of a movement for increasing the New Zealand quota of refugees to 1500 each year, insisting, "We are contributing to the New Zealand economy."

"The Government gave us the opportunities, we are thankful for them, but they can do a lot more."

"This is all I'm asking, what government it is, regardless of what party it is. New Zealand has the capacity to do much more."

According to the UNHCR at the time of writing, 436,000 Rohingya refugees have fled Myanmar to Bangladesh since 25th August, 2017.

Last year, New Zealand welcomed 187 Rohingya refugees in total. •

PAULA BENNETT CRITICISED AFTER CAMPAIGN TEXT

BY ADITYA TEJAS

National Party Deputy Leader Paula Bennett has found herself under fire over a possible privacy breach after a text message was sent on her behalf to Upper Harbour constituents.

The message, which was sent on September 19th and calls on voters to support her and the National Party, said: "Hi. I'm Paula Bennett, your National Candidate. I got your number from the electoral roll.

"National are a strong team. We want to continue to grow NZ & take the next step in tackling hard social issues. We know what needs to be done & how to do it. Please support me and the National Party. Paula."

The message in question was sent through Apple's iMessage app, which meant that the numbers of all the recipients could be seen.

The Electoral Commission said it had received a complaint and was investigating, while Privacy Commissioner John Edwards suggested that it might be in violation of the Privacy Act.

"A candidate's communications in election

campaigning come under the oversight of the Electoral Commission," Edwards told Radio New Zealand in a recent interview.

"But if we did receive a complaint, we would need to look at whether a candidate is subject to the Privacy Act. That's because organisations that aren't covered by the Privacy Act include Members of Parliament, when they are acting as MPs."

"Without a complaint and access to all the facts that comes with an investigation, we wouldn't be able to predetermine whether a candidate was acting in their capacity as an MP."

While Bennett said that the message was sent as part of her campaign's normal outreach programme, a National Party official clarified that the numbers weren't collected through the electoral roll and called the message "poorly worded".

"The names came from the electoral roll, but the numbers were collected through a range of different ways. The message should have been

clearer," Campaign Communications Manager Clark Hennessy told Radio New Zealand.

However, this isn't the first time Bennett has been accused of privacy violations. In 2009, Bennett, then Social Development Minister, committed a privacy breach by leaking the details of Natasha Fuller, a single mother and beneficiary.

Bennett leaked information relating to Fuller's income from benefits to the *NZ Herald* after Fuller criticised welfare budget cuts.

After being reprimanded by the Human Rights Commission in 2012 following a complaint, Bennett remained defiant, saying that she did not consider her actions to be a privacy breach and that she may do it again.

"I do not believe I have breached privacy," she said at the time. ♦

AT TIME OF WRITING, PAULA BENNETT WAS DEPUTY LEADER OF THE NATIONAL PARTY, AND HAD NO CABINET ROLES ASSIGNED.

UOA WOMEN TAKE OUT AFF CUP

BY MARK CASSON

On Sunday, University of Auckland footballers (playing for Central United) were crowned champions of the Auckland Football Federation (AFF) Women's Knockout Cup. They held a versatile defensive wall to keep out fiery attacks from Fencibles United.

While Fencibles broke the deadlock in the 20th minute of the match, going up 1-0, Central answered back with a strike from Shannon Ward to make things level just six minutes later. After 90 minutes, the scores stood level, meaning the match went to penalties.

Central United goalkeeper Chelsea Cadwallader was in excellent form, and managed to keep Fencibles at bay during the shoot-out. Min Khanthee and Mianna Laing both scored for Central, however, crowning them tournament champions.

Stand-in Central Skipper and BA/BCom student Klara Klippel says the road to winning the cup was challenging, but a high level of team spirit kept the team focused on the trophy.

"As soon as we knew we had won, the overall feeling was insane—it was the best feeling ever, I mean totally elated."

"The adrenaline was running. The endor-

phins were high. That moment the ref blew the whistle, we all sort of sprinted on and our supporters came on and we jumped on our keeper... It was the best feeling in the world, honestly we couldn't believe it."

Prior to the final, the team had to play two tough matches. They first played Ellerslie in the quarter final, who finished in third place—one place above them in the overall League Table. Shannon Ward, Min Khanthee, Mianna Laing, Lucy Ruck, and Ruth Perese all scored to beat Ellerslie 5-3. Their next game was against Papakura, who recently claimed top spot in the League, winning their playoff to the NRFL Women's Premier Division.

"With Papakura, it was a tough one," Klippel admitted.

"We beat them at the beginning of the season (we were the only team at the end of the league to beat them) and then they had beaten us in the second game... so it was a bit of a square bear."

"We knew they were going to be a tough team and it was a hard game. But again, it was our spirit that got us through and we were using that to support each other... We just gelled so well as a team and even just winning that semi-final

against Papakura was such a win."

The match ended in a 0-0 draw and went to penalties, with Central winning 4-3. Goalkeeper Cadwallader saved two penalties, while Mianna Laing, Taelor Parker and Min Khanthee put Central in a great position for Jessie O'Connor to score the winner.

After claiming the Auckland title, Klippel hopes to focus on the development of women's football within the Central club—and looks forward to an exciting season next year, as the side chases promotion.

"It's hard with a university team, especially whenever there are exams or holidays, we lose a few players."

"We had a slump mid-season, but at the end of the season, for us to... win that cup is an amazing effort."

"I think they should know we are very serious about women's football at Central and we are trying to get the club on our side. They're historically not into developing women's football, but hopefully now we get some more resources from them and build us up."

"Hopefully next season we can go on and win the league." ♦

IN CONVERSATION WITH: Child Poverty Action Group

In the wake of the election, it has become clear that child poverty is one of the biggest issues facing New Zealand. Rebecca Hallas had a chat with Child Poverty Action Group

HOW DID CPAG GET STARTED?

The Child Poverty Action Group was formed in 1994 out of deep concern for the rising level of poverty in New Zealand and its effects on children. It started out as a really small group of people working on producing research around the causes and consequences of poverty and now has over 3,500 members and supporters across New Zealand, including leading academics, doctors, teachers, health workers, community workers and many other people concerned about the poorest children in New Zealand society.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

CPAG's guiding principle and main goal is the right of every child to security, food, shelter, education, and healthcare. Our core objectives are:

- To promote better policies for children and young people;
- To promote awareness of the causes and consequence of child poverty;
- To ensure all activities and decisions of the group honour Te Tiriti O Waitangi; and
- To ensure all activities and decisions respect other cultural perspectives.

To achieve our goals, CPAG works to:

- Publish reports, make submissions and conducts small-scale research projects;
- Produce evidence about the causes and effects of poverty on children and their families as well as how government policies affect children; and
- We use evidence from our research to recommend policy changes to the Government, policy makers, public and media that will reduce or eliminate child poverty.

CAN YOU TALK A BIT ABOUT THE CPAG V AG CASE AND WHAT YOU ACCOMPLISHED?

CPAG's main argument was that the payment of the In-Work Tax Credit is unjustified discrimination. CPAG argued that it was wrong and unlawfully discriminatory to tie a child poverty alleviation measure to a work incentive, according to the international human rights treaties New Zealand has signed up to.

There were ten separate hearings between 2009 and 2013, including in the Human Rights Review Tribunal, the High Court and the Court of Appeal.

The CPAG litigation made an indelible mark on New Zealand human rights law through setting out three very important precedents:

1. *Right of a public interest group to bring Human Rights Act proceedings on behalf of others affected by government action.* The CPAG decision has been of critical importance to the future ability of public interest groups to challenge a government policy, omission or law which discriminates against vulnerable groups of persons, on

their behalf.

2. *Right to take claims of discrimination in relation to government economic and social policy upheld.* Throughout the substantive hearings, the Crown's major argument was that courts should stay clear of involvement in claims concerning social and economic policies, as this was the domain of the Government. Although CPAG didn't succeed here, the Court of Appeal's ruling left the door open for future economic and social claims challenging discrimination in government policy or legislation to be made by other organisations.
3. *Clear, simple and rights friendly legal test set for determining discrimination under section 19.* While CPAG decided not to pursue this case in the Supreme Court, we used the human rights' framework to draw attention to our obligations under the Human Rights Act, the Bill of Rights Act, and various international treaties and conventions such as United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The proceedings also played a big part in keeping the full range of issues of child poverty on the public and political agenda. Notably, in the 2011 elections, four opposition parties had a policy to remove the discrimination against income-tested beneficiary parents under the In-Work Tax Credit.

CPAG also continues to fight for the rights of New Zealand's poorest children.

DID ANY OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES THIS ELECTION HAVE POLICIES YOU SUPPORT? IF NOT, WHAT KINDS OF POLICIES WOULD YOU HAVE LIKED TO SEE THEM PROMOTE?

Our campaign this year ahead of the election was to ask for all political parties to commit to reducing the annual number of child hospital admissions for poverty-related preventable diseases from 40,000 to 20,000 by 2022. In doing this, the three key areas that need to be addressed are:

- Inadequate basic healthcare services and education;
- Income poverty and material hardship; and
- A lack of affordable, healthy housing.

Some of the specific policy we ask for relating to these areas are:

- Universal and adequate health care for children up to the age of 18 yrs (0–17 years);
- Immediately remove all hours of work requirements for all child-related tax credits;
- Treat all low-income children the same by abolishing the In-Work Tax Credit and adding \$72.50 to the Family Tax Credit for the first child payment;

- The Residential Tenancies Act should be overhauled with a view to improving tenants' rights;
- Review the Accommodation Supplement; and
- Develop a social housing plan within 12 months after the next election outcome.

WHILE CHILD POVERTY IS OBVIOUSLY AN INSTITUTIONAL PROBLEM WITH NO QUICK FIX, IS THERE ANY ADVICE OR ARE THERE RESOURCES YOU CAN RECOMMEND WHICH MAY HELP IN THE SHORT-TERM FOR PARENTS STRUGGLING TO SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN?

There are some short-term relief support options available to families mainly through Charities like City Mission (food parcels), emergency housing trusts (provide short term emergency housing) and KidsCan (provide basic necessities for children through schools), but unfortunately many of these organisations have reached capacity and there are many children and families who still end up missing out. Ngā Tangata Microfinance Trust can help with small, safe and no-interest loans to make asset purchases and debt relief loans to provide relief from high interest debt.

HOW CAN OUR READERS GET INVOLVED WITH CPAG?

There are lots of ways readers can get involved with CPAG! To start with, following us on social media or sign up to our mailing list to learn more about our work and to hear about upcoming events and opportunities to help. CPAG is currently increasing its presence on the University of Auckland campus and plan to hold an advocacy workshop for students on the 7th October, so keep an eye out for more information on that. Other ways of showing support include:

- Being informed on the issues and spreading the word;
- Emailing your MP or Minister—tell them you want greater priority given to the needs of children and why. Suggest they promote effective measures for the relief of families on low incomes. Make sure you tell them you are a member of their electorate;
- Writing letters to the editor of your local newspaper helps get child poverty issues into the public eye;
- If you feel there is poverty within your community or would like to help your community to become more aware and informed on child poverty issues, CPAG members can guest speak at events hosted by you;
- Consider making written submissions on issues relevant to child poverty; and
- Show your support on petitions. CPAG regularly partners up with other organisations to create and/or support petitions to the Government when there is an issue that affects children. •



What the loss of the Māori Party means for New Zealand

An opinion by Rebecca Hallas

At the time of writing this piece, it's the Sunday afternoon following the election. It's not looking likely at this point that Winston will go with Labour and the Greens. My fellow left-wing friends are in low spirits at the prospect of yet another three years of a National-led government. And the loss of the Māori party lingers over all of this.

How did we let this happen? Watching the results come in last night, I was blindsided by the admittedly unexpected 10% gap between National and Labour. I was so distracted by the lack of a neck-and-neck race, I wasn't even paying attention to the electorates.

And then my best friend's boyfriend suddenly noted that the Māori Party and Labour candidates were in a tight battle for the Māori electorate seats. Looking up the Māori electorate results, I realised Labour candidates were in the lead in every single one.

As the night continued, it became clear Te Ururoa Flavell—the only Māori Party MP to win his electorate last election—was not going to win this time round. Nor was Marama Fox able to win hers. And with the Māori Party holding just 1.1% of the party vote, they were effectively locked out of Parliament. The heartbreaking look on Te Ururoa's face said it all, eerily reminiscent of images of Hone Harawira in the 2014 election.

The fact that the Māori electorates were all taken exclusively by Labour adds insult to injury—the two parties have an ugly history. The Māori Party

was formed by Dame Tariana Turia in 2004, in response to Labour's shambles of a Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004, which extinguished indigenous rights to the foreshore and seabed. In 2005, Labour and the Māori Party were unable to come to a coalition agreement, leaving Labour in opposition. From 2008 onwards, the Māori Party has formed coalitions with the National Party.

