

C R A C C U M



A Messy Existence

Saia Halatanu gives some top tips for navigating student social habits

Serious Spooking

An in-depth analysis of *Buzzfeed Unsolved* from two lowkey fans

Cool, Calm and Code-llected

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ISSUE FIVE CONTENTS



6 NEWS

CLIMBING POLLS

The Māori Party reaches new heights



12 LIFESTYLE

KEEPING THE BEES ALIVE

Do your bit to save our buzzing buddies



24 ARTS

TELL-Y YOU WHAT

Jordan Margetts muses on the movements in television



10 COMMUNITY

IT'S A SHAW THING

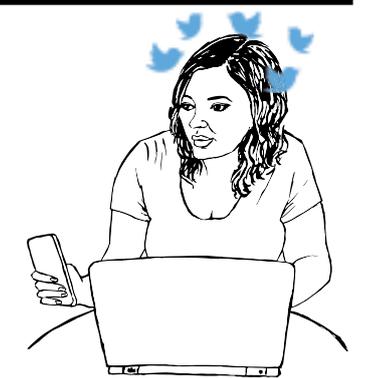
Green Party Co-Leader James Shaw on coalitions



18 FEATURES

READYING FOR RETIREMENT

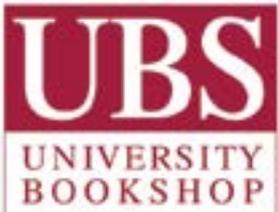
What's so super about increasing the age for superannuation?



33 COLUMNS

A REVELATION ON RESTRICTIONS?

Rachel Berryman looks at YouTube's LGBTQ restrictions



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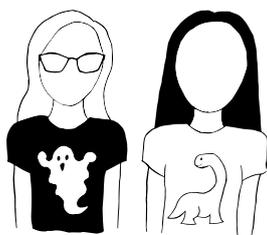
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Catriona Britton



Samantha Gianotti

Water we doing?!

You know that feeling you get when you're watching the latest episode of *Riverdale* whilst eating Proper Marlborough Sea Salt Crisps? Your throat closes up, your lips pucker, saliva collects at the back of your mouth in a thick pool that you have to gulp down? This is called thirst. You may put this down to Archie's shirtless scenes, or Veronica dancing all sweaty in the club. Heaven knows Jughead is not merely a tall drink of water; he lives up to his name and some of us want a damn jug (Cole, please let *Craccum* interview you—you supply the water, we'll supply the jugs *ayyy*). But you may just put this down to the salted chips (realising you've consumed the whole bag in one sitting), which is fine. So you reach for that cool glass of water next to you and take a sip. But what's this? Why are you feeling guilty for having a sip? It's just water, right? Not much to it—flows easily from your tap?

Despite water and sanitation being recognised as a human right by the United Nations in 2010, this all too precious resource, often taken for granted, is in jeopardy. If you didn't know this already, well it's time you got clued the fuck up, son! Our generation is experiencing the impacts of climate change first hand and therefore we are the ones responsible for backpedalling the shit outta the river that the previous generations have led us down by exploiting our natural resources. Issues around water have dominated our headlines recently, so we are going to dissect them and the consequences that we may now face. Sit down and grab a drink (be advised: you may need something a little stronger than water).

First, rewind back to the first week of semester and the rain that came down by the bucketload. We are still reeling from the effects. With the rain that came down a week or so ago, more silt has added to the build-up of silt that is clogging the Hunua dams. Our water quality is the worst it's ever been, and we face shortages for months if the rain contin-

ues off and on like it has been. Watercare continue to advise every Aucklanders to restrict their usage by 20 litres per day, and for the city to restrict its daily usage to 400 million litres per day. Of course, it is hard for industries to comply with this restriction, but personal efforts should be carried out to maintain this restriction. If significant savings aren't made, partially treated water will be released that we'll need to boil. Long rainy spells are bound to become more frequent as the years progress. If anything, this should be a wake-up call for Watercare; the way we manage our water needs revisiting as the impact of climate change becomes apparent and changes in the weather occur.

So what are we doing with our pristine, drinkable water that isn't currently silt-ridden? Only bottling it up and shipping it overseas for some big companies' private profits! Not a big deal? WRONG. Our freshwater rivers are in the worst state they've ever been—not so fresh, you might say. Irrigation and farming have degraded the quality of our water to such an extent, many rivers are not safe to swim in. Why is the Government allowing the sale of water consents to offshore companies who merely have to pay a small administration fee to extract millions of water per day to bottle and sell in other countries? We need to clean up our act, because the way we're heading, there won't be much left for us and future generations. There is a public interest in the sale of water and at the very least we should see a return. The Government needs to realise this.

Where do we move to from here? We're scared of saying the word for fear of an angry mob of Swandri-clad individuals driving their tractors and utes onto campus and setting up a protest in the Quad outside our office, tying up voodoo doll imitations of ourselves on fence posts with number 8 wire wound tightly around our necks. So we'll whisper it quietly... farmers. There seems

to be a staunch mentality inherent in the minds of these great pioneering and hardy folk of our past that agriculture is the be-all and end-all of our nation's economic growth. But the reality is that they are the ones contributing to our rising greenhouse gas emissions and polluted waterways. So is a safe means of economic growth really worth it? When they're not complaining about the weather on the news (it's either too dry or too soggy), they're using millions of litres of water to produce a little bit of milk and the effluent produced by their stock is contaminating our waterways. A change of mentality is needed. There are other means to farm that are more environmentally friendly than what we're currently doing. Our 100% Pure image is at stake.

Let's end on a positive note. We think we've driven home the importance of water, just like Sweetwater River in *Riverdale* is of central importance to the main mystery of the town. In the last month, the Whanganui River was granted the legal status of a person under a Treaty settlement, meaning it now has all the rights, duties and liabilities that come with personhood and can be represented in court proceedings. Of course, the Whanganui River is a little bitter due to its past treatment, as seen on its Twitter account @WhanganuiRvr: "Quite frankly, if you don't like the H in my name you can whuck off" and "You'd be bitter and snarky as well if you'd had Michael Laws in you". But in all seriousness, it is important to give a voice to those things that cannot speak for themselves. Māori have a deep and spiritual connection to the land, and we can all learn from this. The earth provides for us, and so we must care for it, act as kaitiaki (guardians), and stop exploitation at all costs. It is a wonderful gift to have something that is the source of all life and helps to sustain us as living beings. Let's not put it to waste. *Ko te wai te ora ngā mea katoa*—Water is the life giver of all things. ♦



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ANTI-FASCISM GROUP FORMS ON CAMPUS

BY ELOISE SIMS

A page calling itself “Auckland Students Against Hatred” has emerged online, in what its members are calling a response to the recent activity of groups such as the reformed Auckland University European Students Association, and the “Western Guard”.

