

CRACCUM

AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT MAGAZINE SINCE 1927

ONLINE



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our
Site



CLOCK STRIKES TWELVE:
PAY UP DAWN!

by Irene Parsaei

HARRY'S BI-WEEKLY
SPORTS REGAP!

by Harry Sutton

SHOULD AI BE USED IN
UNIVERSITIES FOR TEACHING?

by UoA Students



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STUDENT UNION
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34 PRINCES STREET



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We need your help!

We need your help to reach
69% contribution for Issue 3!



THANK YOU!

Well done everyone! We smashed our goal for Issue 2!

WWW.CRACCUM.CO.NZ

OUR NEW WEBSITE. WHAT IT IS? AND WHAT'S ITS ABOUT?



HARRY SUTTON (EDITOR-IN-CHIEF) & LEE LI (DIGITAL MANAGER)



Hello again! We are so glad to see you managed to survive the first two weeks of the university year. Whether you managed to get your hands on the Alfred Street party tickets or got caught in Bar 101 as a third year during O-week, it's good to see you back reading your student magazine! Just wanted to say a personal thank you to everyone who managed to find our stall during the Clubs Expo, it was so great to meet you all face-to-face and see just how many are interested in contributing this year. We need all the contributors we can get, so make sure to send us articles to go in the next issue, which is all about Sex and Drugs, and I want to see those crazy, CRAZY story ideas and articles for that!

Anyway, getting onto this week's issue. The theme is "online" and is going to be our first step and introduction to you all, our brand-new website! It's taken a lot of time and hard work behind the scenes. After all of this, we now have a brand-new website for us to take into the future. It's simply, craccum.co.nz. Easy to find, easy to navigate, and easy to use.

Don't worry, the printed issues are still the priority, but we thought this year we needed to start to make the move to taking Craccum beyond just paper in the stands and take it to the internet. And it's about time, we're in

the year 2025! With this brand-new website, we can post stories not just fortnightly like the printed issues, but weekly and even daily.

This is a new chapter in Craccum's 98-year legacy. In this ever-evolving media world, legacy publications like ours face challenges but these very challenges also open up huge oppor-



tunities. We must adapt and embrace them—to keep you informed with what matters and ensure Craccum's legacy stays alive.

Your voice matters.

With our new website, we will be able to do more than just publish articles. Now, we can showcase videos, music, photo albums, and other forms of digital media. Craccum is a place for students to shine—whether it's a short film, a dance video, or even just a small Uni assignment, we want to feature your work. Just send it to Lee, the Digital manager at digitalmanager@craccum.co.nz.

Most importantly, this platform enables us to bring you timely, urgent updates. Our News Co-Editors are out at AUSA Student Council meetings, investigating key student issues and campus developments, so you know exactly what's being discussed and what's at stake. We aim to hold AUSA and the University accountable, and now, we are able to send you updates directly to your phone.

2025 opens a new era for Craccum, full of both challenges and opportunities. We're ready for whatever comes next, and we cannot wait to show you guys what we have been working on.

Your Voice. Your Power. Your Craccum.

With Love,

Harry & Lee

WHAKARONGO MAI

SHOULD AI BE USED IN UNIVERSITIES FOR TEACHING?

WHAT DO UOA STUDENTS THINK?



IRENE PARSAEI & ANONYMOUS CONTRIBUTORS

On February 28th, The New Zealand Herald published an article about the University's decision to introduce AI teachers in a digital marketing course, MKTG304. This course has no formal lectures, or lecture slides, and students must instead rely on three

AI 'tutors' in order to complete the course: Project Sofia (A Digital AI Avatar), a customized version of ChatGPT, and Google's NotebookLM.

Although the University defended the decision and stated that there will be real human staff teaching at tutorials,

many students within the course itself were not happy, and took to Reddit to share their thoughts.

Will other courses be next? And if so, what do UOA students think about AI being used for teaching? Students were invited to share their opinions.

Grace, Communications

It's just funny to me that the University, and even some of the teaching staff would defend the decision to use AI, because... do they realize that their jobs are on the line? Do they know they have thirty minutes?

Authors Note: The last sentence is a Tik Tok reference for anyone who isn't chronically online, and miraculously doesn't have Tik Tok brain rot.



James, Business

I would be so fucking annoyed if I enrolled for a class and found out that majority of it was being taught by AI chatbots. What would be the point of paying that much for a class if I wouldn't even be learning from a person? Complete bullshit.

Derek, Engineering

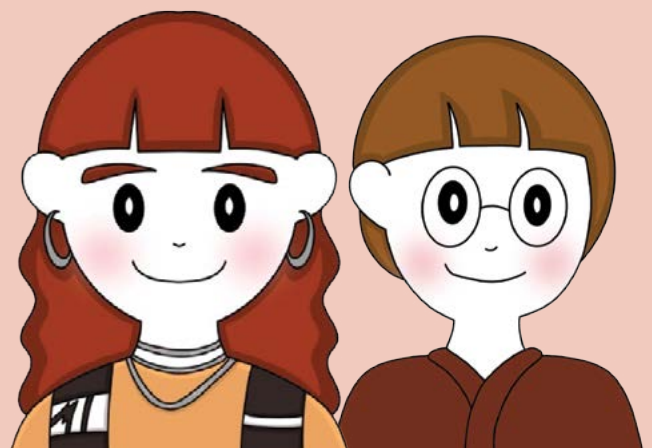
Not gonna lie, half the time I'm using AI to learn stuff anyway, so, I feel like people are making a big deal out of it. Sometimes AI is more useful than actual lecturers.

Abbey, Media and Screen Studies

I kinda do get that since AI is developing quickly and it's become a part of our world, the uni would want to adapt and evolve, but I feel like this isn't the way to be doing it. Students pay so much for each paper, they deserve at least a human being teaching them.

Anonymous, Law

It's so hypocritical of them to say that we can't use AI for other things, and then turn around and force a bunch of students to learn an entire course using AI.



LAW / BUSINESS MERGER UPDATE



TE HIRA MAYALL-NAHI

It's time for an update team! Coming to you from a source in the staff, we've got some results about the Senate meeting held on Monday 24th February. A vote was put forward on the proposal to combine the Law and Business schools under one Faculty, with the results being 121 to 51 votes against the proposal – a 70% majority! The next step, based on the Constitution of the University, is that the advice of the Senate will be taken into consideration by the University Council who will make the final decision at a meeting set for Monday 17th March, the day this story is released to you.

The Senate is made up of mainly university professors from various schools of discipline across the university, along with some senior academic roles. The purpose of the Senate is to represent the academic values of the University on matters involving study, training, awards, or other academic interests. A comment made by the Vice Chancellor at the beginning of the meeting was that it was the largest turnout for an in-person Senate meeting that the University had ever had. The position of the Senate, according to our source, sits consistently with the majority of those who sent in submissions about the proposal, the majority of which also sat against the proposal. The Committee that was selected by the University to assess all submissions provided the recommendation to the Council that the proposal should not go ahead. The Council of the University is the main governing body that determines the policies of the university, undertakes planning of the university's long-term strategy, and seeks out funding. The Council is made up of elected staff, students, alumnus, and external appointees.

Our source states that, "We hope that the proposal is not brought to Council, when it has been clearly rejected by the academic community."

Our source and their team also provided some supplementary research into how previous proposals taken to the Senate impacted the final decision by the Council. At this point they are not aware of any instances where the Council has gone against a vote from the Senate. This would be considered a very serious move and, as far as our source understands, an unprecedented move in the last 30 years. Due to the proposal being one that is a matter of academia, and the Senate is the highest academic body in the university, it was common for the Council to follow the advice of the Senate.

With the Senate's overwhelming rejection of the merger, we turn our attention to the Council's upcoming decision. If the past provides any indication, then we may see Council follow Senate's recommendations – but whether they will remains uncertain.

NEWS

NEW LOCATION UNLOCKED: MĀORI STUDENT CENTRE



TE HIRA MAYALL-NAHI

This past week, a new section opened in the Kate Edgar building on Level 2: He Āhuru Mōwai, the Māori Student Support Centre. This opened on Monday 10th March with a dawn blessing carried out by Ngāti Whātua and attended by staff and students. This space was created to provide support for tauira Māori (students) in accessing university services and advocacy, with Tūrei Ormsby as the new Poutaki Māori (Centre Manager).

The space allows for Māori students to go to someone/somewhere that can help them seek support and guidance within the university system, while also being culturally competent and able to advocate for the students. Some of the services He Āhuru Mōwai connects tauira with are things like academic advocacy, health and well-being, and social activities. The space itself is multiple-use, with its own meeting room, dry kitchen (no taps), computers, and tables to study or hangout at. The space is looking at hosting weekly drop-ins with well-being services, such as nurses, doctors, or social workers, and even academic support from Te Fale Pouāwhina. An aim of He Āhuru Mōwai is to situate itself as a home away from home for tauira Māori so they can feel safe enough to ask for help and work with the staff to figure out the best solution to their needs.

When asked why this space was needed, Ormsby highlighted the petrifying effects of whakamā (shame), and how that impacts students physically, mentally, and academically. He mentions that students can become emotionally unavailable to complete their assignments or studies due to external factors, and that this is how the centre can support students as a point of contact to advocate for them.

For tauira Māori, when the marae are busy, and Hine is pumping with students – He Āhuru Mōwai is ready for you.

Shit 2 Do

PUT ON A CLEAN SHIRT AND GO SEE WHAT'S OUT THERE! IT'S ALL FREE TOO.

MONDAY

Artists on Artists Exhibition

10AM - 6PM (ON UNTIL SATURDAY)
STUDIO ONE TOI
PONSONBY, AUCKLAND CBD

More: https://www.eventbrite.co.nz/e/artists-on-artists-exhibition-ticket-1242822759329?aff=ebdssbdest-search&keep_tld=1

MARCH
17

TUESDAY

MARCH
18

Crafting Corner

4PM - 7PM
PACIFIC SPACE, UOA GENERAL LIBRARY
UOA CITY CAMPUS

More: <https://www.eventbrite.co.nz/e/crafting-corner-ticket-1255220481249>

MARCH
19

WEDNESDAY

UOA Student Trivia Night

5PM - 7:30PM
STUDENT KITCHEN, KEIC LEVEL 2
UOA CITY CAMPUS

More: <https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/on-campus/life-on-campus/whats-on/se-mester-one>

THURSDAY

MARCH
20

FRIDAY

MARCH
21

Music in Parks: Takutai Square

4PM - 8PM
TAKUTAI SQUARE (BRITOMART)
FREE

Check the website for artist lineup

More: <https://ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/events/2025/03/music-in-parks-takutai-square/>

Peace Week Bazaar

12PM - 4PM
STUDENT QUAD

MARCH
22

SATURDAY

Auckland Arts Festival: ROVA Sound Stage

11:30AM - LATE
AOTEA SQUARE, AUCKLAND CBD
FREE

More: <https://www.aaf.co.nz/whats-on/rova-sound-garden>

SUNDAY

MARCH
23

Kiwi Art Trail (Final Day)

ALL DAY
START IN TE KOMITITANGA SQUARE
AND END IN SILO PARK
Free public art displays of stylised kiwis

More: <https://kiwiarttrail.nz/auckland>

HARRY'S BI-WEEKLY SPORTS RECAP!

FROM CRACCUM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



HARRY SUTTON

After a solid two weeks later, I have once again found all the most important sports stories from the last two weeks and compiled them into one article all for you to feast your eyeballs on. Let's get into it!



MOANA PASIFIKA'S CAPTAIN, ARDIE SAVEA CELEBRATING AS HIS TEAM WINS AGAINST THE HURRICANES.

MOANA PASIFIKA PICK UP THEIR FIRST WIN IN DRAMATIC FASHION.

After close losses to the Western Force and the Highlanders over the first weeks of the season, Moana needed a win to get their season on track, going against the Hurricanes, however, it isn't an easy challenge and with the return of star player Ruben Love, it was looking like a tall task for Moana to win.

In their captain Ardie Savea's first game playing against his old team, his team came out on fire with the local Samoan Miracle Faiilagi scoring a hat trick, showing off try, giving his team the lead. another positive was that their first five Patrick Pellegrini missed one conversion the whole game and

being a leader on the field for Moana. not bad for his debut tart.

Although the men in yellow from Wellington made a desperate comeback attempt led by Cam Roigard to take the win away from Moana, it wasn't enough, and the final score read 40-31 in favor of Moana Pasifika, their first win against a New Zealand team since 2022, and who did they beat all those seasons ago? The Hurricanes. A win three years in the making.