Worse still is the fact that Winston Peters, who had a smile like a Cheshire cat throughout election night, has stated many times that he wants to try to remove Māori seats via public referendum. This was previously a National Party policy, until their coalition with the Māori Party. Though now, with the Māori Party gone, and Winston Peters holding all the power, a referendum may be on its way. And if the results from last night indicate anything, it's that a referendum may very well be the nail in the coffin for Māori electorates, and potentially also any comeback in 2020 for the Māori Party—they have historically failed to reach 5% of the party vote and always relied on Māori electorates to get into Parliament.

I won't lie, it's not looking good for the future of the Māori Party. However, it may be the case that three years without them will remind Kiwis of how lucky we were to have strong Māori representation. Certainly, Te Ururoa is still hopeful:

"I think we do have the leadership to come through—it just means some rethinking, some rejigging, and some reorganising to get us over the line." ♦

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

Get philanthropic at the
Variety Charity Roll!

When: Saturday 7th October,
10am–4pm

Where: 4 Wharf Road, Bucklands Beach

Age restrictions: All ages!

Price: Free (but donations encouraged!)

Event info: "This event will feature continuous 'sparring' for 6 hours to raise as much money and awareness for the children's charity Variety, which raises money for disadvantaged Kiwi kids. We're looking for as many grapplers to come together and donate any amount, big or small to help towards a great cause. This is a charity event and any level, from any club, is welcome along. Even if you want to drop by to spectate or make a small donation, feel free to drop by and say hello!"

Interested in environmental issues?

Check out the
Public Policy Club's
ongoing
Speaker Series,
this time on water

When: Thursday 12th October,
5pm–7pm

Where: Russell McVeagh, Vero Centre,
48 Shortland Street

Age restrictions: All ages!

Price: Free!

Event info: "New Zealanders are proud of our environment and our '100% pure' image. Fresh water matters to Kiwis, but conversations on the topic can be confusing and complex. How do we ensure the quality of our freshwater estate on one hand, while balancing development interests and 3 Waters infrastructure affordability on the other? You are invited to hear Sir Peter Gluckman, Chief Science Advisor to the Prime Minister, give his view on the topic—alongside Malcolm Alexander, CEO of Local Government New Zealand, and Raveen Jaduram, CEO of Watercare. Please email ppcexecsecretary@gmail.com to confirm your attendance by October 11th at 3 pm. Spaces are limited. Dress Code: Smart Casual/Corporate. Check out www.facebook.com/UoAPPC/ for more info!" ♦

PHOTO BY ALAN GIBSON



CHARITY/ORGANISATION OF THE WEEK

This week we want you to check out the Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand. The Foundation promotes campaigns on all aspects of mental health and wellbeing, taking a holistic approach. They also provide free information and training, and are advocates for policies and services which support

those suffering from mental illness, as well as their families and friends. Te Tiriti o Waitangi and The Ottawa Charter for health promotion both form a significant part of the principles they try to espouse in their work. You can learn more about what they do, and support them, at: mentalhealth.org.nz. ♦

What's On

Sunset Boulevard THE PLAYHOUSE

Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's hit musical *Sunset Boulevard* is showing for the first time in New Zealand. Set in 1949 in Hollywood, the story follows the tragic romance of a silent film star and a screenwriter. Catch it at The Playhouse in Glen Eden until Saturday 7 October.

Trams Remembered KINGSLAND

For a bit of local nostalgia and history, join the Kingsland Trams Remembered walking tour. Part of the Auckland Heritage Festival, you'll be educated on the impact of trams and the great tram disaster of 1903 by Historian James Duncan. It's free, ya'll.

Sassy Best Friend THE BASEMENT

Fresh from a sell-out season at Edinburgh Fringe and NZ International Comedy Festival, *Sassy Best Friend* by comedian Rose Matafeo is returning to the Basement from 3rd–7th October. Zany and charismatic, this show is a barrel of laughs. Tickets available online, with student discount.

Youthline Dinner Series MEREDITH'S

Youthline is incredible, and what better way to have a meal out than in support of this incredible organisation? The Youthline Dinner Series will run for every Tuesday in October at Meredith's Restaurant in Mt Eden. Enjoy a three-course meal and then make a donation towards Youthline.

Oktoberfest

SHAKESPEARE HOTEL AND BREWERY

Oktoberfest! The time where Kiwis and Aussies head over to Germany in questionably stereotypical outfits and get wasted. Do it here in Auckland on Saturday 7 October from 1pm–10pm. Buy your \$12 tickets and enjoy live music, beer, German cuisine and even a free stein to take home! ♦

GUIDE TO Chillin'

Summer break's a-comin' and with it, time. Ample time that busy students currently do not have. If you need help relaxing, try our handy dandy guide.

Beats and brews: Number one ingredient to chillin' = music. Put on some feel-good tunes and you'll instantly feel more content. Combine that with a few ice-cold beers or a fruity G&T and you've got a recipe of relaxing.

Netflix and chill: Nothing beats Netflix when it comes to really, truly chilling and doing nothing. Find a good series, get some popcorn, whack on your jammies and settle in for 3+ hours of blissful joy.

Mindfulness: If you want to find inner peace and restore the mind from all its post-uni frazzledness, a little bout of yoga or meditation won't hurt.

Mindlessness: Also, let your mind have a bleh moment. Have random, meaningless chats with your friends (a.k.a, the best kind of chats) that don't even touch on the subject of work or uni. Just be, man. ♦



Flower Power

Winter has gone and everything is back in bloom—whether that means flowers for you, or simply cheaper fruit and veg. A few weeks ago, we gave you some great options for Spring flowers that could spruce up your garden. Now let's talk about one of the most interesting unspoken languages—floriography, the language of flowers.

The symbolic language and hidden meanings of flowers have been recognised for centuries throughout Europe and Asia. Back in the 1800s, it became a Victorian pastime to learn, dissect and construct bouquets that were full of meaning. If you gave someone pomegranate, aloe and yellow carnations, for example, you were basically giving them the biggest middle finger, in the nicest way possible.

Although we rarely think about this sort of thing today, it could be kind of nice to give a meaningful bouquet to a friend, a date, or—to really confuse them—an enemy. Here's a great list of spring flowers that you can use to send a symbolic message.

Dahlia: These beautiful flowers come in so many different colours, and the first rule of floriography must be that different colours mean different things. The dahlia—both ends of the spectrum—symbolises both elegance and instability. A yellow dahlia lets someone know you love them and wish for a long commitment with them. A multi-coloured dahlia hints that you think of them constantly. The black dahlia warns of betrayal!

Tulip: The tulip, long looked over for the rose, is a classic flower of love. The red tulip symbolises perfect love and romance, whilst the yellow tulip can mean both friendship and the idea of a bright smile. But be careful who you gift the yellow tulip to, as it can in a certain context mean unrequited or spurned love.

Peony: This full-bodied, ruffled flower is one of Spring's delights. It is a major cultural tradition in some countries, whereas other areas look at the peony as a sign of shame. Typically, however, the peony is associated with prosperity—in both love and riches. We could definitely all use some of that!

Gerberas: These stunning daisies are vibrant and wide-ranged in colour. The gerbera with its bright, bold face essentially leans towards happiness. The meaning for orange is “sunshine of life” whilst the yellow simply denotes happiness. Red, as always, seems to imply being fully in love. Pink, very sweetly, lets someone know you admire and adore them to the highest extent. ♦



Lemon cake

We love a good lemon cake at Craccum, and this one's especially delish. Moist, tangy and perfect for that mid-morning snack, you'll be making this one again and again.

What you need:

For cake:

120g butter 1 cup flour
3 tsp baking powder ½ cup white sugar
2 eggs ¼ cup milk
Juice and rind of one large lemon

For icing:

1 cup icing sugar 1/3 cup lemon juice
1 tbsp boiling water

What you do:

1. Preheat oven to 180°C and line a circular cake tin with baking paper.
2. Soften butter in microwave.

3. Add all other cake ingredients into a food processor in the order listed (dry ingredients first, then the wet ones). Mix for 20 seconds or until blended smoothly.
4. Pour mixture into cake tin.
5. Bake for 20–30 minutes or until a skewer can be inserted into the centre of the cake and withdrawn cleanly.
6. To make the icing, mix the icing sugar, lemon juice and boiling water together in a bowl. Add more water if needed until the consistency is just runny enough to pour over the cake.
7. Ice cake once out of the oven for 20 minutes.
8. Serve with plain yoghurt or cream. ♦

Shop Kiwiana!

We make so many awesome things in New Zealand, it's hard to know where to start. Here's a quick breakdown of some of the best places in Auckland for you to shop 'til you drop!

High Street: Right in the centre of the city, High Street is the place to go if you're looking for striking, well-crafted New Zealand goods. An excellent antipodean store is Pauanesia, who've been celebrating artisan goods and Aotearoa since 1995. It's full of great little cafes and cocktail bars as well, if you're looking for a place to relax.

Parnell Village: This little village is one of Auckland's most charming attractions, and so close to uni! A sweet little street lined with colonial-style shops that specialise in locally made arts and crafts. If you're looking to stay warm, although winter may have passed (it's always coming!), Woolly for You makes use of NZ's famous sheep with a gorgeous collection of NZ-made wool products. If you're in the area, you simply *have* to sit down at the Chocolate Boutique, where everything is like a dream—as everything is chocolate. You can purchase whatever you've snacked on there, and more, if you're looking for some scrumptious treats.

Ponsonby Road: This long road is full of beautiful boutiques and bars, with brilliant restaurants and clubs tucked in between. Clothesline proves that you

can never have too many t-shirts, with an unbelievable range designed by prominent NZ creators and underground artists. You can buy delicious, gourmet chocolates at Devonport Chocolates—handcrafted delights in a box. You can also find an elusive Karen Walker store here dedicated entirely to the products and creations of one of NZ's most popular jewellers. The Vault is a treasure trove of Kiwi craft, with over 75% of their stock made in New Zealand. This is the place to go if you're looking for something special, with a varied collection of Kiwiana, contemporary jewellery and art.

Karangahape Road: Known as K-Road, this buzzing, bohemian road is home to the artists and the avant-garde of Auckland. Old meets new on this street, as you can view gorgeous art-deco architecture as it meets with the new influx of shops and take-out locations. You will find quirky or vintage fashion on this road, with some of the best hidden stores and galleries in Auckland. Award-winning Bread and Butter Letter sells 100% locally made lifestyle accessories and clothing, showcasing the best of NZ design. ♦

Top 5 Markets

Coatesville Markets

Held on the first Sunday of every month, the Coatesville Markets bring crowds from all over Auckland. A mixture of food, homemade jewellery, woodwork and clothing mean there's something for everyone.

La Cigale French Markets

You can't live in Auckland without visiting the La Cigale French Markets in Parnell on a weekend morning. The market sells the best French food Auckland has to offer, as well as a range of fresh produce. There's also a smaller market now in Takutai Square in Britomart on Saturday mornings. C'est magnifique!

Avondale Markets

Boasting the title of New Zealand's biggest one-day market, Avondale is open every Sunday. With an enormous selection of fruit and vegetables, plus knick-knacks and antiques, you can easily while away a day here.

Matakana Farmers' Market

Every Saturday the small town of Matakana, north of Auckland, becomes a bustling hub. This is the place to go for organic chocolate, Italian-style sausages, fine wines, gourmet olive oils, craft beer and locally brewed coffee.

Cross Street Market

If the quirky, lovable spirit of K Rd could be summed up in one thing, it would be the Cross St Market. On the first weekend of every month, local vendors come together to create a blissful market full of plants, vintage clothing, zines, collectables, records and delicious Millers coffee. Get there. ♦

A stylized illustration of a person writing at a desk. The person is shown from the back, with a large, dark, arched silhouette. They are sitting at a blue desk, writing on a white sheet of paper with a quill pen. On the desk, there is also a small black inkwell and a small black object. To the left of the person, there is a white sheet of paper on the desk. In the background, there is a large window with a pink and yellow sky. A green vine with leaves is climbing up the right side of the window. The wall is covered in a pattern of blue and white geometric shapes. The overall style is modern and graphic.

CRACCUM CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION

AMTRAK

*By Heidi North-Bailey
(Master of Creative Writing student)*

"The problem is," my dining companion said, "People with problems don't have any money." He sat on the other side of the plastic tablecloth. The steak on his plate was thin. Tough. The plastic knife buckled under his calloused hands.

His wife leaned in towards me over the table. "He had a five-year stint as a mental health counselor," she whispered.

I looked away. The magenta of her fingernails hurt my eyes.

She gave a high, light laugh, "That was his mid-life crisis." Her hair was a tight platinum puff. She was tracing little circles with her fork around the daisy-patterned plastic cloth, "Can you imagine?"

The train ground on. I'd been on it so long—36 hours—I couldn't hear the whir anymore. Feel the motion. But just to know I was still moving, that was the thing. The wife's eyes flickered to the table across the aisle from us, two men, one heavy-set, blonde, one close-cropped dark hair, compact.