The group was formed two weeks ago with the formation of a Facebook page, which currently boasts nearly a thousand likes.

In speaking with *Craccum*, a spokesperson for the page claimed they had formed in order to educate people on white privilege and race, and to counter actively the presence of white supremacist groups. While the group said they were initially averse to “running a big public response”, they decided to do so after the O-Week media frenzy over the few members of the Auckland University European Students Association.

“Following the glee from some of the groups that they had been given a platform, we decided to go public to show there is a substantial opposition to white supremacy in Auckland,” the spokesperson said.

The need for the move was also heightened, they claim, by the recent activity of members of the “Western Guard” in placing “white rights” posters around University.

Pictures of the white supremacist posters were uploaded to the Overhead @ University of Auckland Facebook page by an account claiming to be that of a Muslim woman, under the name “Samantha Haid”. It is now alleged to be a fake profile created for media publicity.

The website of the “Western Guard” claims it is looking for recruits who “must be physically fit or training to be so”, but not “homosexuals, transsexuals, or any other

kind of mental illness”.

AUSA President Will Matthews said, however, he believes the group is just “one or two angry people putting up posters on campus—rather than an organized movement.”

“AUSA will be watching the situation closely for any developments on this, but we are also confident that the student community is more than capable of scrutinising suspicious groups to ensure the safety of our campus.”

In response, Auckland Students Against Hatred claims they will be getting active on campus soon—and encourages students, in the meantime, to “just call out the hatred when you see it”.

“There’s this big narrative of all ‘liberals’ being ‘snowflakes’, but all these racists seem to be way more sensitive.” ♦

MĀORI PARTY SURGE IN POLLS

BY PATRICK NEWLAND

The most MPs that the Māori Party has ever had in the New Zealand Parliament is five—and if the new Colmar Brunton poll released last week is anything to go by, they could be represented by five again, after the results showed a spike in support up to 4%.

This is the highest result for the Māori Party in any poll since the last election.

While this poll would still be considered an outlier at this stage, it’s certainly good news for the Party, which has been in the headlines in recent weeks over its support for RMA reform.

Its agreement with Hone Harawira not to stand a candidate in the northern Māori seat of Te Tai Tokerau has also gained much media attention. The agreement is designed to give the party a free crack at the remaining six Māori electorates.

The party’s share of the vote in most polls has been higher in recent months—hovering around the 2% mark, which would most likely keep them with the current two MPs, if they do not pick up new electorates.

The Colmar Brunton poll had National at 46% and the Labour-Green bloc at 41%. If reflected in voting, this would put National in prime position to form a government with either New Zealand First—who rested on 8%—or the Māori Party.

Labour leader Andrew Little recently dismissed the poll, saying that it did not reflect the feeling that he had on the ground.

The news is not all rosy for National though, with a Roy Morgan poll from the week before showing them in a dead heat with Labour-Greens at 43%.

The long-term “Poll of Polls” trend, done

by Curia Research, predicts a parliamentary make-up of the centre right on 58 seats, with the centre left on 52.

In such a situation, New Zealand First hold the balance of power.

Both Colmar Brunton and Roy Morgan, interestingly, did agree that Jacinda Ardern has leap-frogged Andrew Little in the preferred Prime Minister category. While Bill English is behind where John Key was in terms of popularity, he still has a clear lead, even when the two Labour members are combined.

The Colmar Brunton poll of 1000 voters was taken between March 18th and 22nd. It has a margin of error of +/- 3%.

The New Zealand Roy Morgan Poll was of 847 voters between February 27 and March 12. It has a margin of error of +/- 3.5%. ♦



LAW SCHOOL GENDER REPORT RAISES CONCERNS OF SEXIST RHETORIC

BY LAURA KVIGSTAD

The Auckland Law School Gender Report has uncovered concerning sexist rhetoric amongst both the school and the student body.

Dr. Anna Hood, a lecturer in Law, and Julia Tolmie, an Associate Professor of Criminal Law, conducted an inquiry on sexism at the University of Auckland in late 2016. This was in response to complaints of sexism from female students in the first semester.

125 students participated in the survey, which was held after five discussion groups for Part II, III, and IV female Law students. Of the participants in the survey, 69% identified as female.

The report states, “In recent years, while the majority of law students at the University of Auckland have been women (in 2016, 69% of all Part II students were female), the views expressed in this report suggest that women do not set the culture of the Law School.”

“Male views, attitudes and approaches are dominant in many aspects of Law School life and many women frequently feel uncomfortable, intimidated, excluded and marginalised.”

Quotes from several anonymous students within the report show the concerns of last year’s student body:

- A pregnant woman “had a long and stressful wait to see if she could be excused from a compulsory workshop due to pregnancy that I felt was extremely unfair. The initial response of ‘pregnancy is foreseeable’ was ridiculous especially in light of some other students’ reasons for missing a compulsory class”.
- In regards to Part II Law School Camp,

students “spoke of forced drinking and highly sexualised activities. In particular, there was an event some years ago in which a sexual act took place in public, was filmed and then placed online for people to see.”

- “I once wore a short skirt and above the knee stockings and a prominent executive member asked his friend too loudly whether I was a stripper.”
- “Many of the male students thought [a female Contract lecturer] was sexist because their female classmates got better grades on average (sounds like male privilege to me—they expect to be better than us).”
- “I got a job recently and was asked twice if I got it by giving favours (to keep this PC). Also have been asked the same about getting my good grades. However not one of my male friends have ever been asked this. I’ve also been told that... I deserve to be paid less than a man in the same job as I have a uterus and may some day use it (all these comments came from Law students).”

Rowan Everton, a former student in the Law School, was asked about her experience in the Law department—she recounts instances of sexism in her first semester classes.

“A female student made the comment during Law 121... ‘That a majority of female rape victims are liars.’ A lot of guys in the room clapped for her, which I and a lot of other people in the room were horrified at.”

Everton also adds that the lecturer ended the discussion quite quickly, and she did not personally find “any systemic discrimination in the Law School itself”.

Stewart Sowman-Lund, a current Law and Arts student, states in an interview with

Craccum that “while I myself have felt somewhat excluded from Law School culture due to its elitism... I have never witnessed any of the sexism that is described in the report.”

“This is certainly something important that needs to be addressed, as it is perhaps telling that I—and probably many other students like myself—was unaware that the culture of the Law School is as described.”