HALF-BACK RYAN LONERGAN KICKS OVER THE WINNING PENALTY GOAL AGAINST THE BLUES

BLUES HORROR SEASON RUMBLES ON.

Now, don't think I forgot about you Blues fans! It's now been four games into this Super Rugby season, and the Blues' record stands at 1-3. Just one win out of the four matches they have played. The team just doesn't look like the dominant championship team that won it all last year and there is real time for concern.

However, this game should have been an easy win for the men in Blue, playing at home in their fortress of Eden Park against the Brumbies; this was

meant to be the win that jumps their team to life.

What happened was turnover after turnover, sloppy ball and easy kicking opportunities squandered by Beauden Barrett with him missing easy conversions, leaving points out on the field that were the difference between winning and losing. In the 79th minute it was the final straw, with Ryan Loneragan coolly kicking a penalty goal in the 79th minute to give the Brumbies the win for the first time in 12 years at Eden Park.

To make matters worse, their upcoming schedule is going to be brutal with games against the Chiefs, the Crusaders, and the Hurricanes. None of these games will be easy, and if they want to repeat as champions, the Blues need to step up and find that magic from last season.



RAIDERS PLAYER SEBASTIAN KRIS SCORES YET ANOTHER TRY IN THUMPING OFF THE WARRIORS

WARRIORS FALL FLAT IN LAS VEGAS AGAINST RAIDERS.

After flying half way across the world, you would hope the Warriors would put up a fight against the Canberra

Raiders, right? Well, no, they didn't; they got pumped by the Raiders. These stats tell the story. 21 missed tackles after 32 minutes, five total tries to two, countless issues with penalties and poor discipline. The Warriors are off to a poor start in the post Shaun Johnson era.

The Raiders simply came out with more power, more fight, more grit, and simply were the much better team on the night. Coach Andrew Webster has more questions than answers after just one game and will need to turn this team around for their second game against Manly.



RYAN PEAKE CELEBRATING AS HE WINS THE NEW ZEALAND OPEN.

RYAN PEAKE, A FORMER GANG MEMBER, WINS THE NEW ZEALAND OPEN

Now, although I know Golf isn't every university student's favourite topic, this is one of the most incredible sports stories of the year. Ryan Peake was a gang member of one of Australia's main motorcycle gangs, getting himself into trouble regularly. His was a junior golfer on the side and did play at small tournaments across Australia; however, he was convicted of assault and handed a five-year sentence.

After finishing his sentence, he returned to golf in hopes of turning his

life around through golf, and thanks to his coach Richie Smith, he managed to get an invite to the New Zealand Open. Not only was this his first win at a major golf tournament, it's his first win of any golf tournament. Thanks to this win, he now has earned himself an invite to the British Open and made 200,000 dollars for himself. Let's hope he can keep this winning streak going and show that anyone can do anything.



BLACK CAPS CAPTAIN MITCHELL SANTNER LOOKS DEFEATED AFTER LOSING TO INDIA IN CHAMPIONS TROPHY FINAL

BLACK CAPS FALL AT THE LAST HUDDLE IN THE CHAMPIONS TROPHY FINAL.

After battling game after game, the Black Caps found themselves battling India in the final. A repeat of the 2000 final, the last time the Black Caps won this trophy. It was safe to say that New Zealand wanted to win very badly.

However, right from the get-go, the Black Caps were off to a poor start, with bowling star Matt Henry failing a pre-match fitness test, and considering he took five wickets off India in their previous matchup with India in

the pool play, this was a massive loss for New Zealand. The beginning of an average day out for the Black Caps in a hot humid ground in where India had played, giving them another small advantage.

It was only thanks to Michael Bracewell and Daryl Mitchell that the Black Caps even had a chance with the first overs going incredibly slowly for the battering side. Then the Indian spin bowlers came on and took four wickets during the middle innings, and the batters never really came back to life.

Without Matt Henry, bowling was going to be challenging this tournament. Although Rachin Ravindra tried his best and even won player of the tournament, it wasn't enough. Ravindra Jadeja hit the nail in the coffin with a four, and India won the game and tournament by four wickets. New Zealand will have to wait to get their hands back on the Champions Trophy.

Again, that's all the sport for one issue, but if you guys have any sport articles that you want to contribute to the magazine, that would be fantastic. Don't hesitate to get in touch with any of our editors, but until then, I will see you soon!

CLOCK STRIKES TWELVE: PAY UP DAWN!

COVERING THE MOST RECENT TEU STRIKE.



IRENE PARSAEI

The morning of Thursday 6th of March was straight out of a Disney movie. Warm sun beaming down on the Clock Tower, blue sky with not a cloud in sight, birds chirping, the whole works. It would've been exactly like a Disney movie were it not for the Tertiary Education Union (TEU) strike taking place.

From 10:30am, staff members started to arrive, some wearing t-shirts stating they were 'proud to be TEU.' With Aretha Franklin's 'Respect' setting the tone for the day, members began to help each other set up the speakers and signs, handing out fliers to staff members and students walking by, and several people wearing neon high-visibility vests collected chalk buckets for the protest activities later.

Nicole Wallace, an organiser for the Auckland regional branch of the TEU spoke briefly to me, amidst the rush of everything, outlining the key reasons for the strike occurring. According to Wallace and the TEU, fair pay, in all aspects, is the reason that the nearly 1600 TEU mem-

bers at the University of Auckland decided to strike. They demand that their pay needs to keep up with the cost of living which has been in crisis since 2021, and that there needs to be more transparency in systems that determine pay progression for staff. In addition to this, Wallace highlighted

the need for all members to be paid a minimum of a living wage.

By 10:53am, there wasn't a free spot to stand in, and the speeches from the TEU organisers, and members of staff began, during which it was revealed that since September of last

year, there had been 29 meetings between the negotiating team of the TEU, and the University. Put together, that would make nearly a month straight spent at the negotiating table, which according to those striking, has reached no outcomes due to the University's refusal to cooperate.

The list of speakers consisted of a wide variety of people, from Deborah Russell, the Labour spokesperson for tertiary education, to a gardener who expressed that having worked at the University of Auckland since the 80s, he was annoyed by conditions not improving. Topics such as trust in the institution and hypocrisy from the University were discussed, as well as the issue of the University's anti-unionism, and its



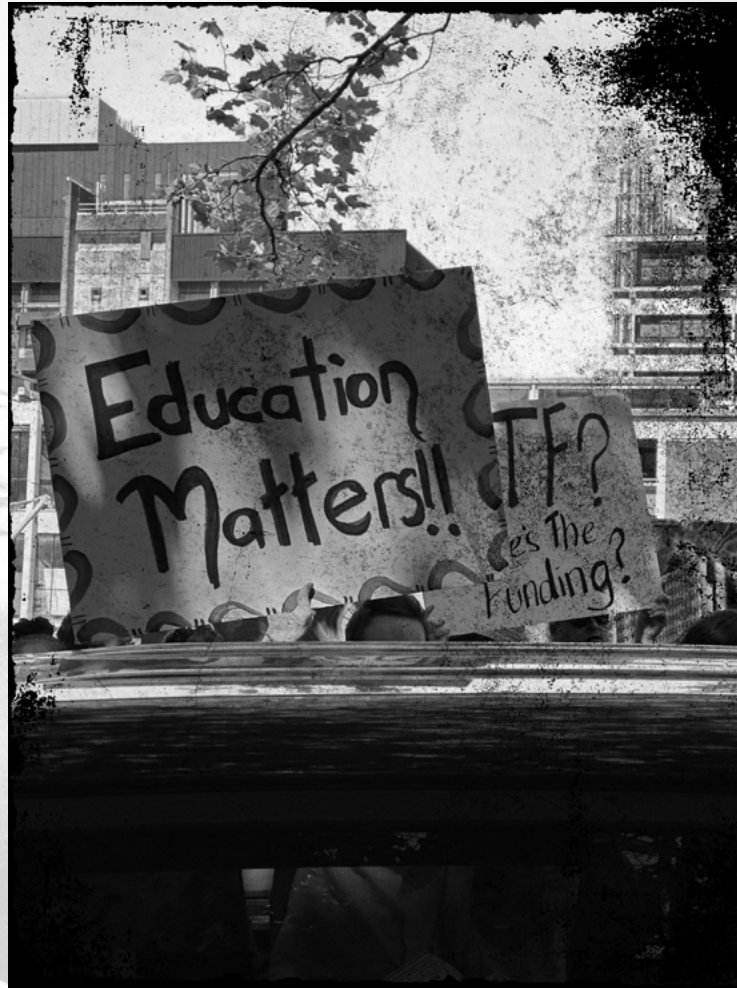
favouring of staff members who are not part of unions by giving them higher pay rises. By show of hands, it was seen that the majority of those striking were lecturers, teaching assistants or non-academic staff, however, Professor Paula Lorgelly, who noted that she was now earning a good salary, stated that “once upon a time I was a lecturer too,” and that she sympathised and understood the struggles of being underpaid and overworked.

Living wage was perhaps the most talked about topic throughout the strike, with Victoria University and Massey being named as two universities that pay staff a living wage. In Auckland, however, the TEU haven’t gotten anywhere with the Vice Chancellor, Dawn Freshwater, who reportedly expressed the opinion that casual staff, many of whom are also students at the university, “don’t need a living wage,” which seems like a very ‘let them eat cake’ type of comment to be making, although not particularly surprising when taking into consideration that in 2020 Vice Chancellor Freshwater’s salary was \$755k. To put that number into perspective, the Prime Minister of New Zealand’s yearly salary is estimated to be between \$400k-\$500k. The Vice Chancellor’s view on living wage was labelled as “very problematic” by Wallace, and a nearby student helping with the strike mentioned that as someone planning to get into academia, she was preparing herself for the need to have two jobs to be able to live.

The minimum wage in Aotearoa is set to increase to \$23.50 on April 1st of 2025, and this will be the minimum that employers are legally obligated to pay their employees. The living wage, however, is voluntary, and as of September 1st of 2024, is \$27.80 an hour

having been increased from \$26 an hour. This increase happens every year to keep up with inflation. According to the Citizens Advice Bureau, the living wage is the amount that a worker must be paid in order to “live with dignity, and participate as an active member of society,” something that most people would presumably want to do. Unfortunately, due to not being a legal requirement, many employers opt to not pay living wage, the University of Auckland being one of them.

When questioned about whether they had considered moving to work at other universities due to the conditions at the University of Auckland, Holly Bennett, a Student Hub Advisor, and Rosaria, a member of the Reading List team at the library, both said yes. Bennett, who told me that she’d done both her bachelor’s degree and her master’s at this university pointed out that “AUT is just over the road, and they pay much better, which is frankly shameful because this is supposed to be the top university in this country.”



Rosaria said that in addition to having personally thought of moving, she was aware of multiple coworkers who had also considered it. She, like Bennett, previously studied at the university, and expressed that while she loves the university, “love doesn’t pay when I go to Pak’nSave, or to get my car gassed up.”

The strike’s final location was the Clock Tower on Princes Street, a symbol of the University of Auckland, one that tourists and graduating students take photos in front of. In a matter of minutes, the pavement was covered in colourful chalk writings of ‘LIVING WAGE’, ‘FAIR PAY’, and ‘PAY UP DAWN’.

Not even three hours later, the chalking was washed away by the University, all traces of the strike trickling away into the drains.

IS CENSORSHIP THE BEST LOOK FOR THE TOP-RANKED UNIVERSITY IN NEW ZEALAND? REGARDLESS, THIS WON’T BE THE LAST WE’LL BE HEARING FROM THE TEU, NOR THE LAST STRIKE TO READ ABOUT.

THE WEB AS A TOOL FOR BOTH LIBERATION AND OPPRESSION.

CONVERSATION AROUND INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

GRACE LONDON (SHE/HER) | @GRACELONNDON

Being online and having an online presence is something that has become an innate part of all our lives, and as a result, the perfect space for us to interact and learn within. Proving to be both a tool for freedom fighting, solidarity, and liberation, as well as hatred, bullying, and oppression, the online space has become a complex maze of often not knowing where the next jab at your existence is going to come from. No one is safe from this contradictory environment, with all kinds of hashtags, forums, and accounts generously donated and tended to provide a safe space to hate on anything you could imagine.

The recent and sadly inconsequential passing of International Woman's Day, a largely online event, got me questioning how the online space is really looking for women **every** day.