The waitress appeared in our dining cart, topped up our sodas. The wife laughed, thanked her and patted back her hair. "It's the aircon," she confided. She was making short work of her Cobb salad.

Her husband had given up on cutting his steak, instead he speared it with the plastic fork and was holding the whole dripping lot up to his mouth.

"I farm now." He worked the meat round his teeth. "Peppermint. Every time you squeeze out some Colgate, that's my peppermint." He swallowed the gristle down.

I picked up a limp fry. Cold. I asked the two men seated opposite if I could borrow their sauce.

"Australian?" said the heavy-set blonde, hearing

my accent.

"New Zealander."

The dark-haired compact one gave a low whistle. "Long way from home."

"Where you heading?" asked the blonde.

"She's going all the way to New York," the wife answered, giggling at my face. "Oh, honey, I saw your guidebooks."

The sauce came out in little red blurts. I had never spoken to them before being seated together in the dining car. I hadn't considered I was being watched.

"I gotta do something with my life," said the blonde, picking up a greyish string bean.

"Us too, honey," the wife said, butter-soft.

"Where you from, then?" he asked her.

"Oh, Callaway. A little tumbleweed town outside Nebraska. You kids wouldn't know it."

"I know it," the dark-haired one said, his voice shot with brightness. "I passed through, back when I was a preaching."

"You're a priest?" she asked. We were all surprised.

"Ex-priest, to boot." Ice cubes thunked his plastic glass. "I used to be Jewish, converted to Catholicism. Now..."

The wife leaned close to tell them, "She was reading a book on happiness this afternoon, this one." She gave a nod towards me, a little laugh.

Her husband's eyes landed on my face.

"I've never been to New York," the blonde said, gloomy.

"Plenty of time left, honey."

"I'm 32." He patted his grey sweatshirt, right where it stretched tight over his stomach. "I haven't aged well. I've run to fat."

FIRST PLACE PROSE

"I'm 32, too," said the dark-haired one.

"No shit," the blonde sat straighter.

"I'm telling you."

"That was a quick priesthood, wasn't it?" the wife asked mildly.

Her husband broke the silence. "I took you for a military man."

"Navy. Ex Navy."

"The last ten years of my life" said the blonde one, watching all this, "nothing's changed." He patted again. "Except the fat."

"Life's hard," the husband said. He had almost cleaned his plastic plate. Just a sprig of parsley lay stranded on the blue Amtrak logo.

"How old are you then?" The dark-haired one looked to me.

I considered lying, but couldn't think what it'd change. "Thirty-two."

"You see that!" The wife clapped her hands.

"See what?" Her husband was ready to go. His leg agitated the air under our table.

"What kind of coincidence is that?" The wife was getting excited.

"Random coincidence," the husband kept his voice flat, "nothing to get excited about."

"Everything happens for a reason."

"I might have to agree with you there," said the dark-haired one.

"Though you were an ex-preacher?" Her husband stood. "Evening."

"Why New York?" the dark-haired one asked, watching them disappear into the sleeping car.

I gave a tight smile. "Why not?"

"I gotta do something with my life," the blonde one repeated, sagging back into his chair.

I walked back to my seat. I hadn't booked a sleeper. I put my hoodie on, pulled up the plasticky white Amtrak blanket I'd paid \$30 dollars for, counting out my change.

"You find anything of note, in that book?" The husband from the dining cart fell into the seat beside me. I snapped awake. The dawn light was a pale shock.

"Here's what you do," he said, keeping his voice low, urgent, "you get out at Penn Station. You see the sights. You eat a goddamned chilli-dog. You wait. For time. It changes everything." Louder now when I didn't respond. "You hear me?"

"Enjoy New York," he continued, suddenly just as casual as when he had sat down, "You just gonna love the chilli dogs."

There was his wife standing over our head, pulling baggage.

"Ready?" he asked her.

"You bet," she rolled her neck into her hand, squeezing at the flesh, "You even get a wink of sleep there?" she asked me.

"It's ain't so bad," the husband said.

"New York?" The wife squinted at me. Her magenta fingernails drummed the seat backs. "You've still such a long way to go."

"She's over half way." The husband put his hands on the seats in front to hoist himself up.

The train ground still. The platform came into view. The husband's eyes went outside.

I followed his gaze. Out there in the future the sun burned the night down. ♦

JUDGE'S COMMENT (PAULA MORRIS): THIS STORY MAKES THE MOST OF A CONFINED SETTING, A CROSS-COUNTRY TRAIN IN THE US, BRINGING TOGETHER A DISPARATE GROUP OF STRANGERS IN A CHANCE ENCOUNTER. THE RANDOMNESS OF THIS ENCOUNTER AND A CONSIDERED USE OF DETAIL GIVES THE STORY A FEELING OF AUTHENTICITY, AND THE AUTHOR RESISTS A PAT ENDING. INSTEAD THE RESONANT FINAL LINE CONVEYS A SENSE OF TREPIDATION AND EXCITEMENT. THE NARRATOR'S CHARACTER EMERGES IN A SUBTLE BUT CLEAR WAY, AND THE PACE OF THE STORY (AND OF SENTENCES) IS IMPRESSIVELY MEASURED.

APHOTIC

By Sarah Kolver
(Bachelor of Fine Arts/Bachelor of Arts student)

Before creation
 we were breathed into a bubble:
 a transcendent recapitulation
 of a memory, lost
 amidst the trammels
 of gluttony.

Illumination.
 To which the dark dragons of night descended,
 arms heavy with the weight of puissant ambition.
 Merely of dust,
 we failed to muster a dreary conviction
 for life once lived.

Taught naught but greed
 and swathed in conceit,
 furnaces ablaze with a damp
 melancholy.
 Our skin rippled with salt and flames
 our essence
 writhed in the turmoil of a
 withered dream.

Decorum taught us to bear
 the curse of a plastic smile,
 a hideous concoction
 to conquer the oceans of fire.
 Our clay-ridden minds bore the brunt
 of the artist's corpulent hands.
 We were rendered acrobats in a circus of the mind;
 a plethora of blunders and absurdities
 echoed in screaming whispers.

Yet a bubble is purely thus:
 Air encapsulated within a soapy mess
 of unmitigated belief.
 It must burst.

Within the carnage we found ourselves.
 Blades of unyielding grass
 smothered by rain,
 the paint of our makers.
 Embraced in a graveyard of veneer,
 the reign of depravity ended.

It was a revolution of the spirit,
 of the mind whose freedom
 plunged deep into the murky waters of the self,
 to glide
 to drown
 to become bubbles once more.

JUDGE'S COMMENT (IAIN BRITTON): AN IMPRESSIVE POEM WHICH CONVEYS A DEFINITE SENSE OF FRAGILITY, BUT COMMUNICATES STRONGLY THROUGH THE JUXTAPOSITION OF WELL-CONSTRUCTED IMAGERY.

HOW TO BECOME A WRITER

By Belle Hullon
(*Bachelor of Arts student*)

Begin at the ripe age of four months old. Lie in your cot and listen to your mother read you *Rapunzel*. Appreciate the words rolling off her tongue, her animation. Be sure to pick a mother who will do this every night.

On your first day of kindergarten, take a canvas backpack adorned with the old Qantas airlines logo. Every morning, put on the dress smock of dusty blue and march through the gates, past the swimming pool and into the large terrace villa. Learn your alphabets, and over time, progress with your Peter and Jane reading books. Mirror your letters, writing “b” when you were meant to write “d”. Do not forget to get into trouble with your kindergarten teacher over your appalling handwriting, and get sent home with extra writing practice. Practice the alphabet in the brown-covered exercise books with the quad lines, designed for a five-year-old’s unsteady hands. Keep progressing through your Peter and Jane books during reading time. Start to overtake the class average progress. Complete the 25-book series and start taking Enid Blyton books to kindergarten for reading time instead.

At eight-years-old, staple pages of paper from your father’s fax machine together. Write your first ever editorial column on the white pages. Make up names for the people you write about and stick to ones you like the most, like “Ellenie”. Eventually writing will tire your small hands, and each individual letter will seem like a chore. It is okay. Scribble your lines instead—random curls and loops that make no sense to no one but your eight-year-old self. Your mother will save these unintelligible newspapers, and will dig them out of the filing cabinet when you take Creative Writing 252 at University, and send you photos. Make sure you save a copy of these photos in your Writer’s Workbook and Portfolio.

At nine, your parents will take notice of your vivid imagination. They will enrol you in a workshop that teaches you to incorporate Origami and storytelling. At the end of the two-day workshop, you will have written an original piece about a girl named Shinee who had a koala bear pin that turned into a real-life koala bear.

Submit this story to an under-12 short story competition organised by the British Council. You will get a phone call months later informing you that you have won, and your father will get angry when you try to listen intently to the lady on the phone instead of answering his queries as to who the caller is. As a result, you don’t actually realise that you have won the competition until you come

home from school—sweaty and tired with grime under your fingernails—a few weeks later. There is a letter addressed to you and it is the British Council. You won second place in the under-12 category of the short story competition and are invited to a prizegiving by a famous author whose Western name your Malaysian-educated mind will forget instantly.

At fifteen, you will sit down at your assigned amber-topped school desk when your teacher once again doesn’t show up to class. Out of boredom, you will pull out your rich dark green notepad and start writing a story that forms in your mind. In parentheses, the word fiction on the top left margin of the page. When the page ends, so does your story. Let everyone in your class take turns reading the story. It passes from sweaty hand to sweatier hand, dozens of eyes wearing out the words on the page. Every time someone tells you how good the story is, feel a bright white hot sense of pride flare in your chest. Fueled by this validation, write another story. Again, keep it a page long. Start mid-scene and build it quickly, and have it peak with a fantastic twist. Do this over and over again, always with strong female leads. Your classmates will read and love every single one. That sense of pride will stay with you long after you leave school. Hold on to it. Remember this feeling. It will matter later, whether your fifteen-year-old self knows it or not.

Fall in love at sixteen. The most stereotypically volatile, passionate relationship should pursue. He will teach you to love and then teach you to bleed, and you will learn things about human emotion that can only be learnt through heartbreak. Write. Put your pain into words. Romanticise every scathing text he sends you and turn it into a form of literary artwork. It will wrap you up in its familiar comfort, and give you solace. Write for your heartbreak.

Turn seventeen and discover deceit from people you trust. You will realise the world is not as monochrome as you thought. Depression will be a well of emptiness that will find home in your chest, and you will fill the well with words on a page. Write. Every time the tears come, let them stain the paper on which you write.

It will come time for University acceptance emails to start seeping into your inbox. Sitting in the passenger seat of your father’s stocky silver sedan, listen to him talk about you in a way that makes you feel like it isn’t about you at all. He will remind you that a Science degree will give you infinitely more options, and that it will tap into the potential you have always exhibited in everything you

attempt. Agree with him as begrudgingly as you can without being disrespectful. When you get home, hold back tears as you decline your offer for the Bachelor of Arts at the University of Auckland and enrol into your science courses. Ignore the nagging feeling of loss in the back of your mind as you seal the deal for the next three years with PSYCH and BIOSCI papers on Student Services Online.

As much as your displeasure will tighten the noose around your neck, persevere with your BSc degree for one year. When you stare blankly at those Word documents and wish you could be crafting a story about arrogant boys and beautiful girls falling in love, don't let the tears that fall ruin your mascara. Smudged makeup will reveal how unhappy you are to the people around you, and you must try to avoid that. The pressures of University will get to be too much, and the only thing that will push the sadness away is the poetry you upload to your Wordpress blog. At this point in your life, that feeling of pride you used to feel when people fell in love with your words will be the only thing strong enough to guide your hands away from the bottle of pills. When you finally fail every single course in your

second semester of University, your parents will finally see your unhappiness in the single row of black Ds on your transcript.

Now this is the most important part of this guide. When your parents sit you down over Skype, and you hear the disappointment in the voices that pour out of your laptop speakers, explain your true passion. Let the words you spill onto your blog speak for your talent, and the tears in your eyes speak for your honesty. The next day, apply to change to an Arts degree with a Writing Studies major. Watch with pride as your grades soar back up immediately. Work hard and love every day you spend creating your creative pieces. Your mother will share every blog update you post, her pride in your talent bleeding into the comments she makes about her "little writer".

One year later, sit down with your Writer's Workbook and Portfolio and piece together this journey. As you write, realise that you have always been a writer—from the way your hands always itch for a pen, to the way your words flow so naturally from your hands they require almost no thought at all. Write this guide, and as you do smile and revel in the fact: You are now a writer. ♦

JUDGE'S COMMENT (PAULA MORRIS): THIS RE-INTERPRETATION OF A FAMOUS LORRIE MOORE STORY SUCCEEDS BECAUSE WHILE THE TITLE, STRUCTURE AND SECOND-PERSON NARRATION IS BORROWED, THE DETAILS ARE FRESH AND PARTICULAR. IT'S SUITABLY DIGRESSIVE AND RICH IN BOTH CHARACTER AND INCIDENT, PARTICULARLY IN THE CHILDHOOD SCENES.