In response to the question, “Does sexism exist in the Law School?”, 58% of students said “Yes” whilst 45% said “No”—echoing Sowman-Lund’s sentiment that many students are unaware of such a culture.

New Zealand Law Society President Kathryn Beck agrees, however, that such a culture exists.

“Women make up 48% of all lawyers working in law firms. But just 28% of the partners and directors are women.”

“In New Zealand’s 14 largest firms, women actually outnumber men. But they make up just 25% of the partners and directors. They only make up 18% of Queen’s Counsel.”

The Gender Report concludes that, “It is apparent that simply hoping that time and more women entering into Law School will be enough to shift the problematic practices and behaviours that are identified in this report is not sufficient.”

Dr. Anna Hood offered comment on the Law School’s response to the report. She states, “There is a very strong commitment from both staff and students to work towards remedying the issues.”

“We are already seeing some changes. For example, a women Law students’ group is being established; a parenting room is being set up; and a group of staff members is going to look at further steps that can be taken.” ♦





DOWN IN THE DRUMPFs

Michael Calderwood offers an opinion on the constant shortcomings in media coverage of the 45th President and the Democrats' electoral woes

On March 14th, left-leaning American TV pundit Rachel Maddow tweeted “BREAKING: We’ve got Trump tax returns. Tonight, 9pm ET. MSNBC. (Seriously).” This sent shockwaves through the media and across the internet, receiving more than 80,000 retweets and 160,000 likes.

For months, liberals had talked about what we might find in Trump’s tax returns—did he have suspicious ties to Russian oligarchs? Did he avoid paying taxes entirely? Many believed this could be *the* smoking gun that could take down Trump.

84 minutes later, *The Rachel Maddow Show* premiered on MSNBC and—after several commercial breaks—the big reveal finally happened. A former reporter for the *New York Times*, David Cay Johnston, had obtained one of Trump’s tax returns from 2005.

And the smoking gun? It didn’t exist—it just showed that Trump paid \$38 million in income taxes that year on an income of \$150 million. And it wasn’t even a full tax return—it was just two pages. Nothing about ties to Russian oligarchs.

Nothing about any particularly egregious tax dodging. Just a boring tax return.

Some began to theorise that maybe Trump himself had leaked the return. After all, it makes the media look like they have chased after a non-issue for months, while making Trump look not so terrible. And most importantly, it provided a distraction from coverage of Trump and the Republicans’ unpopular plan to repeal portions of Obamacare. This would result in an estimated 24 million people losing health insurance, while cutting the Medicaid programme that provides health insurance for vulnerable people.

This whole charade has been emblematic of the media’s outright failure to cover

Trump effectively.

The real story over the past few weeks was that the Trump administration wants to implement a policy that is literally going to kill thousands of people by taking away tens of millions of people’s access to affordable health care. Yet the media focused its outrage on the sensational: a leaked tax return that revealed nothing of interest. This has been true since Trump’s campaign began nearly two years ago, and since he was elected President. Rather than reporting on the serious, downright evil effects of Trump’s policies, they focus on the absurdities of Trump’s late-night social media ravings. The average voter in Ohio or Michigan doesn’t care about what Trump tweets at 3am. They care about whether they can afford to pay the bills or see a doctor when they get sick. Until both the media and political establishment get back in touch with what people actually care about, progressives and the Democratic Party will stray further and further from power.

Many people who consider themselves to be knowledgeable about politics were proven resoundingly wrong on November 8th.

For context, I am originally from the United States and I voted in the election.

I never thought Donald Trump would become President. Sure, I never bought into the idea that Hillary would win by a double-digit landslide, but I also never really thought that Donald Trump would get the magic number of 270 votes in the Electoral College, let alone 306.

During the Democratic primary, I believed that Bernie Sanders was a stronger candidate than Hillary Clinton both policy-wise and electorally for a multitude of reasons, but I thought that *at worst*, Hillary would just barely make it into

the White House. The idea of Trump becoming President never really crossed my mind. As the debates of the primary faded and I became a strong supporter of Hillary Clinton’s candidacy, I decided that Hillary Clinton would probably pull off a relatively stellar win—maybe not to the level of Obama’s, but still decent. Yet we now have (increasingly far-right) Republican control at levels we haven’t seen in a long time, and a Democratic Party that is at its weakest in decades. I was wrong. We were wrong.

This attitude was, to an extent, due to the media’s reliance on polling and “big data”. I read the polls like everybody else—they made it look like the election was in the bag for Hillary. It was not a question of *if* she would win, but by how much. While Hillary’s numbers were strong in general election matchups and on many of the issues, in retrospect, there may have been a bit of selective poll reading going on. She had serious, glaring weak points in polling on her honesty and trustworthiness and whether she had the ability to bring change. It doesn’t matter whether or not people’s perceptions of dishonesty and corruption were correct, because *perceptions* are what matters. Donald Trump’s immense conflicts of interests, which we are seeing every day in the dystopia in which we now live, are far more corrupt than a mishandled email server. But voters did not see it this way: days before the election, a poll found that Trump led Clinton by 9 points when asked who would be better at dealing with government corruption.

But beyond over-reliance on data, my failure to anticipate President Trump likely stemmed from a failure to listen and leave my own bubble. I *wanted* to believe the Huffington Post’s prediction that Hil-

lary Clinton had a 98.2 per cent chance of winning the election by a landslide. There were signs that this was not the case, of course—but I, like the media, did not see them. The people that I discussed politics with and whose opinions I listened to were mostly like me: left-leaning, educated and middle-class, and from coastal metropolitan areas. And much of the Democratic Party leadership is similarly removed from ordinary, working-class voters in the middle of the country, far from the metropolitan coastal cities where most of the American political and media elite reside. A racist, sexist wave was coming, buoyed by a deep frustration with the economy and political establishment. Yet the media and pundit class did not see it coming.

Of course, the million-dollar question remains: how can Trump and the Republicans be defeated? Clearly, the Democrats' strategy failed—and it's time for something new. Some have argued that Democrats need to be more moderate on social issues—essentially, ceding some ground to the alt-right on social justice issues. I reject this position: the Democrats should not (and don't need to) throw marginalised groups under the bus to win over Rust Belt working class voters. Protecting LGBT rights, women's rights, and fighting for racial and social justice must continue to be core Democratic values. And we should certainly not ignore the fact that systems of white supremacy and misogyny played a major role in Trump's ascension to the White House.