The Me-Too movement is a female-led movement that I am sure you have heard of. Gaining the spotlight in 2017 when numerous female Hollywood actresses began a wave of standing up against famous and powerful sexual predators and bringing justice after experiencing sometimes tens of years of fear and suppression. Dominating our

experience of feminist outreach movements of today, Me Too's legacy is less successful than we might think, with the true intentions of its outreach becoming warped by the very people it aimed to protect from. Quantitative context analyses of tweets around the hashtag "Me-Too"¹ highlight how online reception of the movement is dominated by negative attitudes, with invalidation of accusations, questioning of motives, and doubts of the integrity of MeToo as a whole taking up most of the discourse on the subject.

Instead of sympathy and support, the movement—purely intended to help victims of sexual abuse—was met with hate, which might give you a hint to what we can expect from the wider treatment of women simply existing online.

In an Amnesty international New Zealand survey, 1/3 women admitted having experienced online abuse and harassment². I know I can say that almost every video I come across on Instagram or TikTok with a woman present has never been free of some kind of slander or ridicule. With reference to this personal experience and the findings from Am-

nesty, it could be assumed that any woman brave enough to put herself on the internet with a feminist front or not, should expect abuse.

The Andrew Tate-ification of the online sphere could be seen as attributing to this. The viral internet man was made famous for all the wrong reasons. Andrew Tate burst onto our phones for the first time in 2021, making waves in the mid-covid cesspit of chronic online-ness



1 <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605211001470>

2 <https://amnesty.org.nz/online-abuse-women-thrives-twitter-fails-respect-women-s-rights/>

with his controversial opinions on masculinity and relationships. Tate didn't hesitate to make his self-proclaimed misogyny known to his millions of followers, stating how women are a man's property and should take responsibility for their own abuse, amongst many other things. Amassing over 11 billion views across all his social media platforms. Tate's message is already radicalising individuals, particularly men and boys, in the same way that terrorists draw in followers, as claimed by UK Police.

This doesn't bode well for women's safety online. Despite Tate's ban from many major social media platforms as well as supposed 'hate awareness' messages on platforms such as TikTok, the misogynistic environment Tate amplified not only remains, but is growing. A UCL study found that even algorithms are amplifying misogynistic content to users, with TikTok's For You Page increasing misogynistic content from 13%–56% in a matter of 5 days when met with a test archetype seeking out 'masculine' content³. Even individuals not looking for

guidance on how to behave towards women are being fed supposed norms of dominance, objectification and sexual harassment. This algorithmic shift feels uncontrollable, and if our fates are decided by artificial intelligence and we really are being fed misogynistic content are we all doomed and have to melt down our electronic devices and sell the precious metals to buy a farm in the wops?

I hope not! But if all else fails, see you guys in my feminist, offline, anti-misogyny commune in the woods.

3

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2024/feb/social-media-algorithms-amplify-misogynistic-content-teens>

WANTED: HEROES TO HELP WRITE THE BOOK ON DEFEATING CERVICAL CANCER

Aotearoa New Zealand can eliminate cervical cancer. "How?" I hear you ask.

Cervical cancer is almost entirely caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV). Through HPV vaccination, cervical screening (including the game-changing new HPV self-test) and early treatment of abnormal cell changes, we have the power to eliminate it within our lifetime.

We have the tools to prevent cervical cancer. Now we need the Government's commitment and investment.

The Cancer Society of New Zealand and its partners recently launched *The Book that Ended Cancer*, but a crucial part is missing – the chapter where you stand up and join a chorus of voices calling for action.

We need heroes like you University students – our young leaders of tomorrow – to help end cervical cancer in Aotearoa New Zealand. We're calling on you to support our push for Government action by adding your name to be a hero in our book.

Your name in the book will strengthen the call for dedicated funding and resources to make this vision a reality.

Become a hero of this story at endcervicalcancer.org.nz



PERSIAN NEW YEAR IS COMING!

A CELEBRATION WHICH BEGAN 3000 YEARS AGO.



BAHAR PARSAEI

Do you feel like you haven't had a proper 'New Year, New Me' moment, and now have to wait all the way until 2026? Well, what if I told you that you have a second chance? Coming up this Friday on the 21st of March, is Persian New Year!

Persian New Year, called '**Nowruz**' (نوروز) in Farsi, means 'new day.' It falls on the spring equinox in the Northern Hemisphere, marking the first day of spring. Although it is called 'Persian New Year', Nowruz is celebrated by many different ethnic groups in a variety of countries including Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and in Syria, Iraq and Turkey too, where it is celebrated by the Kurdish populations there. For the purpose of this article, I'm going to be focusing on Nowruz traditions in Iran.

The origin of Nowruz is said to be more than 3000 years old, and is thought to have been celebrated in Persepolis during the time of the Achaemenid Empire. It is also believed to have roots in Zoroastrianism. It remains Iran's biggest celebration, with the weeks leading up to it full of traditions as families begin to prepare.

In order to have the house ready for guests, and also in a tidy state for entering the new year, we have what is called '**khaneh tekani**' (خانه تکانی), which quite literally translates to 'shaking the house.' This 'house shak-

ing' is essentially a massive, intense deep clean of one's home. For many, this includes washing items in their home that usually don't get washed, a popular example being the beautiful Persian rugs that people have in their homes. These rugs are usually so large that having them washed regularly is a hassle, however in time for Nowruz, they must be cleaned. After the 'khaneh tekani', the house is spotless just in time to welcome in the new year and start on a new, clean slate.

On the last Wednesday before Nowruz, we also have another event which is called '**Chaharshanbe Suri**' (چهارشنبه سوری). 'Chaharshanbe' means Wednesday, and 'suri' could mean either 'festive' or 'scarlet.' This celebration has Zoroastrian origins, Zoroastrianism being one of the earliest religions found in Ancient Persia. In Zoroastrianism, fire is considered to be sacred, as it represents the light of God, and is a symbol of purity. On the night of the Wednesday, bonfires are made, which we then jump over in a symbolic act signifying renewal and purification. The fire burns away any negativity or misfortunes of the old year, allowing us to start afresh in the coming year. In New Zealand, we usually settle for jumping over a candle since there are regulations on open fires (boring).

From the beginning of March, fam-



ilies soak wheat or barley in water and then leave it to sprout and grow into wheatgrass or barley grass. This is in preparation for one of the most important parts of Nowruz. (Note: I realized after researching this that so many things can grow into grass, and then started wondering what grass even is.)

The key tradition for Nowruz, which is also seen as a symbol of the celebration is called **'Sofreh Haft-seen/Haft-sin'** (سفره هفت‌سین), 'haft' meaning 'seven' in Farsi, and 'seen/sin' being a letter that makes an 's' sound (س).

'Sofre' means 'tablecloth.' A table is set for Nowruz with seven symbolic items whose names start with the 's' sound. Each item is specifically chosen to represent hopes for the upcoming year.

Firstly, we have **'Sabzeh'** (سبزه), which is the grass that we grew from our wheat, or barley, or whatever else can grow into grass. This symbolizes rebirth, renewal, or growth.

Next is **'Samanu'** (سمنو), a sweet paste-like pudding made from germinated wheat, which many people enjoy eating (I do not). Samanu represents strength.

'Senjed' (سنجد) is also on the table, and the direct English translation for it is oleaster or Russian Olive. It's similar to jujube fruit. Senjed's place on the Haftsin table is to symbolize love.

We're nearly halfway there! The next item is **'Serkeh'** (سرکه), which is vinegar. Serkeh represents patience, which is symbolic given that if you're patient and wait for vinegar to age, it develops a more complex and deep flavour.

Apples are also a component to Haft-sin, called **'seeb'** (سیب), in Farsi, and no, you can't just take one off the table and eat it. Seeb symbolizes beauty and health for the new year. You know what they say, a seeb a day keeps the doctor away.

Now take 'Seeb' and change the 'b' to an 'r' and we have our second to last item. **'Seer'** (سیر), which is garlic, represents medicine and health, which is no surprise given garlic's numerous health benefits. Plus, you'll also have the extra protection against vampires.

Last but not least, we have **'Somagh'** (سماق), and that word sounds exactly like the English word for it. Sumac. If you're thinking, hold on, isn't that what I put on my kebabs, yes, it is. On top of being an amazing dash of flavour to any meal, Somagh is representative of light on the Haft-sin table due to its colour being similar to that

of a sunrise.

These seven items are the most traditional, however many Iranians include more items such as sekke/coins (سکه) (the meaning on this one is self explanatory), sonbol/hyacinth flowers (سنبل), or a mirror. Families with children sometimes put painted eggs, or goldfish. Often found on the Haft-sin table is also a book of poems by the great Persian poet Hafez. A tradition for some families on Nowruz is to use the book as a fortune teller. They will open up the book to a random page and read out the poem which will set the tone for their new year.

On the day of Nowruz, families will gather together to celebrate around the Sofre Haft-sin and count down the seconds until the new year has begun. The day is spent together, and for the following week, people will visit and host their friends and loved ones. These celebrations continue for twelve days, and on the thirteenth day of Nowruz, families go out to picnic in nature for what is called **'Sizdah Bedar'**, 'sizdah' being the word for 'thirteen'. Spending time in nature among the fresh blossoms of spring marks the end of Nowruz.

It's a time of unbridled happiness.

For this Nowruz, I even decided to publish this article under my Persian name, Bahar, which means spring, the very thing being celebrated on Nowruz. Pretty cool, huh? My name is a reflection of the most joyous season — one of renewal, celebration, and new beginnings — and I love it.

Happy Nowruz everyone!

نوروزتان پیروز



DESERT ISLAND ANIME

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR CHOICE?



CHAZ TYLER CHO (HE/HIM) | @THEREALFINCH9933

Every gamer has been asked the question, "If you were stuck on an island and could only bring five games with you, which ones would you bring?"

We anime fans always get the short end of the stick, I wonder why.

So now is the time to answer that question: what if the same thing happened, but this time it's anime?

Later I'll make a list for both movies and TV shows, but for now, here is my list of the five anime series I would bring to an island.

But first, a ground rule: I can only bring one season from any show I pick. So no picking the whole Gundam or Pokemon series (I don't even watch those), unless if I can pick one specific season from that franchise (I couldn't).

NUMBER 1 (ONE PIECE)

Now, if you'll be stuck on an island for practically forever, you'll need something to last that long period.

That's why we have to look at the long runners: the ones with tons and tons of episodes.

And that's why the first choice in my mind comes to One Piece, I mean you've got more than a thousand episodes in just one season (technically speaking) and it has consistently high ratings across many platforms, which is impressive especially when you're running a show like this.

But the thing is, I could never get into One Piece; you could put a gun to my head and I wouldn't be able to start the first episode of One Piece in the first place.

As of now, the episode count is just too daunting. I mean, it took me three months to watch Dusk Maiden of Amnesia and that's a 12-episode anime series with my favorite type of anime characters, ghosts! What makes you think I'm willing to watch all... this?

But you'd be hard-pressed to find another anime with this much content

in what is technically counted as one season.

Or 25 seasons, if you're sane and pay for Netflix.

I mean, when it comes to long runners, the only other show I have some experience with would be Sailor Moon. However, I've only completed the reboot in full. I tried watching the first season, and I think if I had to watch 200 episodes of Usagi using the back of game controllers as soap dishes, I might go insane faster than you can say "Munch a bunch of crunchy carrots".

And no, I will not be bringing the Octonauts on the island. I will not be tempted by the better life I could be living underwater rather than on a deserted island.

Then again, we're so far away from civilization, that I don't think anyone would mind if I decided to skip to the cosmic horror episodes of an anime. Plus, the banter between the five seems pretty good, especially in the reboot! It seems like the classic '92 anime would have a good mix of afterschool shenanigans and plenty of cosmic horror to fill me up.

You know what? Screw it, I'm putting One Piece as my first option solely because of its long list of episodes and the fact that the ratings for One Piece have been consistently good all along. I haven't seen a single episode of One Piece, but maybe I'll get to watching the seafaring adventures of a group of pirates once I'm stuck in the middle of the sea with no way out back to the glorious civilization that is New Zealand.

NUMBER 2 (SAZAE-SAN)

Now we need another long runner, and no, Sailor Moon Classic is not on the list anymore because it has five seasons total and that breaks our rules. So we have our adventure shonen pick, now it's time to go for something else entirely. What about something more laid back?

And I feel like there would be no better option than Sazae-san: which, accord-

ing to Wikipedia, is the longest-running anime in the world, clocking in at 2771 episodes total, and still running to this day!

That's right, screw you, One Piece.

And the better part of this is that from my research, the show focuses on daily antics, just stuff like "this character got lost in the mall" or something like that. I don't know, don't take my word for it. But it's still useful because it's going to be important to be able to have a sense of society when you're stranded on a deserted island for all of eternity. Sazae-san is the best choice for this.