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ARTWORK BY Georgina Arnold  @georgi.a.arnold

HELD COURT

By Garling Wu
(*Bachelor of Music (Honours) student*)

Electric skin touch
stagnant streams
Manic depression
Torrid seas,
Wild fire,
No release.

Scratching at Dopamine turned
rancid, cooked
flesh, blood broods, bide time,
and you said—
toes curled biting at the threshold of
Matador, black
static pooling at your feet

Grated lips
chapped, bleed,
taste of Magnesium and Valium and
Mersyndol, *'cheer up, Doll'*
Mercy-n-doll
Sleeping with—
tender, wired, broken
Dolls.
Broken, *sleep*

Dream on
nightmares (run on) clover fields (run on)
gun cocked (run on) turn me on
turn me, on and
on and on
and

Convulsing, fought, writhing, lost—
over and over and over and
Halt
Burn effervescent under the midnight Sun
Death suspended,
fuck you
No release.

JUDGE'S COMMENT (IAIN BRITTON): SYNTACTICALLY VERY MODERN IN ITS FORM AND CONTENT AND SUSTAINS ITSELF BY INTERESTINGLY CONSTRUCTED LINE ASSOCIATIONS.

BRACING FOR THE WORST

By Amelia Langford
(Master of Creative Writing student)

I used to have an orthodontist that looked like that American actress and singer, Bette Midler. Some people might find that a good thing, but I personally have never been a fan.

Bette's lookalike wasn't our first port of call as an orthodontist. My mother had initially taken me to see a man who did not resemble any actor, unless you count an extra. He told us I would have to wear a head brace connected to braces to get my teeth back on track. That seemed rather extreme and reminded me of those nerdy kids in '80s movies who never get a date for the prom. I refused to go back. He was also very expensive so that suited my mother.

The following week, we met Bette. She must have been in her 40s and wore a white lab coat over civilian clothes. She looked like an angry little scientist with a scribble of curly red hair on her head.

She didn't do pleasantries. After examining me, we sat down in her dark wood-panelled office and had a "nice chat". The good news: I didn't need the head brace. The bad news: If I didn't get braces my lower jaw would end up protruding and I would look like a "bulldog". Naturally that terrified us and my mother signed the forms.

It soon became apparent that Bette had bad breath. I hated lying down on the chair and letting her peer into my mouth. I also hated the feeling of having alien pieces of metal attached to my teeth. Worse yet was the rubberband to connect the jaw. My friends' orthodontists tried to make that fun by offering a choice of colours, such as red and green for Christmas or black and yellow like a bumblebee. But Bette always said she was out

of colours so I had to wear black.

After about six months of these horrors, I went in for an X-ray so Bette could see how my teeth were responding to the treatment. The next day my mother ordered me to ring for the results. She didn't like chatting to Bette either. Bette told me my teeth weren't making as much progress as she had expected and I would have to wear the bands for at least five years.

"You're kidding?" I said. I could feel the bands tighten in my mouth under the strain of this news.

"You don't want to resemble a bulldog do you?" she said, laughing.

Without a goodbye, I slammed the phone down. I immediately felt mortified by what I had done. Who hangs up on their orthodontist? I grabbed the bands out of my mouth and threw them on the floor.

*

After a few days, my mother convinced me that I had to go back to Bette.

"Dad and I have paid so much money for this. Thousands of dollars. You can't just stop halfway through," she said. "Besides, do you want braces on your teeth for the rest of your life?"

I had no choice. I had Bette's handiwork on my teeth and I wanted it off. When the day came, I slinked into her office in my school uniform. I waited with a knot in my stomach, pretending to browse the women's magazines on the table. After about 10 minutes, a door opened and Bette walked into the waiting room in her lab coat and short little heels. She gave a short nod and turned. I followed her and lay down in the chair.





She didn't say a word.

She peered into my mouth and I felt her hot breath on my face. She smelt of garlic and seafood. I looked up and she gave me a large toothy smile. I had never seen her smile before. Eventually, she spoke: "Open wide." I saw a needle coming towards me.

"Wait! What's that for?"

"You're jaw hasn't been following instructions. It's been misbehaving. We need to take drastic measures."

"Wait, umm have you ever seen that movie *Beaches*? Or *Hocus Pocus*?"

She stopped and looked at me with a strange expression.

"Never heard of it!"

I then felt a sharp pain as she jabbed the big needle into my gums. I began to worry that saliva was cascading out of my mouth as I could feel nothing. But before I could worry any longer, I felt myself drifting off to sleep...

I awoke to the most awful pain. Something didn't seem right. Something was missing. I looked around Bette's surgery, but she was nowhere to be seen. The room was dark and full of malevolent-looking shad-

ows. I could see the moon creeping in through the window. I wiped my hand on my mouth and it was wet. I looked down at my hands and saw a red substance in the moonlight. I ran to the mirror on the back of the door and heard myself shriek. I had looked into the abyss of my mouth and it had looked back at me. Instead of braces, I had deep dark holes where my teeth had once been.

*

My parents wanted to take Bette to court to recoup costs, but she was nowhere to be found. They had to hire a private investigator as the police didn't have the resources. Turned out she had been trading under a fake name and wasn't even a real orthodontist. They reckon she skipped the country and went to Brazil. Apparently she had mucked up a lot of kids' teeth, but I got the worst of it. I eventually got false teeth after the wounds healed and I do okay. But sometimes when I'm in a department store or supermarket and "Wind Beneath My Wings" comes on then I have to fight the urge to vomit. I immediately run my fingers over my false teeth to check they're still there and try to tune out the words. ♦

JUDGE'S COMMENT (PAULA MORRIS): THERE'S A WIT AND BRASH STYLE TO THIS STORY THAT MAKES IT REALLY ENGAGING, DESPITE A HORROR TWIST THAT COULD FEEL CORNY AND CONTRIVED IN LESS ACCOMPLISHED HANDS. THE AUTHOR DELIGHTS IN LANGUAGE ("A SCRIBBLE OF CURLY RED HAIR") AND LEADS US THROUGH A WELL-CONSTRUCTED STORY THAT MANAGES TO BE BOTH COMIC AND CREEPY.



SYRIA

By Moss Bioletti
(Master of Arts (Philosophy) student)

Looking for something that doesn't exist
Another day another playlist
New artists same shit
Wonder why there's no heartfelt sensibilities
Is there something wrong?
With my human senses
All I want are songs to vibe with
I guess that's what I get
For looking for something
That doesn't quite exist yet
Maybe I'm the one to make it
Maybe I'm just being vain and foolish
In disgust I finish the last sip of tea
A chocolate biscuit a distant memory
Ladders falling from the sky
I do my best to prop them up
Mothers in the kitchen baking
I'm visualising my drum practice
Another day begins with pushing
My fluffy cat off my lap
At least it's not raining
At least it's not raining
At least it's not raining
But over in Syria I hear the children wailing
In these dark times
We must be the light
We must be the light
We must be the light
We must be...

JUDGE'S COMMENT (IAIN BRITTON): A VERY TOPICAL AND TRUTHFUL POEM, YET CONTAINS SINCERE EMPATHY AND RELATES PROFOUNDLY TO THE PLIGHT OF CHILDREN IN MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD. THE POEM IS VERY DIRECT, MATTER-OF-FACT AND SIMPLY STRUCTURED. NB: ORIGINAL TITLE WAS "CHILDREN WAILING IN SYRIA", BUT I RECOMMEND "SYRIA", AS IT IS MORE OPEN-ENDED.



Everybody wants to rule the world

With Anoushka Maharaj

With all this nonsense leading up to, and during, the election, it's been difficult to find avenues of discussion that don't lead straight to Hades. New Zealand is so small that this intimacy in relation to politics and social interaction is inevitable, and it's kind of hysterical that you can have a beer with your MPs while simultaneously taking the absolute piss out of them.

There have been criticisms of the pervasion of "personality politics" not entirely unrelated to the poem that was borne of Bill English's unprotected jog around the neighbourhood. Ultimately, it is odd that we seem to demand a level of relatability in politics—so much so that it affects the way we make democratic decisions.

I am very tired and ineloquent (it's 3am *again*) but I have found a delightful middle ground—a political Asphodel, if you will—to illustrate the turmoil that we all currently live in.¹ That middle ground is *music*, my sweet friends. Music that your favourite (or least favourite) political representatives are probably listening to, right now, trying to get through these uncertain days just the same as you and me.

So, next time the MMP system gets you down, turn to these trusty playlists instead and groove your way through the next three (to sixty) weeks of bureaucratic uncertainty.

Bill's Bangers

A playlist that delivers for all New Zealanders

1. "Money" – Pink Floyd
2. "Money, Money, Money" – ABBA
3. "It's Money That Matters" – Randy Newman
4. "Yesterday" – The Beatles
5. "Take the Money and Run" – Steve Miller Band

The Bad Boys of Politics. These are the only tunes

that anyone who has just consumed a spaghetti pizza would want to listen to. It only seems fitting that Bill's current playlist would reflect the values that we, as a society, value the most—he knows what the people want. Also, I suppose I should have put a Bieber song on there, too, since we all seem to have such an obsession with fuck-boys making a comeback.

Jacinda's Jams

There's nothing taxing about these jams!

1. "Lady In Red" – Chris de Burgh
2. "Rich Girl" – Hall & Oates
3. "Taxman" – The Beatles
4. "The Gambler" – Kenny Rogers
5. "Is This It?" – The Strokes

The world of politics is cruel and unforgiving. Jacinda's probably questioning her allegiances, her opacity, her choice of sausage, or her use of Tiki Taane in that campaign video. There is no shame in returning to the classics—just like the classic scenario of working very hard for your career only for it to be undercut by an old man and his money.

Shaw's Serenades

Acclimatise yourself to this poignant playlist for the ages

1. "End of the World as We Know It" – R.E.M.
2. "Every Breath You Take" – The Police
3. "With or Without You" – U2
4. "Mr. Brightside" – The Killers
5. "Send Me On My Way" – Rusted Root

This is a playlist for the greatest childless dad that we could ask for. A trooper if there ever was one. And while J-Shaw has, in public, conducted himself with the utmost calm, it's safe to assume that his sanity is hanging on by a thread in private—and who could blame him? How did we get here?

What's going on? Is the Zodiac killer still alive? Nobody wants their fate decided by greedy, power-hungry dumb dumbs.

David's Ditties

Euthanise the blues with these sick beats

1. "Livin' On A Prayer" – Bon Jovi
2. "Free Fallin'" – Tom Petty
3. "Creep" – Radiohead
4. "Everybody Hurts" – R.E.M.
5. "Mr. Lonely" – Bobby Vinton

No song will ever truly match the reality, or the trajectory, of David Seymour's political career. But like the demise of any modern-day relationship, these depressingly appropriate anthems paint the picture of having been dumped by someone far hotter than you, hoping that maybe they'll take you back, and then reaching the overwhelming realisation that the only place to go from here is down.

Winnie's Winners

If you have to pick one playlist, it should be this—it's just common sense

1. "Stronger" – Kanye West
2. "Simply The Best" – Tina Turner
3. "Bad" – Michael Jackson
4. "Under My Thumb" – The Rolling Stones
5. "The Man" – Aloe Blacc

This is a playlist for your most triumphant days—like, if you were to return as a ghost to murder your murderers, or go into labour at your worst enemy's wedding. Just know that someone out there deeply fears you. While Winston is *undoubtedly* listening to these tracks on repeat, I think the only real sound that he hears right now could be summed up with just one word: *vindication*. ♦

¹ I am truly apologetic to everyone studying Greek mythology if I've completely bungled this analogy.



The Cat Pack

Catriona Britton affectionately lists members of the “Cat Pack”—the 80s musicians who would have outshone Taylor Swift’s “squad” any day of the week

All great things come in a pack. You have a pack of cards. A pack of wolves. A pack of gum. A pack of tissues to wipe away your tears whilst watching videos on YouTube of packs of dogs viciously smothering a human being and licking them with so much love.

When it comes to entertainment, there have been three “Packs” coined by the media: two Rat Packs and the Brat Pack. The Rat Pack consisted of several entertainers who circulated around the Las Vegas casino scene. Humphrey Bogart was the original leader and frequently held hangouts at his home in the affluent Los Angeles suburb, Holmby Hills. Other members of the pack included Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland and Katharine Hepburn. After Bogart’s death in 1957, a new Rat Pack emerged. Although the media continued to call it thus, actual members of the “Pack” called it the Summit or the Clan. Members included Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Sammy Davis Jr.