But there is one area where Democrats have gone away from their core values: the economy. Democrats used to be the party of the people. If you asked that working-class woman or man in Michigan if the Democratic Party cared about them, they would probably laugh in your face. This is the crux of the issue facing the Democrats. Hillary

Clinton's message in 2016 was too confusing, and almost entirely focused on attacking the outrageous things Donald Trump was saying or doing. (Ironically, Brian Fallon, Hillary Clinton's former campaign press secretary, retweeted Rachel Maddow's tweet about the tax returns, commenting that he thought it was the "holy grail".) It turned out that people didn't care about the outrageous things Trump said or did on a daily basis. They thought that, despite his flaws, Trump might just help them find a decent-paying, secure job.

A recent study by the Roosevelt Institute, a progressive think tank based in New York, offered a solution to the Democrats' electoral woes. Donald Trump won Macomb County, Michigan by double-digits. Interestingly, Barack Obama carried this county by double-digits in 2008, and by a margin of 5 points in 2012. And yet this county may have delivered Michigan to Donald Trump—along with the Presidency. What would make these strongly pro-Obama working class voters switch their vote from voting for the first African-American President to voting for Donald Trump? The Roosevelt Institute decided to conduct a series of focus groups there to find out what happened.

The study found that while some Trump voters are "put out of reach by their racist sentiment, Islamophobia, and disdain for multiculturalism", many are not. A majority of the voters they interviewed were much more open to more populist, progressive Democrats like Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren. They were more likely to be supportive of Democrats that want to take on Wall Street, oppose trade deals, oppose tax breaks for corporations, and get endless, secret money out of politics. While some Democrats believe that focusing on Russia and tax returns will be the winning issue for the 2018-midterm

elections, it's clear that adopting a more populist economic message will be a more effective path to power.

Voters wanted change, and if they can be shown that Donald Trump won't bring that—while Democrats can and will—then Trump and his far-right politics can be defeated. For example, when these Macomb voters were told of the Trump administration and Congressional Republicans' plans to enact cuts to Medicare and Social Security, which provide health care and retirement payments for the elderly, they became angry and alarmed. When the researchers described Trump's cabinet as "full of campaign donors, Goldman Sachs bankers (bailed out by the taxpayers) and people who use undocumented workers in their homes," they began to question whether this is the populist, swamp-draining Donald Trump that they voted for. There were similar reactions when these voters were told of Trump's plan to give away huge tax breaks to the wealthy.

While some Trump supporters may be racist, sexist, xenophobic, Islamophobic, many are not and can be won back to a more progressive politics.

Democrats and progressives will need to speak to these voters with a populist economic message. And it will be incumbent on the media to cut through the "alternative facts" and focus on the issues that matter—Trump's disastrous and hard-right policies, his Cabinet filled with wealthy campaign donors and bankers, and the nasty Republican agenda that will harm the majority of society.

Only then can Trump be defeated. And as an American, I sincerely hope that Democrats will wake up and realize that they need to be ready to fight to defeat Trump—so that we can take back our country. ♦

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In Conversation With: James Shaw

It's an election year, so Craccum will be looking to wrangle interviews with as many politicians as we can. Hannah Bergin had a chat with Green Party co-leader, James Shaw, about working with Labour, the MMP system, and the trouble with "purist" voters.

SO WHILE YOU WERE LIVING OVER IN LONDON, HOW DID YOU FIND LOCAL POLITICS IN LONDON COMPARED TO LOCAL POLITICS HERE?

Well that's an interesting question because I'm also a British citizen and it was a deliberate choice to go into politics here rather than there. There were a number of factors, one of which is that the British political system is incredibly sclerotic and stuck. They've got this professional class of politicians, and that seems to be virtually the only way to get there. And then when you get there, the system is so massive and stuck that your ability to create change is quite limited. So, on the one hand, yes, they have an outsized impact on global affairs, but New Zealand has a very open political system—we actually have one of the most constructive political discourses in the world, and the country can change quickly.

DURING THE ELECTION, HOW DOES THE GREEN PARTY PLAN TO EXPAND ITS VOTER BASE WITHOUT JUST POACHING VOTERS FROM LABOUR?

Well, there will be some voters who have voted Labour in the past who choose to vote for us—and this is why we have the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Because we have evidence that shows that when we cooperate, both our votes tend to rise, and when we compete, one of them goes up at the expense of the other. You have to think about the net gain. Some of the things that Labour has to do in order to attract votes from National will sufficiently annoy some of their other voters that they then vote for us. But actually, that doesn't matter because the net gain between the two parties is such that we change the Government. The extent to which we swap voters between us matters less when we still manage to grow the overall left vote. And in order to do that you've got to persuade people who have been voting National in the past to vote for you.

HOW WOULD YOU RESPOND TO THE PERCEPTION THAT HAVING A COALITION GOVERNMENT ISN'T AS STRONG AS A SINGLE-PARTY GOVERNMENT?

If you look at proportional representation parliaments in Europe, and especially in Germany, which is an MMP system, then you can hardly

argue that they're unstable. If you look at all the Scandinavian countries, they tend to be very stable, but also their coalitions are much more evenly balanced—it will often be three parties of roughly even size. To me, that's a true MMP parliament and I don't think that we've got one yet. I think that culturally we're still stuck in First Past the Post. If you look at media coverage, there are basically two media narratives. The first is "Who gets to be the Prime Minister—is it the red or blue team?" And then the other is "Hey, look at all the crazies on the edge!" The Greens have a bit of a problem because we don't fit either of those narratives anymore. So for us it's often hard to participate in the media landscape during the election campaign. Also the MOU was a deliberate thing to say to voters you can have two parties who are more evenly balanced than the current arrangement. We've got differences but the point is that we have a framework for working through those differences.

SO THE GREENS CHOSE NOT TO STAND A CANDIDATE IN OHARIU, BUT THERE ARE PROBABLY A LOT OF GREEN VOTERS WHO ARE PRINCIPALLY OPPOSED TO A FEW OF THE THINGS THAT GREG O'CONNOR, THE LABOUR CANDIDATE, HAS STOOD FOR IN THE PAST. HOW DO YOU MAKE THOSE TRADE-OFF DECISIONS?

It's important to look at the bigger picture, and I've said a few times that I do not endorse some of the positions that Greg has held. But if you want to change the Government, does it really matter if he's just one member of Parliament, if the bigger goal is that we want to remove National?

I do get a bit irritated sometimes with some people who are so purist that they say, "No, we will never do anything that requires compromise," and in the meantime GHG emissions are growing, and child poverty is getting worse and river pollution is getting worse—and I'm like, *well how bloody useful is that?*

DID YOU CONSIDER NOT STANDING CANDIDATES IN ANY OTHER ELECTORATES?