NUMBER 3 (GENIUS PARTY)

I feel like that's the deal with these older shows, like the Toonami trio, that is this, and Dragon Ball Z and Pokemon: they were written in a way that any kid could randomly tune into one episode and have a high chance of not missing out any important information about the larger plot at hand. Slow character growth, plenty of worldbuilding, far-reaching goals; I mean, does the One Piece even exist?! I wouldn't know, I haven't seen it. That's one strike to my integrity, I guess.

Sazae-san is just a different everyday shenanigan per episode, so any kid could tune in and immediately understand everything.

This is important because I want to keep in mind that I won't be marathoning these animes: I just want to make sure I won't get bored of them. And if I can pick and choose between the episodes based on what interests me, that's even better.

That reminds me of another type of anime: anthologies! And I know this may seem like a cheap answer, but really, I don't know that many anime anthologies. And that's two strikes to my integrity.

There are three I know so far: Memories, Neo Tokyo, and Genius Party. The former two are more my kind of thing, I love

sci-fi and Black Mirror; I feel like both Memories and Neo Tokyo would be right up my alley. The problem is, that they both only have three episodes each.

Come on, I have an eternity to kill in purgatory, I need more!

I'll go for Genius Party solely because it has seven mini-films to its' name, and I wanna make sure that we go for quantity here. I could be wrong, I haven't seen any of these animes.

If I get three strikes on a deserted island, who do the anime fans send to hunt me down?

NUMBER 4 (I GOT A CHEAT SKILL AND BECAME UNRIVALED IN THE REAL WORLD TOO)

Well, let's try to avoid getting any extra strikes to my integrity and now let's solely look at the anime I have seen. So we have long action shonen dealt with through One Piece, cosmic horror and school banter through Sailor Moon Classic, and short separate stories through Genius Party. Now what I need is pure entertainment. I don't care how, it just needs to be fun to watch. Perhaps, so bad, that it loops back to being fun to watch.

I Got A Cheat Skill and Became Unrivaled In The Real World Too is so far, the worst anime I've ever seen: flat, boring characters who are who they are simply because the story demands it, with new skills and rewards thrown seemingly out of nowhere, combined into janky animation that makes the high-octane action scenes feel like a snail's race; I have never seen anything like this before. However, the wish-fulfillment in this anime is so insane, that it actually loops back around to being enjoyable.

We are throwing our dignity out of the window with this list, I mean who's gonna critique us? The sand?!

I could've picked Instant Death which I made a video on before, but with that one, there are genuinely good bits that last so shortly that I'm better off rewatching those moments in my head and coming up with fanfiction on how it continues using an amalgamation of The Last of Us and The Three-Body Problem because those are some of my favorite pieces of fiction ever - maybe I should make a list for games and literature too another time.

Anyway, the problem with Instant Death for me is that it knows it's a comedy, and tries to be a comedy by pointing out

how ridiculous some isekai tropes are, but I just don't find it funny.

Whereas Cheat Skill focuses on just being pure wish-fulfillment to the lonely audience - boy golly gee does that fit our situation very well - and the comedy comes naturally through the execution. It's kinda like how The Room was written to be a tragic drama, yet all the elements came together so poorly that it became a comedic masterpiece instead.

There's barely any genuinely good stuff in this show so when you watch it, you're not constantly thinking about the better thing they showed but ignored; it causes you to feel betrayed. This is what Instant Death did for me, and ironically enough, it was the thing that killed its' chances of getting on this list for now.

I'm going with Cheat Skill for this slot.

NUMBER 5 (MY DRESS UP DARLING)

Now, the last one is probably the hardest for me because we need to make this option count. My first thought is to pick Madoka Magica, but the thing is I don't think I could watch that over and over again. Much of the story goes well on the first watch, with no spoilers. And while rewatching, it's fun to spot all the foreshadowing going up to that twist, the story is just very dark for me. I do like dark, but I don't think I could always go for this. It was my favorite anime, but not one I could rewatch.

We could do an episodic anime series, but I wouldn't know what to fill in for that. If we use logic to fill in what's missing, my brain would just short circuit because I don't know what to do here. So we'll use feeling instead. And there is one anime that immediately comes to mind.

My Dress Up Darling might just be the newest, best anime I've ever seen, beating Madoka Magica, I know that seems nonsensical, and I thought it would be at first. How could a classic, ecchi romcom beat one of the more unique stories and takes on a classic genre of anime

from the 70s, with one of the most unique executions of that story, creating a wholly different atmosphere and ushering in an entirely new genre of magical girl anime for years and years to come?

Well, to cut to the chase: the chemistry between the two leads is fantastic. It's some of the best I've ever seen, and you grow to love these characters so quickly that you don't even mind the fanservice that has caused much controversy in the online spaces. It's so fun and exciting to watch - no seriously, episode 11 had me holding my breath as much as Breaking Bad's Ozymandias; I can't believe I just said that - and it's very easy to binge this. And I attribute that to the cleaner art and the fantastic characters and their chemistry with each other. This show was so good, that I ended up going back to the beginning to watch it all over again - right after finishing the finale! I haven't seen anything else like this - lots of sugar, lots of spice, all to create what will be my fifth and final entry in this desert island anime list.

CONCLUSION

And... That's it! That's the five anime I would bring with me if I were stuck on a deserted island for all of eternity. Or on purgatory, for that matter. What about you readers? What would you pick for this list if you were stranded on a deserted island?

Also, maybe pass on that opportunity to go on that remote island trip with your friends until you have your list ready.

Or a stable internet connection with a stable source of power so that you can watch every single anime that exists without being limited to just five because the internet is a thing that exists.

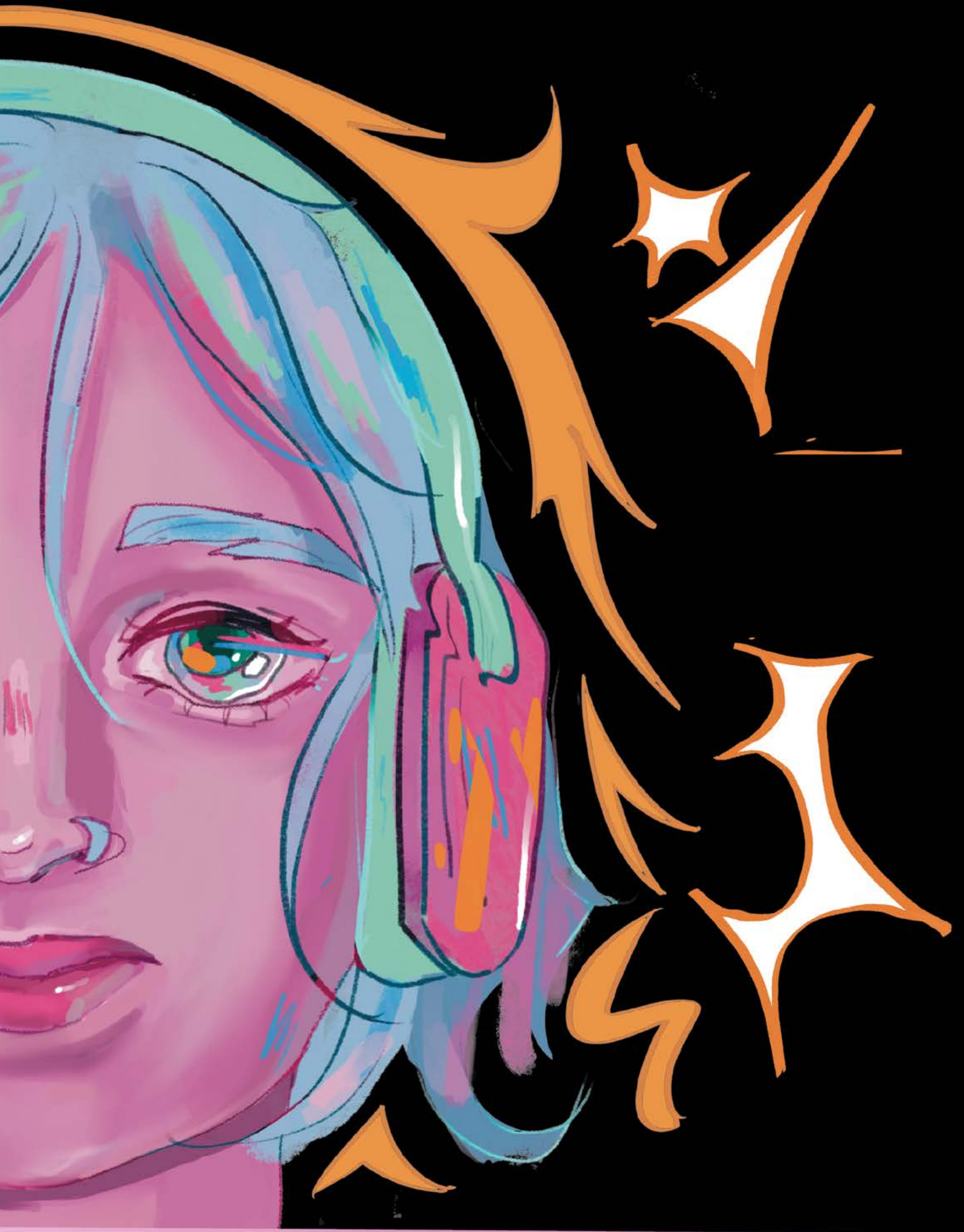
...damn it.



The fears we don't face



ce become our limits...



GEOMARKR

A VIDEO-ESSAY ABOUT GEOGUESSR



TREVOR PRONOSO

GeoGuessr by way of renowned ethnographic filmmaker Chris Marker. A peculiar pairing for those familiar with the browser video game, even more perplexing for the few cinephiles that recognise Marker primarily as an insightful and poetic ‘tour guide’ for all the countless places he’s visited and filmed with his camera with the intent of finally equalising and coalescing the cultural diversities of the globe into one language that is ‘cinema’. Maybe that **was** ‘cinema’—depending on whether or not you think documentary images express some infallible, objective truth of the universe and therefore have enough of an emotionally substantive ability to mimic or replace lived-in experience. No matter your stance, *GeoMarkr* (2022) follows the ‘video-essay’ tradition in covering the multimedia nature of its subject matter, dissecting the unique and fairly recent online phenomenon of being stranded on a random location in Google Maps and then attempting to ‘guess’ that exact location within its geographic-cum-digital landscape. Utilising narration, recorded Discord conversations of the directors’ playing the game alongside friends, screen-captured GeoGuessr gameplay, and the interesting use of clips from Chris Marker’s own films. This was used to juxtapose his approaches of ‘ethnography’ to Google’s equivalent of modern-day surveillance. *GeoMarkr* is an endlessly fascinating work of art that probes our contemporary, information-saturated existence. An existence that attempts smother any and all critical frameworks

of discerning imagistic context beyond attention-grabbing red herrings of the predatory ‘data collecting’ kind.

To see is to believe, and Marker—alongside directors Lého Galibert-Lainé & Guillaume Grandjean—are smart enough to key you in that not everything can be encapsulated within the frame. For Marker, the captured/documentated image’s trait as ‘residual snapshots’ of the recorded subject and/or event’s social, cultural and economic histories is used to scrutinise his own biases, voiced by either himself or a fictionalised version of a ‘wandering tourist’ commenting on the images’ aesthetic qualities. Galibert-Lainé & Grandjean face an even more multiplicitous landscape of imagistic mediation: in an age of surveillance that enables big tech like Google to capture streets with 360° cameras mounted atop automobiles and publish such captured information for public/private consumption, why is it that we are so drawn to video games like GeoGuessr that gamify the feeling of ‘cultural aloofness’ akin to tourists through an almost algorithmic mastery of geographic knowledge via visual problem-solving and pattern-finding? At least Marker comments on images he’s captured himself, yet in some of the sections of *GeoMarkr* that are screen-recorded sessions of GeoGuessr gameplay, we see the copyright symbol next to the ‘Google’ name at the bottom of the minimap. The

‘world’ is no longer captured by a single individual, but instead ‘shuffled’ between different parties for differing reasons. From the camera man driving the car to Google’s IT servers to Google’s censoring algorithms to GeoGuessr’s servers and finally to our eyes, the trail of filtration and scrutinising information becomes hard to decipher and replicate.