The Brat Pack was the name given to a group of young actors who frequently appeared together in coming-of-age films in the 1980s. It was made up of cast members of the cult classics, *The Breakfast Club* and *St. Elmo’s Fire*, so included the likes of Emilio Estevez, Anthony Michael Hall, Rob Lowe, Andrew McCarthy, Demi Moore, Judd Nelson, Molly Ringwald and Ally Sheedy. David Blum, a writer from *New York*, coined the term after hanging out with some of the group at the Hard Rock Cafe. The story portrayed several of them negatively and many began to resent the

term and being grouped together. Several members had their careers derailed in the late 1980s by drug and alcohol problems, and others pointed to the article as the reason they had trouble securing prominent roles later in life.

Whilst the labelling of groups as “Packs” turned a little negative in the 1980s, I’d like to restore its reputation by imagining a bunch of 80s musicians who would have been an amazing group of influential people at the time. Not only are/were these individuals incredible musicians, they did and some still do immense work publicly advocating for social causes dear to their hearts. I can imagine that if they all cracked a cold one together back in the day, they surely would have been a force to be reckoned with. Without further ado, may I present you with four members of the “Cat Pack”.

Annie Lennox (from Eurythmics)

Annie Lennox is my only claim to fame. My Aunt was her best friend in primary school and I cannot think of a greater person to have been best friends with. I’m told she used to be incredibly talented playing the violin and rocked a cute pair of pigtails. Though in the 1970s and 1980s, Annie turned incredibly badass. She had well and truly shed her cutesy pigtails and dared to rock the androgynous look, becoming a fashion icon in the process. With her quintessentially boyish-cut peroxide blonde or flaming orange hair,

dramatic makeup and suited get-up, this Aberdeen lass captured audiences the world over.

As the singer in duo Eurythmics, there was no doubt Annie had a gift for music. Annie has a soulfulness to her voice that beggars belief for a white girl from Scotland. VH1 named her “The Greatest White Soul Singer Alive” and *Rolling Stone* sang the same tune, announcing her as one of The 100 Greatest Singers of All Time. Her songwriting in the 1980s was second-to-none, as she created such simplistically melodious and lyrical tunes and utilised the subtleties of synths in an age that seemed to like saturating the airwaves with every new synth effect that was created.

Annie’s talents extend far beyond the music score. She has always deeply cared about social and political issues and to this day remains a prominent activist for several causes. She’s tirelessly raised awareness for HIV/AIDS since the 1980s, she is a public supporter of Amnesty International and Greenpeace, a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for AIDS, a long-time supporter of LGBT rights (which in turn made her a gay icon), and an outspoken feminist and supporter of women’s rights.

Bono (from U2)

1980s Bono was a wonder to behold. The only time a mullet was sexy was when it graced Bono’s head. Looking like someone had got a balloon and rubbed it frantically on top of his head, Bono’s plumber-chic get-up with sleeveless vests and jeans

too tight for words sent hearts aflutter throughout the Irish plains and soon across the world. As lead singer of the monumentally successful U2, Bono had charismatic charm, stage presence and immense lyrical talent that helped the band gain admiration and soar the music charts.

If anything, Bono was a poet. He was able to create beauty in his lyrics about political turmoil. "Sunday Bloody Sunday" specifically describes the horror which arose out of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, where an incident known as Bloody Sunday saw British troops shoot and kill unarmed civil rights protesters and bystanders. The militaristic themes of the lyrics are mirrored in the song's drum-beat and metallic-sounding guitar, and the soft fiddle is somewhat reminiscent of Irish fiddle tunes.

Bono has been the force behind U2's performances at numerous charity projects and concerts, including Band Aid and Live Aid in the 1980s. Bono himself has become increasingly active in campaigning for third-world debt relief, raising awareness of the plight of Africa and the AIDS pandemic. He is passionate about eradicating poverty in Africa and so in 2002 he helped establish the organisation DATA (Debt, AIDS, Trade, Africa) with activist, attorney and journalist Bobby Shriver. Together they also established Product Red, a brand that is licensed to partner companies that create products with the Product Red logo. A percentage of the profits from the sale of these labelled products go to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.

Michael Jackson

The King of Pop was known for many things—the moonwalk, his squeals, his changing appearance, and claims of child sexual abuse. Michael Jackson was a moment in time. He was an outstanding en-

tertainer who kept the world breathless with his pop hits and slick moves for the majority of his short life. 1980s Michael brought us "Thriller" and a sick red jacket. 1980s Michael also brought us a Pepsi commercial that saw him set his hair on fire, causing second-degree burns to his scalp (he settled with Pepsi out of court and donated the US \$1.5 million to Brotman Medical Center).

Michael had a turbulent life, to say the least. However, music was his constant. Could the boy write a hit or what?! "Beat It", "Billie Jean", "The Way You Make Me Feel"—these 80s hits united the world in a way that arguably hadn't been seen since Beatlemania. He was a man of intrigue, everyone wanted a piece of him and many people wanted to be him. He spawned a lifetime of copycat street artists around the world, all tilting their fedoras, flashing their white socks and pulling on their silver-sequined gloves.

Michael was also deeply sensitive. He was a true humanitarian and philanthropist, and was recognised in the 2000 *Guinness World Records* as the entertainer who supported the most charities—39. Over the course of his life, he supported those suffering from drug and alcohol abuse, HIV/AIDS, poverty in Africa, and founded the Heal the World Foundation in 1992, which saw millions of dollars help children around the globe who were threatened by war, poverty and disease.

Elton John

Besides having one of the greatest "cameos" of all time in *Kingsman: The Golden Circle*, this rocket man is known as a stellar pop/rock musician, having been in the game for 50 years. With song-writing partner Bernie Taupin, Elton continues to churn out hit after hit. Perhaps his only market for new material today is the generation that grew

up alongside him. Nevertheless, he draws massive crowds of all ages to hear him play his classics, of which there are many.

80s Elton may not have produced the much-loved and timeless songs many of us know today, but a few slipped in there, such as "I Guess That's Why They Call It The Blues", "I'm Still Standing" and "Little Jeannie". Gone were the flamboyant costumes and wacky glasses. Instead Elton opted for a more sophisticated look: subtle boater hat and toned-down sunglasses. It's somewhat ironic how Taron Egerton, Eggsy in *Kingsman*, covers "I'm Still Standing" in the critically-acclaimed animation, *Sing*, where he plays a teenage gorilla with a dream of becoming a singer and not following in his father's criminal footsteps. What's more, Egerton has just confirmed he will be playing Elton in an upcoming R-rated musical about Elton's early career. If that's not evidence of the stars in alignment, then I don't know what to tell you.

Elton John's charitable ventures didn't really take off until the late 80s/early 90s, when several friends of his died of AIDS, including Freddie Mercury of Queen. He became closely associated with AIDS charities until he founded the Elton John AIDS Foundation in 1992, which funded programmes for HIV/AIDS prevention, services for those living with or at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, and worked towards the elimination of prejudice and discrimination against HIV/AIDS-affected individuals. He also hosts an annual Academy Awards party and the annual White Tie & Tiara Ball, which both raise money for the foundation. Elton was also a close friend of Diana, Princess of Wales. The £55 million profits of "Candle in the Wind", which he performed at her funeral, were donated to Diana's charities. ♦

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Snow

Angus and Julia Stone

ALBUM REVIEW BY HETAL RANCHHOD

After blessing eardrums with their smash hits “Snow” and “Chateau”, the folk-pop duo finally debuted their fourth studio album entitled *Snow*.

The record opens up with the sun-tinged “Snow,” showing the duo at their best as they play with the “call and response” vocal technique, which is laced throughout each track on the album, and goes to show that the duo are at their strongest when they play off their counterpart.

The mystical folk melodies mixed with the siblings’ dreamy vocals can be heard in every song on the record. Each song also blends in different genres of music with the hypnotic folk genre the Stones are known for. “Oakwood”, for instance, possesses more of a rock sound to it, with a tempo that almost sounds like it’s been influenced by a Fleetwood Mac song just before Angus’ vocals are incorporated.

Tracks like “Sleep Alone” and “Make It Out Alive” thematically make the lucid picture of different landscapes come to life, which the Stones never fail to create with their music. Although “Who Do You Think You Are” doesn’t feel as organic as the other tracks on the album, it’s an easy-going pop ballad which is accompanied by guitars and holds a hint of country influence to it. A perfect travelling song.

Thereafter, “Nothing Else” highlights the acoustic brilliance that is Angus and Julia Stone, as the brother-sister combo take us back to their roots with calming harmonies and lyrics that are like poetry to the ears. With reference to French poet Charles Baudelaire, the Stones exhibit their masterful songwriting on the track “Baudelaire” as they lyrically soar through the anthemic track.

The final track “Sylvester Stallone” nicely polishes off the album and perfectly encompasses graceful magic which has been present all album long. Even though “Snow” and “Chateau” are the leading singles on the album, the rest of *Snow* makes for wonderful listening, and is an album that was well worth the wait. ♦



Kingsman: The Golden Circle

FILM REVIEW BY DARIO DAVIDSON

Oh boy, another sequel. Here we go. For those of you unfamiliar with the premise of *Kingsman*, it’s essentially a British, *Mission-Impossible*-type dynamic. Spies doing spy things with ridiculous spy gadgets and plenty of good-looking women and fast cars. Sounds great, doesn’t it?

For the most part, this is the entirety of what goes on in this film. It picks up one year after the events of the first *Kingsman*, the world being saved and our protagonist Eggsy living it up as a young gentleman spy. *Obviously* a mad super-genius has plans for world domination (or something along those lines) and *obviously* it falls to Eggsy and a singing bald Scottish man to stop her. Presumably because the rest of the world’s counter-terrorism organisations were out to lunch (or something along those lines).

Unfortunately, this film suffers from a severe case of Sequel-Syndrome. It becomes trapped between trying to re-use jokes and sequences that made the first film a success, and desperately trying to assure audiences that it’s not attempting to do exactly that. Similar to *Guardians of the Galaxy: Vol. 2*, all of a sudden we are expected to believe in deep feelings from characters that until this point haven’t had any. This is the only real problem I have with this film.

To its credit, it is funny, and the Elton John cameo goes from amusing to downright incredible. At least the film is aware of its own ridiculousness, and fully embraces it. It’s fun, and has a pleasantly surprising take on the global War-On-Drugs narrative. Truthfully this movie is like waking up bruised and hungover. It really didn’t need to happen, but it was probably a lot of fun in the making. Similarly, this movie rates like eating cold fries off the coffee table when you wake up on an unknown couch: a solid 6/10. ♦

Editor’s Note: Among the tumultuous shitstorm of a year that has been 2017 stands an action blockbuster that uses John Denver’s “Take Me Home, Country Roads” as a musical motif bless the fuck UP



It

FILM REVIEW BY SAMANTHA MAHARAJ

The 1990 *It* mini-series, starring the incomparable Tim Curry, seems to have been something of a cultural milestone for most children. As a child who had routine nightmares about Mr. Bean and cried so much when she watched *Napoleon* (a film about a dog lost from home via rogue helium balloons) that she was forbidden from watching it again, I did not complete said milestone. That said, sitting in the theatre to watch Andy Muschietti’s adaptation of Stephen King’s much-loved horror story, I felt an unmistakable sense of wonder; what had been marketed to me as a case of straight up and down spook ‘em ups was in fact a tale of terror punctuated by humour, and built on a foundation of genuine heart.

In the town of Derry, a sinister presence lurks, surfacing every twenty-seven years to feast on the fear and flesh of the town’s young residents. Taking the form of Pennywise the Clown, the film’s very real stakes are set from its opening, as *It* lures young Georgie Denbrough violently into its fatal clutches. Children are fodder for *It*’s insatiable appetite—but they are also *It*’s foil. It is in the company of the members of the Losers Club that the film finds its heart, as each of the seven faces their fear and finds that, in order to stand a chance against an ancient evil asshole, they cannot stand alone. In contrast to their courage stands Bill Skarsgård’s terrifying turn as Pennywise, no easy undertaking given the iconic character carved out by Curry twenty-seven years earlier. His iteration is a drooling, bending, grinning creature, untempered by the pain *It* so callously reaps.

It is rare that what is ostensibly a horror film can be so moving and affirming—in an age of excessive gore, or cheap scares, *It* stands to show us that, like the members of the Losers Club, scares should not stand alone, but succeed far more when they are nestled within a tale that begets both tragedy and triumph. ♦



mother!

FILM REVIEW BY PATRICK YAM

After Darren Aronofsky released his latest work, critics and Average Joes alike raved online about *mother!* being amazing, while many more called it ridiculous. The acclaimed director had created yet another polarising, grisly piece of art that stunned audiences.