We looked at a whole swathe of electorates and decided that Ohariu is really the only electorate in the whole country where the outcome

of the constituency vote affects the make-up of Parliament. In Auckland Central for example, if Labour won the seat, it wouldn't actually make a difference to their ability to form a government. But in Ohariu it matters. And on the other side of the equation, if you don't stand a candidate in an electorate, your party vote in that electorate goes down. So if we want to change the government, both parties have to stand candidates everywhere in order to drive up the party vote of both parties.

DO YOU THINK THERE WOULD BE ANY CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE YOU COULD WORK WITH NATIONAL SO THAT THERE IS AT LEAST SOME INPUT FROM AN ENVIRONMENTAL PARTY?

The conclusion that we've come to in relation to the National party is that you cannot make progress on the environment and maintain the economic agenda that the National party has. So, they would actually have to abandon their economic agenda in order to achieve the environmental outcomes that we are looking for.

WHERE DO YOU SEE THE FUTURE OF THE GREEN PARTY? YOU'VE MOVED AWAY FROM YOUR ACTIVIST ROOTS AS YOU'VE BECOME MORE MAINSTREAM—HOW DO YOU SEE THAT DEVELOPING?

I don't like to say that we've moved away from our activist roots because all of those are still there, but we've broadened our appeal and support base. The other thing that's happened is that while yes, the Green Party has evolved, so has the New Zealand public opinion—to the extent that it's starting to change Labour and National as well. So many of the things that we've been banging on about for 20 or 30 years are now pretty mainstream, especially amongst the younger generation. It's just second nature—like why wouldn't you want 100% renewable electricity? Why wouldn't you want really awesome public transport? Yeah, so just get out and vote! So I see the future of the Green Party as a much larger player. I'd like the New Zealand political landscape to have at least three significant parties between 20–30% each. And I see us getting into that kind of bracket. I think that it's possible! ♦

Fighting Prejudice: It Starts With You

By *Danielle Parsbotam*

I am half New Zealander and half Indian. I am also a New Zealand citizen, and have been my entire life. For personal reasons, I seldom identify with my Indian heritage, and so my friends would say everything about me is Kiwi except my skin colour.

While I have rarely suffered from prejudice or stereotyping, lately, more often than not when I have visited a petrol station or a café, the cashier has asked where I'm from or what my nationality is. Usually this wouldn't phase me, and I would confidently say that I am a New Zealander. But with the current political environment, and the animosity directed by many towards minority groups, I have feel the need to justify why I look the way I do. I shouldn't have to, I shouldn't need to. But the unconscious necessity for us to judge a person within seconds of looking at them, placing them into pre-made social constructs, is so strong that it's hard to ignore in this day and age.

One day I rocked up to the till at the BP petrol station, when the cashier guy asked:

"Are you from the Middle East?"

"No."

"Oh, where are you from?"

My immediate answer should've been New Zealand, which would have frustrated any preconceptions this person had of what a New Zealander should look like. Instead I told him I was half Indian, as I knew the reasoning behind his question. His reply shocked me:

"Oh that's in the Middle East eh? Or at least near the Middle East? They're basically all the same."

Other conversations have revolved around where my parents are from, leading to the conclusion that I'm not a New Zealander, but an Indian-New Zealander.

Coloured people have to carry around a hyphen, which does not bear the weight of the words evenly. When you describe someone as an "Indian-New Zealander", you're making "Indian" the most salient aspect of that person's identity—an aspect that holds real, tangible consequences in a country built upon white, Western beliefs.

Social categorisation theory argues that just as we categorise objects into different types, we categorise peo-

ple according to their social group memberships. Once we do so, we begin to respond to those people more as members of a social group than as individuals.

We start exaggerating the differences between individuals from various social groups, while also perceiving members of the same social groups as more alike than they actually are. This over-generalisation paints a picture that all members of a social category are identical and should therefore be thought of and treated the same.

Once we start doing this, it becomes very easy to apply stereotypes to the members of different communities without having to consider whether the characteristic is a true representation of the individual. Just because I'm brown and have features not typical of a white person, it doesn't mean my New Zealand nationality should be questioned.

Education can help foster and encourage democratic values, including social justice, equality, tolerance, and appreciation of diversity. It can also enable students to critically examine and challenge mainstream perspectives and hegemonic narratives that serve as tools for prejudice construction. I took a course called "Race, Indigeneity and the Media." It opened my eyes to the dangers of universalisation and normalisation, and made me appreciate the intricacies involved in the concept of race.

Prejudice thrives in environments in which it is perceived to be the norm, but when society disengages in that practice, it dies. Promoting a social norm that reduces discrimination, prejudice, and stereotyping can help shape the behaviour of individuals for the better.

This is why we should not simply rely on our thoughts, feelings and intentions to initiate change, but rather act upon them. We need to call out prejudice, speak out against stereotyping, deconstruct the dominant ideologies and question the foundations behind them. We can be the change in this country, but we need to first translate those internal dispositions to external actions.

Not one New Zealander looks or acts the same. We all come from different cultures and different backgrounds, and it is this that contributes to our country's unique identity. It is time we start treasuring this rather than questioning it. ♦

Upcoming Community Events

On World Health Day, take care of yourself and hit up an

Organic Mechanic "OM Shack Session".

When: Friday 7th April, 6:30pm–10:30pm

Where: Organic Mechanic, 69 St Georges Bay Road, Parnell

Price: Free to attend!

Age restrictions: All ages

Event info: "Late night at the OM shack: live music, Kombucha on tap, Kava bowls, plant powered food, alcohol-free".

Keep updated about the event at:

<HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/EVENTS/1373457089344443/>

Want to help save the animals and our planet over lunch? Hit up the

Charity Vegan Sausage Sizzle

in our very own UoA quad!

When: Monday 10th April, 10am–3pm

Where: University of Auckland Quad

Price: Vegan sausages are \$2 each

Age restrictions: All ages!

Event info: All proceeds from this event will go towards supporting Gentle World, a not-for-profit organisation based around vegan education. Gentle World has recently suffered severe flood damage in their educational center.

You can learn more about the fundraiser via the Auckland University Animal Rights Group's

Facebook page here:

<HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/AUANIMALRIGHTS/>

and about Gentle World at their website:

<HTTP://GENTLEWORLD.ORG>

CHARITY/ORGANISATION OF THE WEEK

It's World Health Day on April 7th, so this week we're bringing your attention to a surprisingly common condition: epilepsy. One in ten New Zealanders will be diagnosed with epilepsy in their lifetime, and while many respond well to medication and/or surgery, some people still need extra assistance.