But for all intents and purposes, what *GeoMarkr* and Chris Marker’s own filmography share is the need to communicate and its infinite potentialities and pathways to do so; making familiar the unfamiliar. For Marker (and I welcome any cinephile and Marker enthusiasts to disagree with me), his intent is usually to communicate the world as **he** sees it back to **the audience**. Galibert-Lainé & Grandjean on the other hand communicate the world as **the audience** sees it (the comparatively mundane online access to Google Maps and GeoGuessr) back to **themselves**. The effect of seeing Marker wandering around the metropolitan capital of Japan in *Tokyo Days* (1988) becomes less of a novel ethnographic exercise than it is another indexed entry for search engines amongst the millions of indexed media one can access and get an acceptable video/image of what Tokyo looks like. In the 21st century, one

does not necessarily need ‘ethnographic film’ when ‘frequent flyers benefits’ exist. One can physically go to the



places and landmarks themselves with the right price. If seeing the world is just a few clicks away, then one should rightly assume that what we are seeing is probably not the 'objective' or 'truthful' vision of the world we thought cinema offered—or what Marker thinks his images accomplish that abets his occasionalist orientalist thinking.

Galibert-Lainé & Grandjean understand this phenomenological discrepancy deeply, and they reflect upon the ways controlling the disembodied Google Street View car with a single mouse click sparks one's innate human desire to explore unknown worlds, satiating one's unquenching curiosity and drive to overcome ignorance and gaps in one's knowledge; in other words, 'embodying' Chris Marker from the comfort of one's personal computer. Through Geoguessr, we learn to understand not only the known world, but also the tools in which we use to discover it in the first place (using non-geographical clues like the colour of tape on the 360° camera or the police vehicle constantly tailing the Google Street View car that indicates its location as Nigeria). But information isn't always readily available; it is sometimes acquired non-consensually or is under constant surveillance by local authorities, or can even be outright prohibited. Geoguessr's playing field is only limited to already existing road maps traversed by cameramen of which we do not have the luxury of knowing their names, yet we know who Chris Marker is. Google does not have Street View information on mainland China or North Korea or the entirety of the Amazon rainforest, yet we can pinpoint any other exact address down to the specific zip code and local road.

We desire and seek so much information, yet we have nary a clue how to position ourselves within this sea of context. It is frustrating to get stuck in a location on GeoGuessr, even more so when a certain section of a road sign reads too pixelated or unintentionally blurred when it could have been the key clue in finding the exact location. It is scary not being able to know something, and Galibert-Lainé expresses their inner anxieties such a game instills in them when you have no preconceived notions or frameworks to utilise and help orient yourself in GeoGuessr (the 'captured' world), and by extension, in the real world.

confinement, and re-confinement. But rather than great unfulfilled departures within him, which Geoguessr's incessant geographical catapulting might have imperfectly compensated for, perhaps it was really a matter of fulfilling a much more local desire... to cross a few blocks to listen to our friends talk have a drink in their company, make vague projects with them."

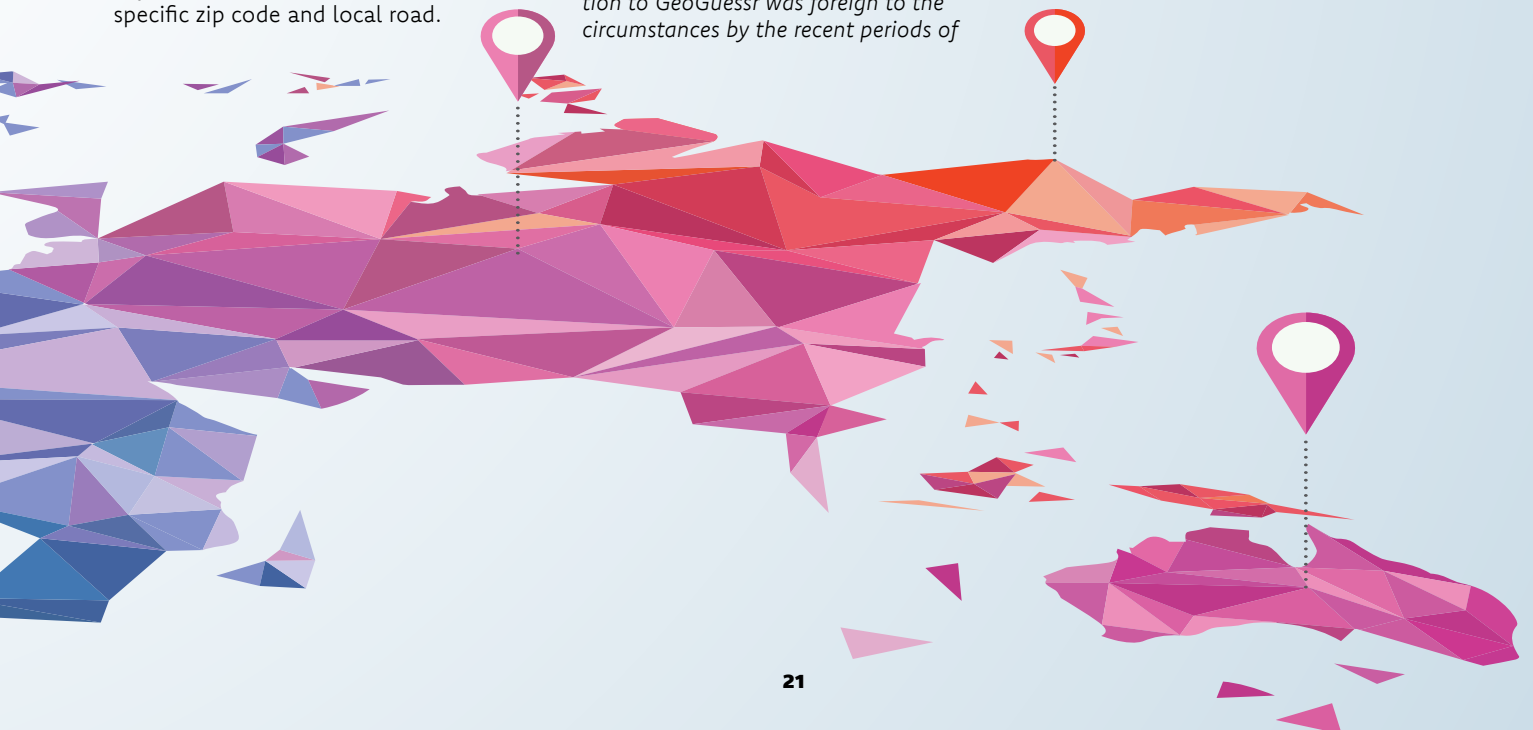
There always exists a certain social element that provides emotional catharsis for the player engaging in certain video games and certain movies. Whether it be eliciting empathy towards a specific movie/video game character, the dialogue between our self-orientation and the rule of the game is always in relation to our deep-seated desire to share these modes of experience alongside other people. To broadcast a longing for the collective, for a reciprocal acknowledgement of one's existence, for safety and security of a shared sympathetic belonging. We can joke about GeoGuessr pros not needing to touch grass because they already know almost all subspecies of grass available on Street View, but sometimes we forget that what truly defines us and gives us most meaning in this world is not our ability to politically contextualise our identities that exhibit a heteronomous negotiation between our race, ethnicities, class, religion, or gender, but instead the immediate company we have in front of us. A friend, a family member, a significant other; only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile.

You can watch this film for free on Vimeo.



But to watch a Chris Marker film—hell, even when playing a few rounds of GeoGuessr—is not primarily an exercise in correctly categorising places or socio-historical milieus based on deduction and memory recall. It is of interest that this video essay was conceived around the same time as worldwide COVID-19 lockdowns. In the words of Lého Galibert-Lainé:

"In our discussions, we thought that it would have been naive to imagine that Guillaume [Grandjean]'s attraction to GeoGuessr was foreign to the circumstances by the recent periods of



warped perspectives



CAMERON BURTON

EVERY SINGLE STATEMENT MADE BY THE CHARACTERS AND NARRATORS IN THESE STORIES, EVEN WHEN CONTRADICTING EACH OTHER, COMPLETELY AND TOTALLY REFLECT THE OPINIONS OF THE AUTHOR.

MY frontal Lobe will go on

"Coffee?" Satan offers, dressed in a maid costume.

"No thanks," Cal replies.

Rose stirs her tea uncertainly. She has a strong sense of déjà vu, except she is not surrounded by water, but fire.

"Funny it is that we should both end up here. You, of course, are no surprise. But I?" Cal continues.

"Oh, it wasn't her infidelity that sent her here," interrupts Satan, "it was the sin of dropping that jewel into the ocean."

"WHAT?" Cal thunders.

"Are you surprised? That jewel was worth tens of millions of dollars! In the right hands, or charity, that money could have significantly impacted many, many lives."

"Insignificant lives," Cal scoffs. "Groveling at more accomplished men's feet, asking for handouts."

"And that, my friend, is the reason that you are here," Satan smirks, taking a measured sip of tea. "A lot of people think I am the embodiment of evil. Yet I have a greater understanding of morality than both of you."

"It was symbolic, okay?" Rose pleads. "A form of closure, for me."

"One of humanity's greatest flaws," Satan continues, brushing some ash

from his dress, "is the prioritisation of the individual over the collective. Your empathy for each other only applies where you can see yourself in the other person. But you cannot see yourself in a crowd. They are a faceless swarm, not people with their own nuanced backstories and wishes. Throwing a near priceless diamond into the ocean was a very expensive form of symbolism. And for whom? You think someone would write a story about you? Would anyone buy a single ticket to, heaven forbid, a movie adaptation?"

"Then what is the point of all this?" Cal waves a hand. "If you're so moral, why should I have to sit on an island in an ocean of lava, listening to you tear apart our life choices?"

"Morality is... subjective. I am not here to torture you for eternity. I am here to teach you. But this job comes with its perks. It is only natural that people's egos will get bruised. For some, it is inevitable."

"So what happens now?" Rose asks.

"Finish your tea," Satan replies.

rage Against the printer

The computer scientist takes an awkward sip of Mountain Dew. "And that's how I exploited a bug to take down the most popular ad blocking plugin."

The others shudder. "That's cringe," one replies. "Good thing I use Linux."

"That reminds me," another pipes up,

spraying spit-coated dorito shards across the table. "I've been doing some experiments with printer-based viruses. I'm hoping to showcase it to the ink cartridge manufacturers to see if they like the idea."

"Well, I for one want to hear about it. Printers already suck enough."

"Essentially, it's a gif that has meta-data tricking a printer into accepting it, then spreads to other devices in the area. All the waste will make sales of paper and ink skyrocket!"

"So it literally makes them print out every frame of the gif?"

"Yeah. I can even try it now. Does this place have a fax? That way it'll print out automatically."

There was indeed a fax in the corner of the delapidated pub. Unfortunately, this particular fax had been generously donated by an occult group known as the Serendipity Conclave, who previously used it as a method of sending secret messages before modern technology made it obsolete.

The fax hums. The paper starts to come out. The bartender looks towards the corner, and starts to move towards it. They stop when they see a giant stickman emerge from the output slot. It straightens, turns towards the nerdy group, and its abnormally shaped face stretches into a wide grin, wrinkles deepening around every feature.

It opens its mouth, and speaks. "It's trolling time."

The four friends sit on the grassy hill, watching the spindly stickman give one last grin, before dousing itself in oil and jerkily flying off into the sunset.

"That'll remind me to keep my internet life and real life separate," the dorito guy muses, seeing his creation for the last time.

"What real life?" Mountain Dew chuckles, slapping the ground with his spidery hand and twisting a blade of grass between his fingertips.

"I suppose we'll need to find a new pub now," sighs the linux user. "Preferably one that uses Arch."

"I'm just glad we didn't need to call the Serendipity Conclave. Their shit scares me, man. Computers are cursed enough without bringing actual magic into it."

"Of course not. As my old teacher said, technology can solve all the problems it causes."

"Given all the damage he caused," Dorito adds, "I think it's time I put some good in the world. I'm going to create another printer virus—"

"Bruh," the other three say simultaneously.

"— but this one will rewrite the printer code to allow printing even when running low on irrelevant colours. That'd really stick it to those ink cartridge manufacturers. Bloody parasites."

"Actually, I could get behind that," Linux says.

"True, it's still illegal, so it's still based," Dew agrees.

"I don't see how it would cause anything like this incident, either," Dorito says.

As the singing of "trololol" fades into the distance, the friends stand up, and head back to their parents' basements.

catapult

People don't often think about what it's like to be thrown off a catapult.

But I'm certainly thinking about it now. Ever since I was ambushed, kidnapped, and tied to a rock sitting in a nearby catapult. My captors are winding back the payload that is me to be launched at approximately an angle of pi over seven.

You might think it funny that I notice such a specific fact mere moments before my death. And you'd be wrong, because my death is still many years off.

I planned the whole thing. I knew these people would be here to ambush me. I knew they would attempt to assassinate me by catapult. Why do you think the catapult is there? Do you think catapults just randomly lie around the world? This one is designed to launch a projectile the same weight as me (plus the rock) at twelve metres per second, which will be the perfect amount of speed to get me where I need to be.