The plot seems basic enough for a horror film: a docile housewife (Jennifer Lawrence) and her writer husband (Javier Bardem) live an isolated life in their isolated home. Their idyll is disrupted by the arrival of an amicable doctor (Ed Harris) and his devious wife (Michelle Pfeiffer). What follows is anything but predictable. Don't be fooled, though—*mother!* isn't your typical horror movie, as it was unfortunately marketed as. Aronofsky's work is a disturbing Biblical allegory depicting the struggle between Mother Earth, Man, and God.

The story is best seen as a psychological analysis of religious foundation, and the way Earth has been brutalised throughout human history. At first, the film is a slow burn, ripe with tension, before exploding into shrill chaos. The final act is immensely disturbing and confusing. Constant close-ups of Lawrence's character give us little time to breathe or gather our thoughts. Worse, the ending is ambiguous. As the credits rolled, I was frustrated...which is why I think *mother!* is a great film overall. Aronofsky ensures that his audience never stops puzzling over what the hell is actually happening on screen. Everyone in the cinema (those who hadn't walked out) immediately started discussing with their friends or consulted Google.

It's definitely flawed, though. The pacing should have been tighter—the slow burn didn't need to be that slow. The extreme, ambitious lengths Aronofsky takes are either unique or pretentious, depending on who you ask. Nor is *mother!* entirely original; people were quick to draw similarities to *Rosemary's Baby*. Nevertheless, I loved it. With solid performances by all, especially Lawrence, this film will get you thinking and talking whether you like it or not. •



Waiting for Morning to Come Being As An Ocean

ALBUM REVIEW BY CHRIS WONG

Melodic hardcore band Being As An Ocean return with *Waiting for Morning to Come*, their first independently released album, and fourth album overall. *Waiting for Morning to Come* arrives after months of delay and conflict with their label, Equal Vision, ending up with guitarist Tyler Ross buying out the album's rights, and the band ultimately deciding to have it independently released.

While it attempts to seek some new directions, the album is clearly recognisable as a Being As An Ocean album, with tracks such as "Dissolve" and "Glow" showing off their signature melodic stylings mixed with Joel Quartuccio's heavy growls and drop-tuned guitars. The incorporation of samples and subtle trap drums on tracks such as "Black & Blue" and "Thorns" help showcase the band's newfound inspiration, but their hardcore origins make it difficult for the band to come up with anything interesting enough to be groundbreaking without straying too far from their roots.

The inclusion of several atmospheric piano interludes also appear meaningless with none of them appearing to go in any apparent direction, and their meandering leads to the album losing focus after a while. The track "eB tahT srewoP ehT" being completely backwards offers nothing to listeners either, and feels like a miscalculated artistic overreach.

Being As An Ocean appear to be focused on prioritising an experimental and artistic approach on this record, rather than focusing on developing a concise collection of songs, with only half of the 14 tracks on the record being fleshed out and fully developed, and the album may be better seen as a type of mood board or an experimental art project instead.

Where there appear to be glimmers of light on the record, the album is unfortunately weighed down by the excessive amount of needless interludes and production tricks plaguing it. Compared to their previous albums, *Waiting for Morning to Come* feels somewhat lacklustre and would probably have been better off being released in a shorter EP format instead. •



Half-Light Rostam

ALBUM REVIEW BY ANOUSHKA GIANOTTI

After departing Vampire Weekend in 2016 (and consequently shattering my life), Rostam has been putting his whole heart into every single one of his musical endeavours since.

With the release of his debut album, we are finally gifted with Rostam's personal narrative, embellished with soaring melodies and a dynamic approach to musical production. *Half-Light*—named for the light that exists during dusk or dawn—is a sprawling, intimate glimpse into the psyche of a rebellious artist with a penchant for experimental instrumentation (Rostam has cited The Beatles' *Eleanor Rigby* and Lou Reed's *Street Hassle* as examples). The sonic range within this album is vast, as the electronic "Hold You" (featuring the ethereal Angel Deradoorian) and the chaotic chimes of "Don't Let It Get To You" exist in extreme contrast to the tender crooning of "Gwan" and "Wood" (a beautiful ode to his Iranian heritage).

Half-Light is, amongst many things, a revelation, as it allows Rostam the chance to fully explore and develop his musical consciousness. The poignancy of "Half-Light" (featuring Kelly Zutrau) allows Rostam's vocals to sit at the forefront, accompanied by temperate and persistent keys and percussion.

From the warmth of "Wood" (said to have been recorded during a sunny day, with the studio door wide open), to the touching, one-minute ballad, "I Will See You Again" it is evident that this album has been meticulously constructed. Standout tracks also include the jittery, vibrant "Rudy" and the affectionate, triumphant "Bike Dream"—a track that ricochets around the heart and subsequently heals it: "*But I'm sure that you'll catch your breath / you'll sleep into the day / to wake up with sunlight across your room.*"

The acoustic reprisal of "Don't Let It Get To You" is an appropriate closing track that comes with a much-needed reminder about love and life: "*You're not gonna get it exactly how you want it / but that doesn't mean that you shouldn't try, no / and it's not gonna feel the way that you expected / but it's still all up to you.*" •



Comic Books to Blockbuster Films: A Cinematic Marvel

By Dario Davidson

What are all these comic book movies about? If you happen to like a good action film, but don't want to do an entire literature review just to sit and watch the latest Marvel movie, this guide may be of some assistance. If you're unfortunate enough to have a close friend who is forever bombarding you with history lectures and PowerPoint slides about the original Avengers line up, this guide may spare you from many more hours of pain, and possibly even give you the material to make some slides of your own.

Firstly, it is important to know about these two companies: Marvel Comics and DC comics. (DC stands for Detective Comics, so yes, they are called "Detective Comics Comics".) These two entities are completely separate to one another so there will never be any crossing over or appearances from DC characters in a Marvel film or vice-versa. They are like *Harry Potter* and the *Chronicles of Narnia*. Both stories about magic, whilst promoting the awesomeness of lions, but have no overlap. The crucial differences between the two are, of course, the characters. Both brands have their stories taking place on Earth, in a mixture of real and fictional locations. Both companies have created film franchises of interconnected movies starring their respective

characters. These are the MCU (Marvel Cinematic Universe) and the DCEU (Detective Comics Extended Universe). Anything not officially part of these franchises essentially doesn't count as far as these films are concerned. For example, *The Dark Knight* trilogy is not part of the DCEU. Heath Ledger as the Joker has nothing to do with *Suicide Squad* or *Batman v Superman*.

We'll start with the easy one: DC.

Batman, Superman, Wonder Woman, The Flash, Aquaman and the Green Lantern are all characters from DC who inhabit various fictional cities on Earth. Relatively speaking, the DCEU is quite self-contained. *Suicide Squad* was a large cast of villains from these stories. Their first big ensemble hero film is *Justice League*, coming out in November. If you are interested in the backstory for the *Justice League* movie, you will need to watch *Man of Steel*, followed by *Batman v Superman*. (However, the best movie from DCEU so far is almost certainly *Wonder Woman*.)

Now things get confusing.

Few people know of the plight of Marvel Studios. The truth is that the '90s were not kind to Marvel. While George Clooney's Batman and his rubber nipples were keeping DC alive and well,

Marvel had no such golden boy to save them. Of course, there was the surprisingly popular *Spider-Man* trilogy, starring Tobey Maguire and a lot of crying. But sadly, Marvel had sold their most marketable character some time before to none other than Sony. That's right, your friendly neighbourhood *Spider-Man* has been property of the tech giants since 1993. It was only very, very recently, (circa 2015) that Marvel "negotiated" (presumably by offering a number followed by several dozen zeroes) with Sony in order to let *Spider-Man* join the MCU. You may have seen him in *Captain America: Civil War*. For those of you wondering, the first commercially successful film to be released under the official banner of Marvel Studios was actually *Blade* in 1998.

So, the mid-2000s came and went. Sony cashed in big off *Spider-Man*, Christopher Nolan gave birth to arguably the best comic book films of all time with his *Dark Knight* trilogy ("Why so serious?" and so on). DC was doing well. Marvel tried to get off the ground with a slew of sub-par movies. *Blade 2* and *3*, plus a nightmarishly bad *Daredevil* movie (anybody care to recall a bald Colin Farrell throwing paper clips at people? Good. Me neither), and the less we speak of Nicolas Cage's *Ghost Rider*,

the better.

2007 was the peak of Marvel's problems. *Batman Begins* had pulled in plenty of fans for the new, dark adaptation of *Batman*; Heath Ledger was about to portray the Joker in what would become the highest grossing superhero film of all time. What Marvel needed... was a hero. Enter Jon Favreau and some truly inspired casting. Jon Favreau—sometimes known as the B-grade Vince Vaughn, or the dad figure from *Elf* and *Zathura*. Favreau came on board to direct Marvel's last chance at making the big time. He bet it all on Robert Downey Jr. to play Tony Stark, a.k.a *Iron Man*. He won. As of opening weekend 2008 on April 29th, Marvel very much had its foot in the door, and the MCU was born.

The cast of the *Avengers* films, including Iron Man, Captain America, Thor, The Hulk, Hawkeye and Black Widow, are all members of the MCU. Many of the more popular characters have their own films, but the overall story arc is about the giant purple space-tyrant called Thanos, and his pursuit of the infinity stones. (These are magic stones that make the nasty, bad man even worse than he already is.) The only films that are directly relevant to this plot are *Captain America 1*, *Avengers*, *Guardians of the Galaxy*, *Thor 2* and the *Avengers 2*. The rest of them are entertaining, but don't affect the overall story aside from some minor characters coming and going. So, with *Thor 3* coming out in November (directed by our very own Taika Waititi, the geeky vampire from *What We Do In The Shadows*), the next major installment to the MCU is *Avengers: Infinity War*, set for release sometime next year.

Also from Marvel, but not part of the MCU are all 9 *X-Men* movies. *X-Men* is actually owned by Fox, but the films somehow remain a strong franchise of very good movies, thanks to Bryan Singer's

directing and a very talented cast. Seeing as both franchises revolve around essentially the same catalogue of heroes, this allows both the *X-Men* films and the *Avengers 2* to have their own version of Quicksilver (the really fast guy with silver hair) in different movies. It should be noted that in the comics, Deadpool is a semi-regular character around the *X-Men*, but seeing as the *X-Men* mutant Deadpool encountered in his movie wasn't from the original *X-Men* films, it's likely that Deadpool won't be part of the ongoing *X-Men* franchise.

So, you ask yourself... Which comic book movies are good for me? What will I enjoy? Do I want quantity, quality, a strong social commentary? Sci-Fi? Or some sweet roundhouse kicks? Without diving back decades, I'll stick to the three franchises covered in this article.

DCEU. A series of films that ask questions of people as a species. If Superman really existed, and tomorrow he lifted a jumbo jet over his head, how long until someone tried to arrest him, or attack him, or more likely still, sue him? The DCEU explores the combination of fear and awe that people have of aliens and the unknown. Batman in these films is portrayed as a sort of violent lunatic who fatally injures people he deems to be human garbage. Instead of the revered character he is usually seen as, in the real world a huge, homicidal, middle-aged man in a mask would be feared instead of respected. *Wonder Woman* also makes us think of the uniquely human invention that is warfare, and the scars it leaves on our planet and in our collective memories.

MCU. Stories about individuals learning to be heroes. These are the motivational posters of movies. These characters are almost all extremely talented, strong and intelligent, but crucially flawed in some way. Each character represents a personality flaw that they must confront in order to save the

day. Very classic stuff. Easily the most humorous series of superhero films out there. Strong points include the amazing casting, the soundtracks, and the visual effects teams at Marvel Studios. It should also be noted that Mr. Stan Lee, the Editor-in-Chief of Marvel comics for some 40 odd years, created Iron Man, Spider-Man, The Hulk, Doctor Strange, Professor X, Wolverine, Magneto and Groot. Yep, one guy. He also has a cameo in most Marvel films as an old white guy dropping a one-liner.

X-Men. At its core, *X-Men* is a story about racism. People who are born different, are feared, hated, and made outcasts. The dual narrative of a young Jewish boy escaping the Nazis' clutches in the Second World War and going on to become a powerful mutant leader, alongside Wolverine's ongoing struggle to find inner peace despite being made into an engine of war, brings to mind the sort of brainwashing and conditioning that governments and independent militaries have subjected tens of thousands of people to over the centuries. The *X-Men* films also ask us to look at ourselves as a species, and to decide if we are really capable of tolerance and compassion.

To conclude, I'll recommend my top three superhero films of the past five years, each for varying reasons. *Deadpool*: for its excellent, simple plot, ridiculously funny dialogue, and the constant fourth-wall breaks. *Batman v Superman*: for its ambition and politically-driven storyline, taking inspiration directly from the most successful *Batman* comic of all time, *The Dark Knight Returns*. *X-Men: Days of Future Past*: for a host of great actors, time travel, Peter Dinklage; this film has it all. More superhero films need to be set in the 70s.

Hopefully this has been helpful, or informative, or at least reassured you that someone out there is procrastinating their assignments more severely than you are. ♦

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“Refugees are the most resilient people in the world – when they are pushed down, they get back up.”