The New Zealand Epilepsy Assist Dog Trust is an organisation that can provide such support. They

train epilepsy assist dogs to help Kiwis with epilepsy live their lives to the fullest. You can learn more about what they do, and how you can support them, at: <http://www.nzepilepsyassistdogs.org.nz> ♦



What's On

Caravãna Sun THE KINGS ARMS

This Friday 7th, indie band Caravãna Sun are playing at Kings Arms Tavern with support from Strangely Arousing. Doors open at 8pm and tickets can be bought from UTR.

Ben & Jerry's Free Cone Day 160 PONSONBY ROAD

Brace yourselves. Tuesday is Ben & Jerry's Free Cone Day. We don't lie—get there, people.

Anzac Eve HERALD THEATRE

If you're interested in an incisive look at New Zealand's history, and examining the ideas we have as a country around WWI and Gallipoli, check out Anzac Eve, a play by Dave Armstrong. It runs till Wednesday 5th April at the Herald Theatre. Tickets are \$15 for students.

Weave BASEMENT THEATRE

From Tuesday 4th–Saturday 15th April, Kate McGill's charming show Weave is on at the Basement Theatre. It is a light-hearted examination of New Zealand and the people who live here. Each night the audience will get to choose which four people they want to meet. There are twenty verbatim accounts from actual New Zealanders to choose from, so pick well! Tickets can be found online for \$20.

Chromacon AOTEA SQUARE

Chromacon is a bi-annual event where independent artists from all over New Zealand flock to Aotea Square to show off and sell their talents. This art festival will be full of stalls where you can browse and buy as much art as you may ever want or need. From illustrations, to comics, to sculpture, to animation and videogames—Chromacon has it all. ♦



Bee Aware

By Grace Hood-Edwards

Bees are dying. Stop and think for a moment about when was the last time you saw an actual bumblebee, or even just a bee. Compare that to how many you would see as a kid. You may or may not have heard this, but the bumblebee—that curious, aerodynamically improbable insect—went on the endangered species list this year. Now I believe I have a sensible, moderate fear of bees and the potential pain that comes with their sting; but I am heartbroken at the idea that we might see our greatest pollinators die out in this lifetime. Not only is it a tragedy, but it has huge consequences for this planet.

Around 30% of the world's crops rely on the cross-pollination which bees provide, and they also pollinate 70 of the 100 crop species which feed 90% of the world. That's a lot of numbers, right? Without bees, a chain reaction could be initiated. We would lose the plants that bees pollinate, which would lead to losing the animals who ate that food. It's not simply that half the fruit and vegetables at the supermarket would disappear, but that the Earth would significantly struggle to hold a population of 7 billion people.

When I told my Dad the bumblebee was now on the endangered species list, joining many of its bee brethren, he immediately started doing research into how to build a hive and become a beekeeper. This is someone who stepped into a wasp hive as a child and nearly died from the amount of venom in his system. A true horror story we were told repeatedly about as children, with poisonous insects in every orifice. Yet, he understands how vital bees are and wants to do his part.

Whilst beekeeping probably isn't something any of us students can take up, there are little, easy things we can do to try and help out our local bee populations.

If you have a garden at home, try planting some wildflowers or a herb/vegetable garden. It's a lot of work, but if you have the means it would definitely be worth it. Beautiful flowers and free veggies? Yes, please.

Check out seed bombs. Like a Lush bath bomb, but for your garden—you can just throw them onto your grass and eventually they'll grow into a colourful patch of wildflowers.

If you do tend to your garden, try to do a bit of research and find natural pesticides. Pesticides are extremely harmful to natural biodiversity, and should be avoided—if used at all.

However, if you want to do absolutely zero work and

still help the bees then here's an idea for you. Stop mowing your garden. Weeds, such as clovers and dandelions, are perfect for little pollinators. You can look at your overgrown lawn and be proud of your lack of action. How often can you say that?

If you're buying your fruit and veg locally/organically, that's really great. In supporting the people at the farmer's market, you're propping up some of the major champions of bees who use natural practices to cultivate the remaining bee populations. It's probably quite difficult on a student budget to do this though, but if there's anything you're buying locally, buy local honey. Splurge a little bit on this natural sweetener, and be grateful for its existence.

Did you know that bees get thirsty? If you see a bee lying on the pavement, it probably isn't dead, just dehydrated. You can place a spoonful of water and sugar next to it in order to give it the liquid it needs. To help prevent dehydration, you can simply set out a small saucer of water in your garden for bees to drink from. Cute!

Tell people about bees, and try to encourage them to find out more. There's always more to learn, and always little, creative ways to help out. I recently found out that bees can smell pheromones, and that's why the best thing to do is to stay still and calm if one comes near you. Your pheromones change when you're afraid or angry, and these pheromones can be a trigger for them to sting you—dying in the process.

For The Love of Bees is one of the groups where you can learn more about what you can do locally. An Auckland artist, Sarah Smuts-Kennedy, started the movement as research in relation to her previous work around energy and biodiversity. It is a collaborative art project that is trying to make Auckland the safest city in the world for bees. They're doing this by building an infrastructure that will support and grow the local populations and colonies of bees. The project set up three beehives in early March in Victoria Park, with plans for the next set of hives in Ponsonby's Myers Park. They offer free courses on creative sustainability practices from Monday to Friday at their hub Griffiths Gardens (42 Wellesley Street), just a skip and a jump from uni. ♦

Check out their website at: www.fortheloveofbees.co.nz/

GUIDE TO... Being an Adult

So you're at uni now, getting a degree to further your career. Maybe you're flatting or living in one of the uni halls. Once you leave high school behind and enter the "real" world, shit gets scary. Shit gets hard. But DW—we're here to help with some bangin' advice on Being an Adult.

Eat Your Greens: Once you leave home, making dinner becomes a real thing. So does buying groceries. Try and eat well. Don't let those late nights drinking and long days studying put you in a food slump. Make a conscious effort to include fruit, vegetables, grains.

Be a Clean Human: Keep your room clean (by this we mean make sure at least ¼ of the floor is visible—we're not tyrants). If flatting, create a roster where everyone is given a different cleaning task. You'll be surprised how much being surrounded by cleanliness prevents unwanted stress.

The Honesty Policy: Be honest with friends, family and flatties about what you think and how you feel. If you're unhappy with something, let it be known in a sensible fashion. The time for bitching and backstabbing should be replaced with honest communication where issues are addressed in a calm and reasonable way.