Why would I plan such a mistake-prone escape? I'm alone, that's why. No one wanted to catapult me there, so I had to trick my enemies into doing it. I know you must be very impressed at my intelligence.

So it is that when I start sailing through the air it is with the utmost serenity...

I just need to make sure I clear the Wall. The Wall was thought to be impossible to sail over, but everyone who thinks that are pretty stupid. They're the sort of people to think that 1 kilogram of steel is heavier than 1 kilogram of feathers. Whereas I have mastered the physics of motion. Such faith do I have in my ability that I am risking my life to it.

But I soar over the Wall, just as I expected. And beyond it, a pool of water is my projected landing spot. I pat the knife in my pocket, reassured that it's there. I shall cut the ropes before I sink and drown.

The water looks odd though. It's eerily still. I can't see anything in it. What force is at play here? How can water, so chaotic and fluid, be tamed?

Unless it's not fluid. That might pose a problem. It has been quite cold lately. This is going to hurt.

Surely it can't be that thick though. As long as I don't hit it. If the rock side hits it first... I start twisting, trying to little by little face myself away from the icy surface and getting literally stuck between a rock and a hard place before probably getting squashed.

It's alright. I'll be fine.



ART BY LEWIS MATHESON CREED



FILM

ANORA (2024)

Could this be the modern sequel to Cinderella's "happily ever after"?

JUSTIN AGLUBA

"God bless America," moaned Vanya (Mark Eydelshteyn) as Anora (Mila Suda) rubbed her bare buttocks on his crotch the first night they met in a strip club. Our Cinderella was no docile lentil-picker or the modest maiden of the Brothers Grimm but an empowered seductress, a bird-charmer through and through. She's a 23-year-old New York City erotic dancer (who goes by the name "Ani"), and our Russian princeling is a 21-year-old twink sent to study abroad by his oligarch parents. A privilege he squandered in dolce vita.

The first act was a classic rags-to-riches plot, the buttery beginnings of eros, culminating in an impetuous elopement in downtown Sin City, Nevada. Anora is now a proper wife, the rich and respectable woman she dreamt of being, escort no more. They had a lot of sex, often in hurried missionary and doggy style. However, the newlyweds were immediately plunged into the greatest cock-block of fiction, the dreaded peripeteia. What started as a blazing love story became a mere flash in the pan. Vanya's mother, Galina (Darya Ekamasova), sent goons to annul the mar-

riage, catching up to them mid-coitus in Vanya's lavish flat. Vanya answered the door while visually tenting a boner.

This was no fairytale at all but a tragicomedy. Marriage in the first act is bound for a miserable third. Vanya's family was cynical of their union, treating it as a crime gone wrong. The besotted Anora was initially resolute in preventing their marriage shattered. But, Vanya was a playboy, feckless like his father, led by the nose by the domineering matriarch. After dissolving their matrimonial contract, Vanya insouciantly sounded, "Thank you, America," as if his one-week bride was another brothel transaction (bagging a Green Card in return). Anora was heartbroken, retreating from an ill-fated misalliance and back to where she had begun.

Anora is a filmmaking juggernaut exploring feminine strength against masculine weakness and more. It won Best Picture in Hollywood's Academy Awards and a Palme d'Or at Cannes, like 2019's *Parasite* (dir. Bong Joon-ho). Both movies were masters in subverting audience expectations. Conan O'Brien said it best: *Anora's* political message was standing up against a powerful Russian—even when some men could not.



FILM

CONCLAVE (2024)

A gripping political thriller on venerable men in scarlet cassock and zucchetto

JUSTIN AGLUBA

Conspiracies and hushed caucuses unfurl at the Holy See after *sede vacante* (Latin, lit. *vacant seat*) was declared. The Pope had died. Cardinals vote for his replacement to lead the Catholic world amidst intrigues and deepening schism within the ecclesiastical order. *Quo Vadis?*—where should the Church of Rome go—is the central question to Robert Harris's 2016 novel of the same name. When Peter asked Jesus Christ the same question on the Appian Way, the former was inspired to embrace martyrdom as Peter was crucified upside-down on the now-eponymous Saint Peter's Basilica: the proverbial rock on which the Catholic Church was built. *Conclave* is a gripping mystery-thriller where conspirators dressed in liturgical vestments grapple to steer the Petrine congregation as they see fit.

Cardinal Lawrence (Ralph Fiennes) was tasked to facilitate the conclave, of which the successor to Saint Peter would be chosen. Conducted in secrecy, the electorate is locked inside the Sistine Chapel for the poll. Their political machinations were no

different from the laity's democratic ballots, fraught with scandals and motley contenders. Cardinal Tedesco (Sergio Castellitto) was a bigoted fundamentalist. Cardinal Adeyemi (Lucian Msamati) was the Nigerian prospect that hid an unseemly past. Cardinal Tremblay (John Lithgow) was a crafty moderate with questionable integrity. Cardinal Benítez (Carlos Diez) was a Johnny-come-lately with an unassuming persona. Cardinal Bellini (Stanley Tucci) was Lawrence's confidant in lobbying Liberal voters. One of them is the next supreme pontiff.

Gregorian chants are the common incidental music to clerical dramas. But Volker Bertelmann's score of cristal baschet and string instruments produced a uniquely haunting atmosphere—sudden pizzicato sounds boom like a jump scare. Perhaps my petty criticism is on Peter Straughan's slight deviation from Harris's page-turner. Cardinal Lawrence (Lomeli in the novel) was an Italian, not an Englishman. Cardinal Benítez of the Baghdad Archdiocese was a Filipino, not the Mexican Archbishop of Kabul. I don't see a cogent reason for these changes. However, I applaud Sister Agnes's (Isabella Rossellini) character improvements, highlighting the often overlooked role of women in the Church. When adapting a book for screenplay, can we at least agree on being faithful to the source material unless it has a critical message to convey?

It is worth noting that, in the real world, one of the *preferiti* (Italian, lit. *favourite*) to succeed Pope Francis is a Filipino—the first Asian Pope in the long millennium should he be elected. It would have placed the screen adaptation closer to reality. Not because I'm a Filipino myself, but if you have seen the film, you would understand why I press (lightly) on this matter.



UNI

LECTURE ROOM 106-204

HOPE MILO

Located up two and a half short flights of stairs in the Symonds Street Biology building, I give Lecture Room 106-204 Five Big DOOMS.

DOOM ONE: My first two lectures of the year—both of which were TWO HOURS LONG—were held in this pathetic excuse of a lecture theatre. Besides science students, it seems mostly arts and humanities classes have been banished here, including one with 125 students, even though the room only seats around 111.

DOOM TWO: The HEAT. The room's unopenable windows and lack of air conditioning. The stench of BO. By the end of the first hour, nobody could focus on anything but the whirring of the lone Kmart fan, pointed directly at the lecturer.

DOOM THREE: Now, you might ask, "But isn't the location more convenient for arts students, since the 106 building is just across the road from B201?" WRONG! Do you know how often Biology Labs trigger fire alarms mid-lecture?

DOOM FOUR: Despite being in a multi-story building, 106-204 seems to have no accessible route for those who need one. No elevators, no ramps—just endless stairs. If you can't take the stairs, you simply can't get to class.

DOOM FIVE: When the lecture ends, the real battle begins: the stampede down the narrow staircase. Luckily for me, I desperately drank two litres of water in fear of getting heat stroke and had to use the bathroom immediately, missing the commotion.

Seen, heard or read something you want to tell everyone about? Tell us at managingeditor@craccum.co.nz to get your review here next week.

PODCASTS TO FLUSH THE ALT RIGHT PIPELINE

REFRESH YOUR PODCAST GAME WITH THESE WOKE-LEFT APPROVED DEEP CUTS



TIM EVANS (THEY/THEM) | @TIMOTHYRAEVANS

Who Shat on the Floor at My Wedding? And Other Crimes

COMEDY | CULTURE | CRIME

This podcast is number one on the list because it is number one in my heart. Following the story of two lesbian lovers (ultra-woke already) and their Kiwi bestie, we delve into a terrifying tale of two wedding dresses and a turd on the floor. Helen and Karen pursue the unsolved crime of the turd which found its way onto the floor of the women's bathroom on their wedding party boat. Instigated by "Detective" Lauren Kilbie, the severity and seriousness with which this podcast takes itself is refreshing and heartwarming. At the time of this publication, they have recently released a new season of this podcast to sink your teeth into. An absolute gold mine of comedic crime, this limited series podcast will capture you like you wouldn't believe.



Meat Bus

CRITIQUE | QUEER | CULTURE

Simply put, I think Kay Poyer is the next Aristotle. Meat Bus (with the audience name of Meat Riders, or Meat Heads depending on who you ask) is the brainchild of Kay and her boyfriend Alex as they ramble and rant about whatever seems to be on their mind. Which sounds played out, perhaps, but these two have brains bigger than that one law lecturer people love to quote online. Kay and Alex bring a truly American, queer, and at times aggressive perspective to everything they do. If you want to check out this podcast, you don't need to necessarily listen in order given that most of it is just rambling. However, if you want a tiny taste of what the podcast really is, Lady-MissKay on TikTok is where you'll find Kay in her distilled form.



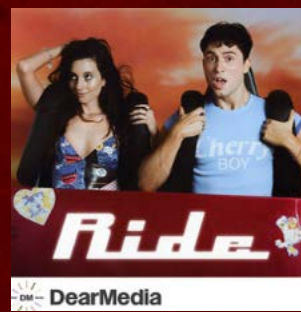
Ride

CULTURE | CRITIQUE | IRREVERENT

This talkback starring Mary Beth Berone and Benny Drama reads as a truly absurd evolution of Entertainment Tonight. The premise: What is something you would Ride (or Die) for that needs to be discussed. The pair each pick a topic and explain why, this week, it is the best fucking thing ever. The inside jokes, banter and timing of the pair should be studied by science. The twin telepathy they have with each other and bandwagoning on the other's nonsense is astounding and (when you're not slightly lost) will convince you that yes, The

Placebo Effect is totally radical.

From topics like Sleeper Trains to Having Gratitude, Benny and Mary Beth have got it all - "and they do it with flair!" This is a podcast you should definitely start from the beginning, but with episodes usually lasting no more than 45 minutes - you'll charge through it in no time.



Who's The Asshole? With Katya

COMEDY | IRREVERENT | INTERVIEW

If you're not an avid Grindr user, this podcast might have slipped you by. Everyone's favourite batshit insane drag queen Katya Zamolodchikova hosts this interview style show. Bringing on gay icons from the US to weigh up the debate: who is the asshole? Usually, you get to know a bit more about the guests usage of Grindr and their approach to hookup culture, as well as whatever unhinged mess Katya has decided to share. It's entertaining, it's lighthearted, it's brain numbing - everything you want out of a podcast strongly aimed at gay men. My personal episode favourite features Gottmik, featured on RuPaul's Drag Race, and explores the world of trans identities and why Katya is so chronically single. Check it out!



Waiting, waiting.

EVA LIN (SHE/HER)

Waiting, waiting.

It hurts. It hurts a lot.
But still I must keep
Waiting, waiting.

For there isn't much else
for me to do besides keep
Waiting, waiting.

It's only two years, they say.
It's not long at all.
You'll be more mature, they say.
You'll do better when your turn comes round.

It doesn't sate me. For

How is it supposed to
when you are held at the starting line
while everyone else gets to run?

How is it supposed to
when you are trapped on earth
while everyone else grabs the stars?

How is it supposed to
when you watch the sand drain
from the hourglass of life
unable to do much more than just keep

Waiting, waiting?



MICROTRENDS OR MICROPLASTICS?

THE TOLL OF TIKTOK'S VIRAL CAPITALISM



ANNABEL ALDERSON (SHE/HER)

TikTok is one of the most influential apps online and has been for years. The algorithm is a masterclass on giving perfectly personalised content to users in order to increase engagement and keep them hooked on the app. The short form content that is peddled out on 'For You' pages drives trends which don't just stay in the app but flow out into everyday life. All over TikTok are fashion videos, huge Shein hauls, and trend predictions, constantly pumping out new styles and microtrends to consumers. In the online space, overconsumption is normalised; it is only natural for it to become normalised in everyday life.

Back in the mid-20th century, the fashion industry had only four seasons: summer, spring, autumn and winter: meaning that clothing design was deeply thought out and trends were driven by fashion designers who worked for these brands. However, fast fashion companies now have 52 micro-seasons per year (that's one per week!).¹ The drivers of trends have also changed. Instead of fashion designers designing trends for consumers to buy, apps like TikTok are themselves dictating the trends through influencer content, which fast fashion companies must then attempt to replicate.