So declared Rez Gardi, a University of Auckland Law alumnus whose refugee-background identity and experiences are the foundation to her commitment to help others from refugee backgrounds.

Rez was one of four panelists addressing 40 secondary students from refugee backgrounds who attend James Cook and Kelston Girls' high schools. Combined, the cohort represented around 14 different countries of origin, including Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and Palestine.

The panel discussion formed part of an Equity Office initiative, which aimed to introduce the school students to University life and emphasise the University's commitment to being safe, inclusive and equitable.

The panel was made up of past and present University students from refugee backgrounds: Rez Gardi, Asma Shah from the Ministry of Education, Nosia Fogogo, who is near to finishing her law degree and Yobithan Rajaratnam, who is currently studying toward a Bachelor of Science.

Director of Student Equity Terry O'Neill, who facilitated the panel discussion, acknowledged the vital contributions made by refugee background students, to and beyond the University.

“The University is an enormously diverse

place, and refugees add to this richness” he said. Terry highlighted the range of resources available to students from refugee backgrounds at the University, including the Undergraduate Targeted Admission Schemes (UTAS), foundation courses and scholarships.

In addition to describing their own experiences before and after arriving in New Zealand, the panellists discussed the term “refugee” and its impact on their sense of identity. For Yobithan the word is fundamental to who he is.

“[The refugee] experience is important. It helps shape you and gives you the power to be yourself. So it's important to acknowledge your experience.”

The visiting students were particularly keen to hear about how the panelists navigated the often-challenging transition from high school to tertiary education.

“It's a new type of responsibility,” Rez told them. “Learning how to study, working out the style that works best for you, figuring out what papers to take. It's important to ask questions and ask for help.”

Yobithan also encouraged the students to check out the new Students from Refugee Background (SRB) club.

In addition to a City Campus tour, students

also heard a presentation by acclaimed University of Auckland academic Associate Professor Jay Marlowe. Jay's research explores how students from refugee backgrounds use social media to retain relationships across the world, enabling them to simultaneously stay connected to their friends and family in their country of origin and build a community in their new country.

Pushpa Raghavan, Dean of International/Refugee Background students at Kelston Girls' College says that the familiarisation event is invaluable for her students.

“It boosts their self-esteem and makes them feel like the University of Auckland is a place they can go to. Seeing the panelists is a big inspiration. The students feel ‘They're like me, they've gone through experiences like me, so I can do it too’. Bringing them into the University environment, showing them how they will be supported, and empowering them to have that dream is a big thing.”

As the afternoon drew to a close, students were invited to write down what they learnt during their time on campus. Many wrote about feeling proud of being a refugee. “It's a wonderful thing that doesn't hold me back” said one. Others wrote that they learnt about “how to get the information from the University to make a plan and get my dream”. ♦

AUSA October Online Referenda

Submissions for referenda questions are now being accepted! Have your submissions voted on by the student body, by emailing your referenda question, with your full name and student ID number, to the Returning Officer, at seo@ausa.org.nz. Be sure to get in there before Friday 6th October 4pm, when submissions close!

What do referenda questions look like, you may ask? They can be absolutely anything, as long as they are unbiased, not leading, clear and

concise. Here are some examples to get you started:

- Should AUSA lobby for an increase in funding for University Clubs?
- Should AUSA support a change of government at the 2017 General Election?

KEY DATES

Friday 6 October: Referendum question submissions close at 4pm

Tuesday 10 October: Final referendum questions released

TBC: Student Forum in the Quad to discuss referendum questions (free BBQ) at 1pm

Tuesday 24 October: Voting commences at 9am

Friday 27 October: Voting closes at 4pm

TL;DR Flex your democratic muscles and submit referenda questions. ♦

Amateur Hour



With
Jordan Margetts

Ummm, errr, column

Each week Jordan, disgraced former-editor-in-chief, tries to impart political wisdom but mainly just cries in the shower.

“...malicious, malignant, and vicious in the extreme, err err, of the nature which they were doing before the election without me being there...”

Such were the hyper articulate words of the senescent baby boomer and so-called kingmaker Winston Peters (27/9). The kind of utterance that would have sent his near namesake Churchill into a paroxysm of jealous insecurity and bitterness. Magniloquent, miasmatic, and vitriolic in the extreme, umm umm, of the nature which the press tends to do in their terrible online articles about him... This isn't *Craccum's* shit version of the now ubiquitous “what-will-Winny-do” op-ed.¹ Because (a) give it a week and a half and it'll be like basically otiose, and (b) because it's getting boring.

What I'd rather focus on is the remarkable stupidity of the NZ political-game. A major critique of US political news-type coverage is that it's been commodified and reality-TV-ified and sportified—or whatever other analogy you want for basically transformed into a type of entertainment system no different from anything else on TV. This is pretty true; the fever-pitch hysteria of the New York-based left-wing press in the US operates at the same shrill tone whether it's Trump making an awkward speech to boy scouts, or beaconing a nuclear apocalypse. At a certain point it's all white noise.

But surely, poisonous for the body politic or not, the politics-as-national-sport thing has got to be better than the drivel we saw over the weekend. Sitting in my flat, surrounded by young professionals, cans of Double Brown (you think they could afford better booze), and a general sense of *once-again-we-won't-get-what-we-want*,

¹ His backing down from hating Steven “Humpty Dumpty” Joyce sort of suggests he's edging towards the Nats?

the best moments of the evening came from TV3 coverage. Duncan Garner, unable to achieve journalistic turgidity, settled for just being kind of mean to various people: “You did very badly, how does it feel?” His troop of reporters were even better; we got extensive coverage of the canapés and drink options available at the various party parties, we got to see the outside of Jacinda's (Jacinta, as she was known in the flat) house. I think though the two best moments were (1) when an intrepid TV3 reporter found a flock of (seemingly unsupervised) girls (and one boy, as she noted herself) outside Jacinta's home, they were like selling biscuits or something, her *I swear to fucking god* only question was “Did you see what Jacinta was wearing?” *Comeon!* And (2) this interaction, at the tail end of the coverage:

Patty Gower: “Peters may be the kingmaker, but he's no longer the king of the North.”

Duncan Garner: “Amazing analysis, thanks.”
Don't even get me started on the endless moronic repetition of the phrase “moral obligation”. Apparently if you get the most votes, but *not* enough to form a government, other parties are *morally obligated* to give you their seats because that's how democracy works under MMP, cheers TV3/Stuff.

The politicians aren't much better; Peters's tirade against the press for asking him questions (like, err, buddy, who are you going to make our PM?) made Trump look articulate.² The Nats' awkward campaign to convince us they won is embarrassing and obnoxious; as is the Green Par-

² Settle down NZFY, I'm not saying he's Trump; I'm just saying that compared to Trump he's kind of bumbling and inarticulate when trying to villainise the press. Otherwise he's a stand-up bloke with cool suits and a great haircut (I enjoyed his anti-Australian rek at the conference; terrible place, terrible people, thank god we have a moat).

ty's massive turn around etc.³

I think I've made my point—and that point is, media coverage in NZ is total crap. They waste column inches on inarticulate partisan ranting. Unlike *Craccum*. It's scary when Mike Hosking is one of our best commentators on election night. And you know why, it's our fault, we keep reading the shit.

One of the TV3 panelists said TOP let ideas get in the way. Doesn't that make a good tagline for NZ?

“New Zealand, we don't let ideas get in the way”.

Ummm ummm, err. Fin.⁴ ♦

³ At least these examples make a sort of practical sense, unlike the drivel from our third estate.

⁴ Sent the opening few paragraphs of this column to a friend, and he very rapidly pointed out that there's actually no shortage of complaints against the quality, quantity, etc., of NZ political coverage and (he asks) isn't the best fix just to start doing good political-type writing rather than complaining incessantly? Well he's obviously right and if I had any views to offer I'd sit down for six hours and hammer out a smart and workable opinion piece that goes through Winston's relationships with the two major parties (and the Greens) and the major figures in those parties. And I'd note that it's all based on, like, personal maximisation thinking, because policy-wise he isn't too far from Labour or really the Greens, but in terms of base-voters etc., he leans more closely to the Nats, and I'd probably eventually conclude I still don't know and he can either be the cantankerous old thorn-in-the-paw of the new trendy Labour/Greens coalition (whose own base voters are hardly fans) or like the renegade contrarian of a final term National government. N.B. all that is ripped off this same Facebook friend. But here's my point: the reason this column is only contributing to the problem and not fixing it is because I am lazy/unskilled etc., and it's easier to be a critic than a producer, and because the same people will read this either way, so who really cares. But I have an excuse: I'm underpaid (not paid) and cynical and have really quite seriously run out of ideas for column writing, but why does this apply to NZ journalism at large? I suspect it has something to do with the fact that the literate-educated NZ media consumer is currently sated by US output, and even if the Auckland Review of Books or something suddenly existed, they'd still read NYr/NYRB etc. etc. first and so why bother, let's just get clicks? I'm not sure, but things are dire.



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By Popular
Demand



With
Michael Clark

Ode to *Blade Runner*: How We Got over the Crisis of Conscience

*Each week Michael, long-time writer and all-round teddy bear,
tries to persuade you to take pop culture seriously.*

A thought crossed my mind while I was watching *Blade Runner* again in cautiously optimistic anticipation for 2049—is it still a problem that Deckard is a replicant or not? Do we still care?

The human experience is short and terrifying. The whole idea of a soul or some other mythical element that separates us from the animals has been largely debunked in science, and it has been proven that certain animals, depending on their cognitive capacity, have the same level of “consciousness” as humans. After adjusting to the notation that we are not sacred beings, we’ve been pretty comfortable with the theory that “I think, therefore I am” as the deciding factor of consciousness: if you think you exist, then you do exist. This doesn’t detract from how we experience things as humans, but makes us rethink what it means to be human.

Most of us have got over our crisis of consciousness that was topical in yesteryear’s sci-fi films. We used to find ourselves confronting our robot anxieties in the safe space of *Battlestar Galactica*, *Star Trek*, *Bicentennial Man*, *iRobot*, and anything by Isaac Asimov. Now we’re generally accepting that if robots, AI, cyborgs, and other animals are able to feel, they are capable of having that desirable thing called sentience. In recent media like *Westworld*, *Humans*, *Black Mirror*, and *Fallout 4*, villainy is placed specifically on those who don’t treat their mechanical compatriots in the same regards as humans. We now see the void of robot rights as a cruel and outdated practice, perhaps going hand in hand with the animal rights movement that has recently gained more traction.

The shift in how we understand sentience can be put down to the way we see humans, non-hu-

man animals, and technology. Since the 1600s, there has been a popular notion that animals work like machines. As René Descartes wrote, not only “do the beasts have less reason than men, but they have no reason at all” (1637). He placed machines and animals—*animal-machine* as he called it—in the same category as things that cannot reason, in opposition to humans that could. That false dichotomy ended a few centuries later when we started to explain the functionality of our bodies as if they were machines.

Even more recently, we have started to conceptualise the mind as if it were a highly-advanced computer. This metaphor explains the functions of the brain as components of a computer—each part of a computer translates to a different part of the brain and that act of “thinking” equates to “computation” (see David Marr, Hilary Putnam, and Georges Rey on the topic). While this metaphor is a vast generalisation of the way the brain works, and is argued against by many scholars, it one-ups previous metaphors for the brain and breaks down the *animal-machine*/human dichotomy. The mind as computer metaphor doesn’t allow the concept of a soul or account for a special component that separates us from the animals.

Many have come to believe this analogy of the mind because of this factor, which is telling to the current zeitgeist. The way we approach the concept of the human has changed. No longer do we see humans as this special creature that has divinity over all other things, but as a computer or machine. For many of us we have come to realise there is nothing that really separates us from non-human animals or robots.

Another change that has occurred in recent

years is our philosophy of technology. Not only do we relate our own existence as if it were a function of a machine, we have started seeing the functions of machines as existential. We have been raised by robot Tamagotchis, empathised with digital creatures like *Pokémon*, put faces on rumbas, and cared for algorithms. We still generally think in the ancient mindset that forms of technology are only tools, but the gap is slowly closing. Heideggerian theory has started to sink in where technology is seen not as a separate item, but a part of ourselves which then becomes imbued with our personality. Our cars, phones, and computers are ours in the sense that we operate through them. We “drive to the shops” as if driving is a function of the body. Here the technology that we use is still considered a tool, but we have started to imbue emotional resonance into the objects that we use. It is a long way to go before we get out of the mindset that technologies are our ethical slaves, and consumerism will further hinder this progression. But for the most part, we are getting more tolerant with machine-human interactions as more of our experiences are affected by the algorithms around us.