Be Practical: One of the less-fun parts of Being an Adult is the need to be practical. Being an Adult means making sure you get enough sleep, staying hydrated, exercising and eating well. It also means prioritising the things in your life. Got an assignment due next week? Skip the bars this weekend.

Look After Shit: By this we mean: water your plants, mow your lawn, feed your pets. If none of these are relevant, make sure you at least look after your clothes. Hopefully by now you know how to use a washing machine correctly and remove stains. If not, get Googling. ♦



Pita Bread Pizza

My sister loves this quick and simple recipe for pizza. I overheard her saying just yesterday that the reason she loves it is because she feels so healthy eating it—and it's basically pizza. I don't know how true that is, but I know it tastes great.

Ingredients

Oven
Baking tray
Cooking spray
Pita bread (You can buy the small pocket ones, or larger wrap-style ones)
Tomato sauce (When I say tomato sauce, I don't mean ketchup. Look for something you might put on a pasta)
Cheese
Tomatoes
Toppings (As many as you want!)

You need to:

1. Preheat the oven on fanbake to 180/200°C. If you're using a baking tray, give that a spritz with the cooking spray so they don't stick.
2. If you're using pockets, you can split them in half. So one pita pocket will give you two mini pizzas.
3. Spread your tomato sauce over your pita bread.
4. Grate your cheese and sprinkle it on.
5. Slice up some tomatoes. One large tomato is all you will need for both sides of a pizza pocket.
6. Add your tomatoes and toppings. If you have favourite herbs or spices, go nuts.
7. Pop it in the oven for 5–10 minutes. Keep a close watch, as we mainly cook this by eye. When it looks nice and crispy, with the cheese melted, take it out.
8. Enjoy (and feel slightly superior for finding a way to eat pizza on the sly). ♦

TOP 5... Vegan Eats

Misters

12 WYNDHAM STREET

While Misters isn't a completely vegan establishment, it has some delicious vegan options. Lunch consists of different ethnic bowls (e.g. the Turkish bowl), and the menu changes every few months to fit with fresh ingredients. Everything is created onsite and is free of dairy, gluten and refined sugar.

Lord of the Fries

SAINT KEVINS ARCADE,
183 KARANGAHAPE ROAD

Most of y'all have probably heard of Lord of the Fries by now—the Australian ethical fastfood chain that specialises in freshly cooked fries,

homemade sauces and vegetarian or vegan burgers and hot dogs.

Il buco

113 PONSONBY RD

At Il Buco you can buy pizza by the slice. What a dream. The Italian pizzeria has six types of vegan pizza and eight types of vegetarian. I recommend the American—onion, spinach, vegan chorizo and mozzarella.

Revive Cafe

33 LORNE ST

This healthy food chain is 100% vegetarian with vegan alternative options for almost everything, and their nine salads, frittata and hot pots change daily. There are now a bunch of cafes around town, AND there's a student discount—just sign up to the emails for a unique code and voilà!

Giapo

12 GORE ST

Vegan ice cream is a real thing guys, and those legends at Giapo are perfecting it. Giapo offers a range of delicious vegan ice creams and sorbets, predominantly using coconut cream as an alternative to dairy. Vegan flavours include Organic Lemon, Samoan Caramel, New Zealand Peanut Slab and Pacific Gardens. ♦





HOW TO MESS UP YOUR LIFE

Saia Halatanu offers some questionable words of wisdom to help you navigate student social habits

DISCLAIMER: THE AUTHOR OF THIS ARTICLE IS AN ALCOHOLIC, TOBACCO-ABUSING VIRGIN WITH NO SENSE OF RHYTHM AND NO REAL FRIENDS. ALL ADVICE OFFERED BELOW IS TO BE TAKEN WITH CAUTION.

There's a brief moment of fascination as you wake up the morning after a demanding night of alcohol-fuelled chaos. It lasts all of three seconds between the initial moments of semi-consciousness, and complete awareness. Before you take your first alert breath or open your eyes, it signals its arrival with the primary bliss of being alive. Following this bliss, a mental stocktake occurs with the aim of identifying any sources of pain. The first few attempts to scan the body usually return positive feedback. A full set of limbs are still present, and all fingers and toes accounted for. No soreness yet. So far, so good.

There are, however, two problems with these first scans— i) because it's still booting up, the brain is functioning sub-optimally and, ii) the effects of last night's abuses are largely unmoved by the frivolities of the arms and legs; their work is undertaken in the body's vital organs. After the initial three-second moment, as you arrive at full consciousness, the very real consequences of the night before begin to set in.

An attempt at a deep breath sets off the first blip. Your body forces out a spluttering fit of coughs as you try desperately to purge your respiratory system of the remnants of cigarette smoke stuck to your internal walls. This sudden jerking of the body sets off another chain of blips, your brain now becoming more attuned to the scale of the damage. Liver failing. Kidneys pickled. Head throbbing. Heart rate erratic. All of this and you now notice how heavy your arms and legs actually are. Another Saturday morning greeted by the feeling of death. Ahhh! Nothing like a near-death experience to reinvigorate the mind.

While some of us are now familiar with this feeling, others—especially those just entering their tertiary lives filled with naïve optimism—may be uninitiated. No worries. Your youthful sense of adventure combined with the pressures of assignments and the cripplingly awkward and confusing matrix of making new friends, losing old ones, #fucktheaters, and maintaining a desperate professionalism to make sure that you don't end up unemployed will un-

doubtedly lead you to partake in a little vice. To go through university solemnly disciplined and level-headed is likely considered an act of masochism. That being said, it's helpful to remind ourselves of what Samuel Butler wrote in the seventeenth century: "The extremes of vice and virtue are alike detestable; absolute virtue is as sure to kill a man as absolute vice is, let alone the dullnesses of it and the pomposities of it." Apply this caution to all of life's undertakings, including the following.

In between the rigours of uni life, should you find it of any use, or if you'd just like to read a viewpoint juxtaposed against what your mother said about hard work paying off (or something), here is a basic outline to university partying, or as it's otherwise known: "stress relief".

DRINKING

Aldous Huxley is credited as saying that "chronic and inescapable sobriety is the most horrible affliction". How right he was. Ever notice how paralysing reality can be? The immediate predicament for any student is fairly bleak. A major portion of us have committed ourselves to a debt which we'll be paying off for an unforeseeable period; the benefits we hope to gain in exchange for the debt won't manifest any time within the foreseeable future—if at all; and there is no guarantee that we'll even complete all of this formal education nonsense. Combine those concerns with the difficulty of seeking and obtaining shelter and sufficient income in the largest city in the country with one of the highest living-costs in the world and there's only one clear option: into your drink, my dear friends.