Fast fashion companies are now producing double the clothing they were making in 2000,² and more clothing, of course, means more waste. On average, an item of clothing is only worn 7 to 10 times before being thrown out, resulting in a staggering 180,000 tonnes of textile and clothing waste being thrown away in New Zealand alone every year.³ Microtrends, created by influencers online, result in consumers purchasing more and more poorly made garments at an incredibly cheap price. These clothes will hardly survive 3 washes but the longevity of these clothes is not important – the trends will move swiftly on and the items can be discarded.

This desire to purchase is destroying our planet. The fashion industry produces huge volumes of textile waste which are simply dumped into landfill. Our waterways suffer as microplastics from synthetic fibres, such as polyester, flow into wastewater during manufacture and subsequent washing.³ The second largest water polluter in the world is textile dyeing. The contaminated wastewater from dyeing clothes is thrown out into rivers and lakes, killing fish and other organisms in these

poisoned water systems.⁴

Overconsumption is driving these fast fashion brands to make more clothes than ever and peddle them out at a rate faster than ever, before the trends change again and these clothes become obsolete. The influence of TikTok has accelerated the rate of the trend cycle and contributed to the changing views on clothing and the fashion industry. Unfortunately, the continued growth of such a polluting industry can only be negative for the health of our planet Earth.

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THE ENDING OF FACT-CHECKING

HOW WE ARE DEPENDENT ON PLATFORMS DESTROYING OUR DEMOCRACIES.



FLORIAN BELL

Social media is an essential part of our everyday lives as a life without it seems unthinkable. However, the platforms we use so thoughtlessly are owned by billionaires empowering the alt-right and directly undermining the democratic pluralism in our societies. How did social media become a cesspool of hatred and misinformation with the power to make or break elections? If an illiberal upper class controls a majority of information, are we politically doomed? And what if anything can we do against it?

Meta has recently removed all forms of fact-checking from their platforms, following the lead of Elon Musk after he acquired Twitter (X) in 2022. Instead of unbiased professional fact-checking organisations moderating posts, this will be replaced by 'community notes', essentially allowing the audience to decide fact from fiction. This process began before the election of Donald Trump, but his second has encouraged Meta to double down. Fact-checking has been an essential part of the political realm since the late 2000s with organisations such as PolitiFact but became crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic, as misinformation flourishes in times of uncertainty. Covid was also a turning point, as it demonstrated our incredible reliance on the internet. Although the world stood still practically, it still continued to work in a digital realm, with real-life services and interactions being reduced to a minimum. Meta did have measures against misinformation, but these were relatively weak and obviously did very little to actually stop the spewing of falsities and hate on the internet. In my personal experience, nearly 95% of posts I have reported for misinformation or hate speech; were not annotated or taken down. The structures in place were already scarce and no match for the sheer volume that could be produced by users and bots alike.

Misinformation greatly benefits authoritarian politicians, although

theoretically, on all sides of the political spectrum, the current threat is posed by the right wing. Much of the right-wing push against fact-checking



claims to be protecting "free speech" and "freedom of expression" and implicitly labels fact-checking as a form of woke left-cancel culture. It creates a victim mentality that those who wish to share their opinion cannot because they will apparently be attacked and criticised online. The main issue here is an understanding of free speech. Free speech does not mean one can say whatever one wants without any critiques or counterarguments, as those themselves are also covered by free speech. However, by restricting things such as fact-checking, this is what discourse becomes: an uninformed opinion that has no rebuttal whatsoever. It allows falsities to stand, which plays directly into the hands of right-wing politicians, who themselves often bend the truth or exaggerate entirely to create bogeymen regarding minorities or other marginalised people. In the name of free speech, the actual debate is destroyed, and unvetted hatred is allowed free reign.

In its origins, the internet presented an unprecedented opportunity for cultural and social change, in its endless scope of knowledge, an opportunity for humans to learn and unite with the other rather than judge based on ignorance. An issue thwarting this potential of the internet was its monetisation and the massive flow of capital that followed

it. A new generation of unfathomable wealth became possible, and this monetisation eventually led to monopolisation as Facebook purchased its biggest rival, Instagram, and the internet, which was once diverse, has now descended into the power politics of capital. With Google dominating most of the smartphone market through Android and Elon Musk owning X/Twitter it is now a small handful of companies that own most of the public internet traffic. It was only a matter of time before the big business of the internet specifically aligned with those willing to consolidate the company's power and make their profit streams flow more than ever. Why did we think that superficial liberal values would trump profit in the long-term? Why would the super-rich fight for democracy if their goal was always power and profit?

Although the system seems rigged, there are multiple ways for us to counter these developments. An easy one is to avoid these platforms where we can, not to completely delete our presence as this is unrealistic, but to attempt to limit the interactions we give these tech giants. For example using alternative messaging apps rather than Facebook or Instagram or using browsers that aren't Chrome. Here, I wish the entire university email network wasn't tied to Google, for example. Furthermore, in times of misinformation it is essential that we fight it where we see it, but not with judgement and anger (as justified as these might be), but with understanding and empathy so that no victim mentality can arise. Engaging in civil and respectful debate is the only way to actually be heard, even though our counterparts are unlikely to do the same. These are very easy steps to at least limit the complete oligarchy currently threatening our society. If the truth is presented not as a vilifying attack but as a tenet of shared humanity, perhaps there is hope.

CLUBS



CAMPUS

Check out these cool clubs on campus, come back for new clubs each issue.



Auckland University Property Student Society

@AUPSS.NZ
EXEC@AUPSS.CO.NZ



Te Rākau Ture | The Māori Law Students Association

@TERAKAUTURE
EXEC@TERAKAUTURE.ORG.NZ



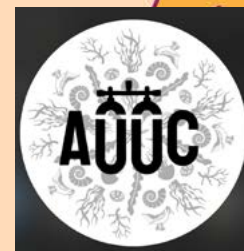
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"Stay the fuck offline"



SADIE MAY YETTON (SHE/HER) | @JOANOFACKLAND

"Stay the fuck offline," Courtney Love says, unflinching and formidable, staring down the barrel of someone's iPhone at Paris Fashion Week after being cornered into dishing out advice. "I'm not even joking. No one's going to hire anybody that can't focus. None of my employees have social media. Stay offline. Really stay off TikTok!" She's deadly serious. Those iconic red lips have been known to stir up some controversy, but now they are shaping an authoritative plea directed at the girls like me who watch her movements through our screens. It's clear she knows what she's talking about. My resolve hardens. Hearing those words from the mouth of a certified hero finally enables me to act on the idea I've been flirting with for a long time — deleting all of my social media platforms. After a full decade of maintaining a social media presence, I'm fatigued.

All the aimless, attention-hungry algorithms have filled my head with fog, keeping me in a semi-daze of anxiety at missing out, as well as anxiety at knowing too much. Whatever happened to the things I liked to do, I think, like turning my focus to a creative outlet for hours, days, weeks at a time? It scares me that my child self was most likely a sharper model

than I am today — unclouded, uninfluenced in her view of the world, steady and dedicated. I've spent an unforgivable amount of time away from her. Action must be taken. I delete all social media from my phone, and put it the fuck down. A few minutes later I walk away from it completely, without an overarching anxiety that I might be missing out on some earth-shattering event. The last time I recall being free from that feeling, I was an eleven-year-old. Dr. Clarissa Pinkola Estés, the famed psychoanalyst and author of *Women Who Run With the Wolves* (an absolute must-read!), speaks of the Overculture — a term she coined to describe the dominant culture which society must assimilate into, causing us to lose all our unusual talents in the process.

At the time of the term's conception it was meant to encapsulate the mainstream attitude of the nine to five lifestyle, but it struck me as having a different relevance today. Because I've never heard a word that more expertly sums up the beast that most people with internet access grapple with — an overexposure to online culture! At our fingertips we have too much, too quickly, and we are all aware of the paralytic effect that access has over us. The Overculture lives in our

devices, and is so all-consuming that we can forget real life happens around the screen, not inside of it. The Overculture is so much bigger than me, and it swallowed me whole. How are you supposed to draw a breath of your own when you're constantly drowning in everyone else's unlimited output? But once you turn it off, the Overculture ceases to exist. On the first night without social media, I write in my diary for the first time in recent memory: "I can't wait to be bored and mindful again. I'm going to fill the time with things that matter, because time is the one thing you can never get back and that you always need more of. I'm going to dedicate myself to my talents, because I was blessed with many of them. I'm going to hone, shape, craft, live, breathe and excel at what I'm good at. This is how you live a life fulfilled." I knew the truth behind that when I was a kid. I got blown off course for a long time. But I'm the one sailing this ship, and it's blessedly easy to navigate back to better waters. Just stay the fuck offline!



ART BY LEWIS MATHESON CREED

LOST AND FOUND IN THE CLOUD

WHEN THE INTERNET NEVER FORGETS (BUT YOU DO)



VIVIENE BUNQUIN

Include Illustration in folder. If you're anything like me, technology has only made you increasingly nostalgic and indifferent at the same time. My phone of five years had accompanied me right from the start of my never-ending degree — finally, it retired, it took stockpiles of bittersweet memories along with it. Unlike your neurotic yet arguably more sensible engineering friend who backs up all their data, I lost most of the photos, videos, and incriminating screenshots I hoarded over the years. But (un)luckily for me, I had also been a chronic oversharer on social media, so I could retrace my digital footprints and continue my bittersweet stroll down memory lane.

This rather long-winded exposition is all to say that I soon grew fascinated by the paradoxical ideas of ephemerality and permanence in online spaces. Digital tools such as iCloud, Dropbox, and Google Team Drives have conditioned us to create, amass, and archive content with unbridled, abundant mindsets — so much so that we take our sheer capacity to do so for granted. However, perhaps equally true is our tendency to stock libraries of spur-of-the-moment screenshots that will never see the light of day again. What is it about having virtually infinite storage that makes us even more likely to forget the very things

we strain to remember?

At a macro level, this question points out the issue of ubiquitous content creation. Media scholars argue that social media platforms give rise to the “cult of the amateur,” whereby former barriers to content creation and distribution have

Cancel culture has highlighted the equally affirmative potential of online content, ascribing one's (at times) isolated behaviour or comment to inherent moral deficiency, therefore warranting the maximum extent of expressive online condemnation. It would be no exaggeration to say that the chilling effect of mob-like online

vitriol is decisively real *and* permanent. To an extent, online platforms have succeeded in demanding accountability in cases where problematic behaviour could have been easily swept under the rug. For better or worse, maintaining an online presence is not entirely devoid of consequence, after all.

vanished mainly, so much that the online landscape is saturated with excess content lacking objective quality nor meaningful purpose. Contrast this with historical information dissemination, where publishing was a carefully curated process, and the sheer absurdity of our current digital excess becomes apparent.

But such obscurity is not always guaranteed. We've all heard the phrase, “*Beware of the skeletons in your closet.*” Encountered fearmonger tactics about the workplace panopticon and how your employer — no longer Jesus — is always watching you.

And, albeit it is a trite conclusion, perhaps humanity finds the Internet so enthralling precisely because it is a double-edged sword. The modern digital landscape, with its compelling arsenal of contradictions and dualities, reminds us that the same tools we use to immortalise and safeguard are just as capable of devastating erasure and obsolescence.

Indeed, this article, this edition of Craccum, and the unimpressed comment you're about to leave — are no exception.



The Ghosts We Date In Cyberspace

ARE WE ALL FALLING FOR DIGITAL ILLUSIONS THAT LEAVE US QUESTIONING OUR OWN TRUTHS?



SAKSHAM (HE/HIM) | @SAKSHAM21097

It took us years to build trust with friends and family, yet when we step into the realm of online dating, we fall for profiles that may not even be real. We spend so much time perfecting our "best versions" online, displaying an airbrushed image of ourselves, but deep down, we wonder: Would they accept the real me? The me with acne, dark circles, and the crooked nose I try to hide behind filters. Would they embrace my frizzy hair, the stretch marks, the scars that have shaped who I am? Or would they ghost me the moment the truth is revealed?

This is the danger of the online world—the world where the self we present isn't always the self we are. It's easy to hide behind a screen, to create a version of ourselves that we think others will find more likable and more attractive. We craft these "perfect" profiles, feeding a lie that we're happy, confident, and glowing when, in reality, we're questioning if anyone will ever love us for the person we truly are. Yet we stay hooked, scrolling, hoping to find someone who might see past the digital mask.