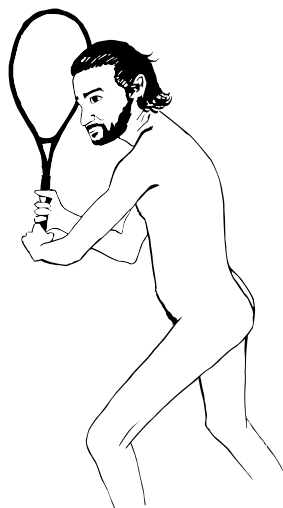
We know that most of our appliances aren’t smart enough to adapt to and manipulate environments, but when the day comes that we turn on the first AI and it starts to judge and be an agent of morals, I think it will be okay. I think we are big enough to take the fact that we are not sacred beings and in fact, share an advanced self-referential experience with other thinking beings. I really don’t care if Deckard is a replicant or not. That debate is long over. It’s how Deckard exists that counts. ♦

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How to Talk About Sport



*With
Mark Fullerton*

Sporty Bites

Each week Mark, disgraced former-editor-in-chief, tries desperately to eat more brown sugar pancake from Mr Zhou's Dumplings on Mt Eden Rd, but his little stomach can only handle so much!

Dylan Cleaver is a *NZ Herald* sports journalist and I respect him very much.¹ He doesn't write too often, however. Aside from a lengthy and very entertaining piece following the Alternative Commentary Collective throughout the Lions Tour, he writes about one piece a week, but that one piece is worth about seven Gregor Paul pieces of utter SHITE.

What sets Cleaver's writing apart from any other sportswriter is the fact that when he writes he has a purpose, unlike Phil Gifford² or Liam Napier³ or Gregor Paul⁴ or Marc Hinton⁵ or Wynne Gray⁶. That is a skill that I respect because it is a skill that I do not have, as evidenced by approx. my last sixteen columns, and as evidenced by this upcoming passage of writing.

Black Ferns Not As Blacklisted As Everyone Thought

While it's darn-tootin' obvious that women's sport is still lightyears behind men's in terms of funding and coverage and pretty much every facet of being, the fact that they still haven't had a victory parade isn't entirely the fault of a negligent NZ Rugby. Because the players aren't on professional contracts, NZ Rugby doesn't really have any control over them post-tournament, so the women took advantage of a free return flight to Europe and went travelling on their own. So while it is entirely the fault of NZ Rugby for not having them on professional contracts, no one wants to hold a parade with a half-squad.⁷

Fuck The All Blacks

There's no rule preventing the All Blacks from running out a second-string team in the not-important games and, considering they already have one hand on the Rugby Championship already, and Argentina is a long way away, it seems fair that they don't want their top player to haul-ass all around the Southern Hemisphere. But how fucking insulting is it, when they've routinely spanked South Africa and Australia over the last five years of RC's, that they still choose to view Argentina as a non-contest. There is always a need to blood new players, but do that on the end-of-year tour when there is literally nothing at stake. Until then, the All Blacks will continue to exude an arrogance that's in direct contrast to their team mantra "no dickheads". I hope they lose (lost) and then lose against South Africa the

week after because fuck 'em.

Something else that Dylan Cleaver does is finish his columns by recommending other articles to read, and they are consistent bangers. Being in print and unable to provide easily clickable hyperlinks, I can only describe them and hope that you choose to read them yourself.⁸

"Racing the Storm: The Story of the Mobile Bay Sailing Disaster" — *Smithsonian Mag*

A banger of an article about a sailing regatta turned tragedy when a freak storm ripped through Mobile Bay on the Gulf of Mexico, destroying boats and rendering rescue almost impossible. All the weather technology in the world was no match for high winds, rain, and astonishing human error.

"The Fallout From Sportswriting's Filthiest Fuck-Up" — *Deadspin*

If I were to write a paragraph along the lines of "Dixon sucks donkey dicks and doesn't wipe the shit off before practice. We like to keep him at the sweeper position so his sperm breath will stop people from penetrating to the goal," no one would mind because you are reading *Craccum*, not a conservative small-town newspaper and I am not writing about a 15-year-old boy. But someone did that once, as a joke, and it got past the editor. The fallout was swift and brutal, and has to be read to be believed. ♦

1 Another sports journalist I respect is Steve Deane from Newsroom, partially because he is very entertaining, partially because he almost singlehandedly writes the entire Sportsroom section by himself, partially because he has a very cool column name (Tuesday Morning Quarterback, a name almost-but-not-quite as good as Dylan Cleaver's Midweek Fixture), but also because he claims to have the highest number of sportswriting nominations without a win, a claim to which this writer, with his seven Student Press Award nominations and four Student Press Award Runners-Up, can relate intimately.

2 Who seems to compare EVERYTHING to a game played in 1973, or a game he played in 1955, but oddly never to that time I sold him a newspaper at Paper Plus Royal Oak.

3 Who does have the unenviable job of writing play-by-play accounts of the games that NZME can't put up highlights of because SKY are a bunch of fucking cunts. NO FREE DRINKS.

4 I have made my feelings about Gregor Paul very clear because he writes about NOTHING, and yet I still keep going back.

5 Who got told off by Kane Hames for saying Kane Hames couldn't scrum, and was vindicated 72 hours later when Kane Hames was blasted all over the park by a pathetic Springboks pack.

6 Who has a street named after him in Stonefields lol

7 They did, however, get a little presentation of sorts at half-time of the All Blacks/Springboks game, alongside the "kick-a-ball-in-a-ute-to-win-a-ute" competition.

8 Everyone copied my footnotes so now I'm copying Jordan's recommendations." (*"Columns Editor's Note: Pretty sure Jordan also did footnotes first back in 2k15, so really you're nothing but a greasy poser."*)

Quarter-Life Crisis



With
Caitlin Abley

Please Look After This Columnist Thank You

Each week Caitlin, disgraced former-editor-in-chief, tackles an item from her list of Twenty Things To Do In Your Twenties and tries to pass it off as journalism.

I recently fell into a clickbait trap and purchased a copy of *The Little Book of Hygge*—a Danish word that’s hard to translate, but means something like comfort, cosiness, warmth, togetherness. The book’s author, Meik Wiking, describes *hygge* as:

“the feeling you get when you are cuddled up on a sofa with a loved one, in warm knitted socks, in front of the fire, when it is dark, cold and stormy outside. It’s that feeling when you are sharing good, comfort food with your closest friends, by candle light and exchanging easy conversation. It is those cold, crisp blue sky mornings when the light through your window is just right.”

Turns out, I’ve been *en hygger* my whole life—an eternal creature of comfort. I bring an extra pair of fluffy socks along to the cinema, I wear comically large mum-undies (#controlthegunt), and I frequently bring four wheatbags to bed, much to the alarm of the man who occasionally has to sleep next to a five-foot-four furnace.

This love of comfort, this thirst for *hygge* extends to the books I read and the movies I watch. Last week, I found out the live-action *Paddington* had been added to Netflix, and I have since watched it three times (crying each and every time when it gets to the part when he’s waiting at the train station to find a home and the fuck-

ing note around his neck from his Aunt Lucy says “Please Look After This Bear Thank You” are you FUCKING KIDDING ME I feel that in my very SOUL SOMEONE LOOK AFTER THAT GODDAMN BEAUTIFUL BEAR). Give me a cosy tale about a bear from Dark-est Peru, or a cosy stoner comedy featuring the original dad-bod-god Seth Rogen (you *know* he would big spoon the *shit* outta you), or the utter joy that is *Mamma Mia!* any day of the week. I crave comfort food on film. I am trash, and me oh my I have enjoyed it yes boi.

Recently, my dad pointed out that I was exhibiting old lady habits at the age of 23, and that I needed to watch out before my youth entirely faded away. This is fair. I do use hand cream before I go to bed. Things have gone a little too far. So this week my challenge was to:

Step outside of your comfort zone.

I thought back to the last time I was truly uncomfortable, and honestly, it was the day I and three equally dumbass friends decided we would do a back-to-back double feature of *Batman v Superman* and the agonising 1990s film *Kids*. I ate half a Sal’s pizza in between and vomited when I got home, partly from cheese, but mostly from the force required to unclench my anxious stomach muscles. This time, naturally, I would follow suit with a double feature of Darren Aronofsky’s intense new film *mother!* and Jim Hosking’s night-

mare-on-tape *The Greasy Strangler*, punctuated by some very cheap and very fried food from Mr Zhou’s Dumplings in Mt Eden. I’ve written this prelude before going into the films. What follows is my reaction.

12.03am. I HATE MY FUCKING LIFE WILL I EVER BE CLEAN WHEN I WOKE UP YESTERDAY MORNING I REALLY DIDN’T THINK THAT I WOULD SEE BILL WEASLEY GOUGE A GUY IN THE SPINE WITH A DOOR HANDLE OR A DUDE EATING A DEEP FRIED EYEBALL OR A BABY’S NECK SNAPPING AND SAID BABY BEING EATEN BY A CRAZED MOB OR A SAGGY OLD MAN COVERED IN LARD WITH A HUGE PROSTHETIC PENIS BEING SCRUBBED CLEAN BY AN AUTOMATIC CAR WASH WHY GOD DID I EAT SO MUCH CHINESE FOOD I AM SO THIRSTY SOMEONE SEND HELP.

12.41am. I’ve had a shower, flossed three times, briefly considered a cleansing spew, decided to go with some light stretches instead. I get that I just watched “cinema” but really, what is the fucking point? My feet were cold, my buttocks were clenched, my brow was sweaty, and I broke out in a vigorous stress rash on my neck. If anyone needs me I’ll be watching a cheerful little bear with a tasty marmalade sandwich. ♦



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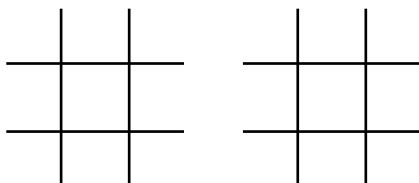
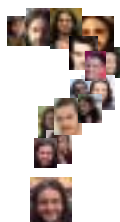


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BABY'S BOTTOM SUDOKU

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		2	9					7
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ROCK SOLID SUDOKU

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		5	9		8	4		
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Answers: 1. Mexican 2. Drake 3. Ohakune 4. Google 5. Commerce 6. Rocket Man 7. An instrument—an early form of trombone 8. Lost 9. Types of lightning—Cloud to Ground, Cloud to Cloud and Intra Cloud 10. Aotearoa Legalise Cannabis: 0.3% to 0.2%. By comparison, ACT only reached 0.5%.

KISSES AND QUIZZES

EASY (ONE POINT)

1. What type of food would you get at Zambrero?
2. Who is coming to New Zealand as part of his "Boy Meets World Tour"?
3. Where in New Zealand would you find a giant carrot?

MEDIUM (TWO POINTS)

4. Which internet giant recently celebrated its 19th birthday?
5. What degree did I complete if I wear an orange hood at graduation?
6. What nickname has been bestowed upon Kim Jong Un?
7. Is a sackbut an instrument, a Victorian spinning top or a sailing manoeuvre?

HARD (THREE POINTS)

8. Eko, Sawyer and Kate Austen were characters on which television show?
9. What are CG, CC and IC in relation to weather?
10. Who polled higher in the election: Aotearoa Legalise Cannabis or Conservative?

HERALD'S HEROES

Every week we'll trawl the comments section of the NZ Herald Facebook page to find the hilarious, the repulsive, and the outright absurd.



In a world with far too many potential babies for one family on the horizon, Anna keeps it real.

the people to blame.

EDITORS

Catriona Britton & Samantha Gianotti
editor@craccum.co.nz

SUBEDITOR

Hannah Bergin

DESIGNER

Nick Withers

SECTION EDITORS

News Eloise Sims **Community** Rebecca Hallas **Lifestyle**
Nikki Addison & Grace Hood-Edwards **Features** Ginny
Woo **Arts & Culture** Anoushka Maharaj **Columns**
Caitlin Abley **Games** Mark Fullerton **Visual Arts** Isobel
Gledhill

WRITERS

Caitlin Abley, Nikki Addison, Ulysse Bellier, Moss
Bioletti, Catriona Britton, Michael Calderwood, Mark
Casson, Michael Clark, Dario Davidson, Jarrod Free-
land, Mark Fullerton, Samantha Gianotti, Rebecca Hal-
las, Grace Hood-Edwards, Belle Hullon, Sarah Kolver,
Laura Kvigstad, Amelia Langford, Anoushka Maharaj,
Jordan Margetts, Heidi North-Bailey, Hetal Ranchhod,
Eloise Sims, Aditya Tejas, Chris Wong, Garling Wu,
Patrick Yam

COVER ARTIST

Young Kim

ILLUSTRATORS

Mark Fullerton, Isobel Gledhill, Josh Hart, Young Kim,
Nathan Wood, Julia Zhu

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EDITORIAL OFFICE

4 Alfred Street,
Private Bag 92019,
Auckland

ADVERTISING

Aaron Haugh
advertising@ausa.org.nz

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