But here's the kicker: the more we engage in this virtual reality, the more it seeps into our real lives. These profiles, these "ghosts," invaded our minds and turn into self-doubt. Every message, every like, every fleeting interaction becomes a reflection of our worth. We replay conversations, searching for clues, for validation, only to find none. And when the ghost of a conversation disappears, we're left questioning: Was any of it real?

It's all too easy to fall for the illusion. We see the hazelnut-colored eyes, the charming smile, the perfect line of text

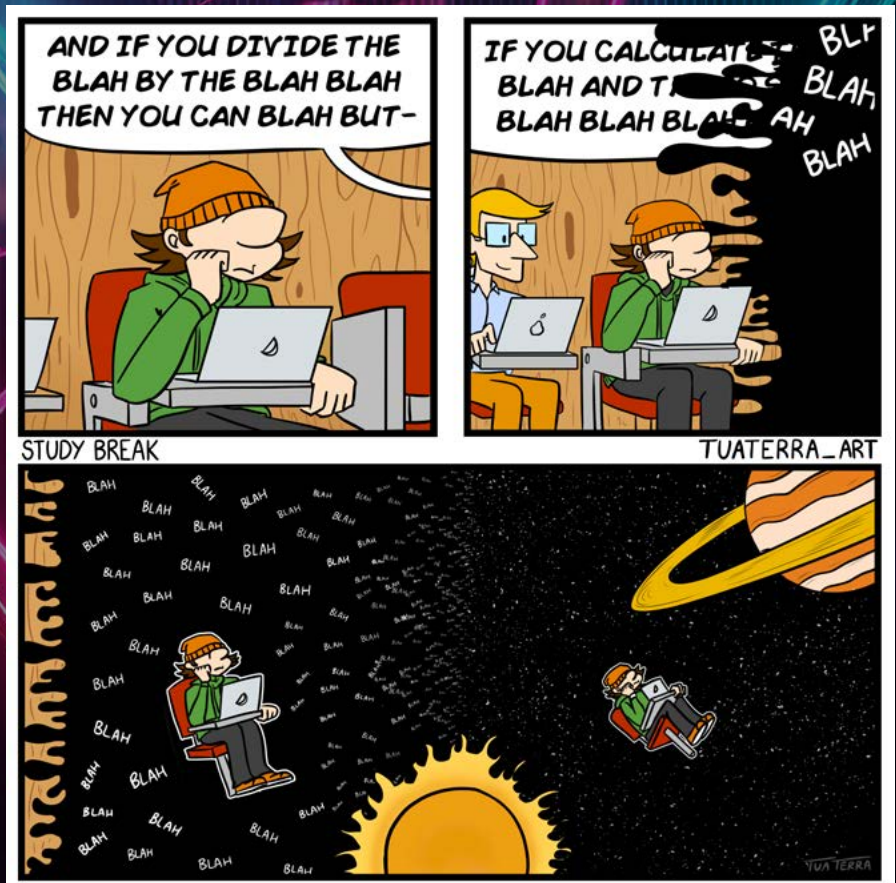
that we can't stop thinking about. But when that ghost fades away, we're left wondering if the virtual connection we thought we had was ever meaningful at all. Was I haunted by a carefully curated image? Did I ever know the person behind the screen? Or did I just fall for the idea of someone who was never really there?

We're becoming zombies of a dating fad, addicted to the online world and the constant chase for approval, leaving behind a trail of other "victims." The truth is, we're all searching for something that may not exist—real connection in a place where nothing feels real.

So, as we continue to interact in this digital space, let's ask ourselves: How much of this is really us? And How much of it is a ghost we've created?



ART BY LEWIS MATHESON CREED



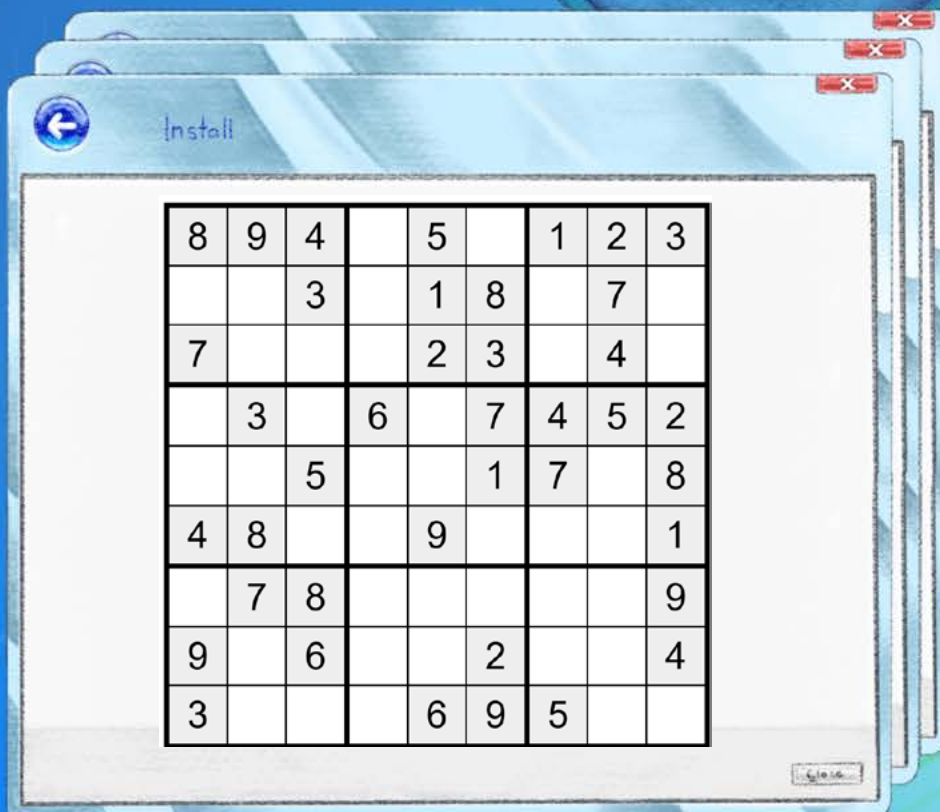
PUZZLES

Across

2. Type of insect that features on the 'Chat the Weird Out' logo
4. Title of the first YouTube video
6. Visionary Korean artist who came up with the term 'Information Superhighway' in 1974
8. International AI conference UOA is hosting this May
10. Emeritus UOA professor who co-invented the R programming language

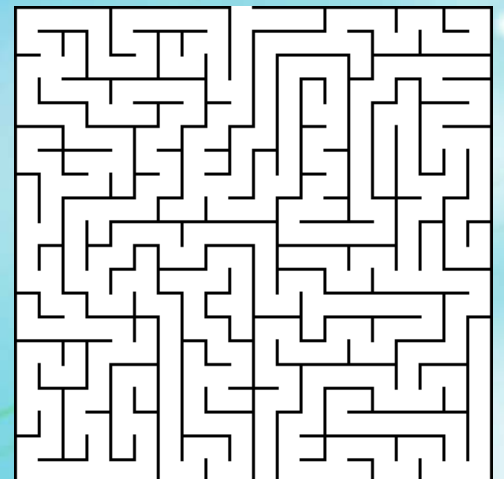
Down

1. Craccum's web address
3. University with the largest E-Sport arena
5. Movie star and inventor who helped create the tech behind WIFI
7. UOA course which made headlines for using AI instead of a lecturer
9. Name of the mental health chatbot developed by UOA's researchers



bReak the code and read the message:

**SoX0f2XndkD0clWiBonae3SiAY
5mKJTqBUDbBYPxdoSuKJTqBUD
jeoPqcZTnA3SiAoXqcY5mKJTq
BUDbfiHaeaDlclHwB2XmNkDQd
3TnKlnOeaDyAZPbcY5pNEDo
d3KifljncZKif29aBEDvAZmiA
oWiclHwBJmid24ifljnKJTqcZLmNi**



HOROSCOPES



AQUARIUS

(JANUARY 20 – FEBRUARY 18)

You're the Wolf of Wellesley Street this week. Dusk doesn't endorse tax evasion, but anything you invest your energy in this week will be fruitful. Take that as you will you handsome devil. Just please don't ask freshies out on dates unless you are one. You're not actually Leonardo DiCaprio.



GEMINI

(MAY 21 – JUNE 20)

Bad News for you too. The planets are optimally aligned to fuck you over this week. Since holing up in halls under a funerary mound of blankets isn't an option for us all. I suggest you watch your back and pack a hurricane-grade rain jacket with a BS proof vest for good measure. I hope you don't have overdue karma. If you do, well, maybe don't be so passive aggressive in your emails next time ;) I see you. I get bcc'd into everything.



LIBRA

(SEPTEMBER 23 – OCTOBER 22)

If you were thinking of getting back with your ex, under any other circumstance, I would say HELL NO. But I'm offering a special deal this week only, if your feelings are still lingering this week, stop listening to Hello by Adele, and actually say it to them. No texts. Phone them or say it irl. Personal connections require people, and so face-face is the only way you're gonna make gains with your relationships this week. Heads up tho, kinda awks but, you'll just have to taste Dusk when you're kissing them. Soz!!!



PISCES

(FEBRUARY 19 – MARCH 20)

I sense you're in a group project, or have one coming up soon, so be careful. Take the lead and make sure you're all on the same page this week. Shit is going to hit the fan if you don't. Only you can prevent it with your gift of foresight, Cassandra.



CANCER

(JUNE 21 – JULY 22)

Great, you've pulled yourself together. Gold star. Use this brief window of stability to get shit off your chest, just don't be upset if people take it the wrong way. The other star signs are kinda going through it this week. Time for you to show you care. Attend your tutorials and talk to randoms in the Quad. Use that giant heart of yours to make campus a better place. Thanks sugar :)



SCORPIO

(OCTOBER 23 – NOVEMBER 21)

Step 1: Did you join a club? If yes, skip to Step 3.
Step 2: Join a club.
Step 3: Ask when is their AGM?
Step 4: Mark that date in your calendar.
The stars are telling me this is gonna be your people. Your crew. For uni and for life. Act now for a brighter future, fam.



ARIES

(MARCH 21 – APRIL 19)

Don't apologise for being a mess this week, it's just where you're at, hun. Don't fear, a fresh breeze courtesy of Mercury doin' its speedy boi ting is gonna start cosmically blowing away that O-Week hangover brain fog. In the meantime, take each day as it comes. Treat your life admin with the delicate care of TEU's ritualistic chalk offerings to the goddess Dawn, and you'll find yourself aligned in no time.



LEO

(JULY 23 – AUGUST 22)

Hope you've got your rice cooker ready for some cheap eats because you made it rain last week. Scratch that you made it fucking pour. And now that you are poor, it's time to review your financial decisions. No more Boy/Girl math excuses. No Uber Eats. And make sure your student fare is active on your AT Hop card. Sorted? Well, sorted, except for that giant debt you owe on StudyLink... Don't worry, Dusk will let you keep your kidneys for now. x



SAGITTARIUS

(NOVEMBER 22 – DECEMBER 21)

Are you about to quit your shitty part-time job? Is your manager being a dick? (Probably a Taurus, Gemini or Aries aye? That'd be about right). Don't worry. Dusk is on your side. What isn't meant for you, isn't meant for you. One door closes, another door opens. Have I said enough proverbs for you to get the memo? ;)).



TAURUS

(APRIL 20 – MAY 20)

Eek! You've had too much dodgy day old Domino's pizza, bud. Hate to break it to you but that ain't soul food. It's hyperpalatable cardboard courtesy of our trans-national billionaire overlords. Overdose and your spirit withers. I can't stress this enough darling: DO NOT OPERATE ON INSTINCT THIS WEEK. I know this goes completely against your nature, but please take time to re-find yourself and digest all of that junk food out of your system. You and your bowels will thank me later.



VIRGO

(AUGUST 23 – SEPTEMBER 22)

Who are you? No seriously. Ask yourself that question. I'm expecting a brainstorm amount of reflection here. I'll wait ;) How much of that was defined by who you once were. How much of who you are now is defined by what others say or have said you are? Are you okay with that? You're not, I know, so ironically this is your sign to be offline this week. Don't worry, Craccum will be waiting for you when you come back. Touch grass. Go for a stroll to The Domain. Life is short, uni is even shorter, live in the moment.



CAPRICORN

(DECEMBER 22 – JANUARY 19)

You've got big bigot "-ist" energy oozing off your aura this week, captain. You might think there is no way: 'wow Dusk fell off this week'. Your lack of faith has been duly noted. But whether you like it or not, that ick is there. When someone annoys you, reflect why. That's your "-ism", chief. You won't fix it overnight, but consciousness is the first step to being a not dick.



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