It's amazing how a small amount of alcohol can transfer the most immediate and pressing issues in one's life to the periphery of one's thoughts. In fact, the benefits of the well-lubricated student are multifold. A glass of wine or two can give your wit an uninhibited sharpness, improve your social skills and give you all-round acumen. Meeting new people and

making connections can also be a beneficial result of the drink (more on that later). Some also argue, after having a glass or two, that a bottle or two (or three or more) can only enhance all your innate positive traits—this is still up for debate and might be a subjective matter best left to personal experience. However, here is some counsel on the matter: being shitfaced can be fun but should be left to the very special occasion or the very special drinker.

Words of caution regarding drinking: there are often consequences for those who fail to judge correctly their consumption, sometimes these problems manifest themselves in the form of handcuffs or detention cells, other times as kidney and/or liver failure.

TOBACCO

Don't let them trick you. Smoking has always been cool. Did you ever see James Dean looking uncool with a cigarette hanging from his lips? And all this nonsense that modern-day puritans spew about it being bad for you—did you really think you were going to live forever? Tobacco appreciation is a dying tradition being extinguished by self-important political dogmatists, government authorities and social media's #fitspo-do-it-for-the-gram hacks. They say "life is too short"; well, when you get to a certain age and meet enough people (especially these #fitspo fuckers) you'll realise how long and tedious it actually is. What's a few minutes off the tail end of it?

The great thing about smoking is that it acts as a great filter for potential friends. Native Americans once smoked tobacco to seal agreements. Today, Marlboro's capacity to bring people together at the bar is still evident. "There have been ... moments of conversation perfumed with ashtrays and cocktails and decent company, which I would not have exchanged for a year of ordinary existence," wrote Christopher Hitchens whilst battling a cancer brought on from smoking. This is the kind of heroic stoicism and moxie that all students should be looking to emulate.

FEATURE

While it does possess the power to bring people together it also repels those aforementioned don't-you-know-that's-bad-for-you? puritans and the my-body-is-a-temple types that you wouldn't want to be chummy with anyway. You can feel it in their glares and the way they look down their noses at you as if your smoking is a sign of deviant or illegal behaviour. Did they forget that Orwell was an avid smoker? Or that Hemingway produced his best works from within a cloud of tobacco smoke? Or that Einstein attributed calm and objective judgement to pipe smoking? This is potentially the greatest residual joy to be had from a cigarette—the ability to piss people off by minding your own business. Stick a finger to those that think they're better than the rest, and smoke a durry.

Words of caution regarding smoking: lung cancer.

DANCING

Dancing can make the bravest of men tremble. Cicero said of dancing: "No sober man dances, unless he is mad." It's a rather quick way to look like a fool and potentially to end all hopes of meeting new people. It might even cause you some difficulty in retaining your existing friends. You're either good at it or you're not, but if you don't mind being the fool then you might take comfort in Theodore Hook's words: "The greater the fool, the better the dancer."

Whether or not you're any good at it, dance invariably rewards your health. It has been proven to burn calories and improve blood circulation. Moreover, it tones muscle and enhances fitness. It's the exercise of the night and if done often enough, it can replace your entire gym regime. If you don't mind the way you look

while doing it (this can be helped with a little Shadows Draught), and you're fairly confident in the loyalty of your friends, dancing has no real downside and certainly has an upside for your health.

Not only are there health benefits to dancing, but it can be wildly amusing. The fun found in dancing is known to all people, from infants to the elderly. If the right tune is heard at the right time, even the manliest of rhythm-empty men cannot contain their limbs. It might start off with an innocent toe-tap or a head nod but more often than not—particularly should he have a dosage of drink and tobacco in him—it will result in a full-blown attempt at a "whip" or "nae-nae" or something they swear they didn't see in that Channing Tatum movie. Generally, women find dancing more natural. Maybe it's because they possess some gene that remembers the hardships their maternal ancestors faced and so they understand that dance is a shortcut to happiness. Or maybe it's because they know, as Robert Frost did, that "it is the vertical expression of a horizontal desire."

Words of caution regarding dancing: The #fitspo people will definitely be better than you at dancing.

FLIRTING

They say that "starting is half the task". Bollocks. When it comes to the art of seduction, starting is only that—starting—and for those who are brave enough to start, this can often be where it also ends. Flirting is by far the most difficult task to attempt on a night out. It comes with an inherent tendency to hold your pride and ego hostage with a high likelihood of scathing damage. Don't listen to your well-meaning but

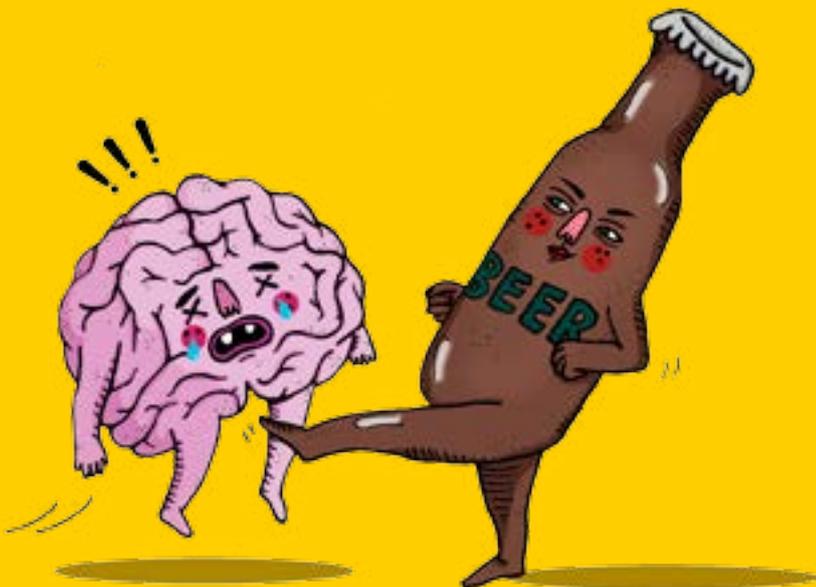
idiotic friends who tell you to "just be yourself". If it were that simple then why are you still crying yourself to sleep at night listening to mid-2000's R&B whilst clutching a two-litre tub of ice cream? Upgrade yourself, be cooler, be smarter, be sexier—be someone else. Flirting is a surgical venture that requires absolute precision at every step and has no room for error. A little liquid courage can take the edge off and excite the action, but be careful! Too much liquid and you risk losing your accuracy.

Flirting often starts before formal introductions are made on a night out, usually with a glance that turns into a gaze that turns into a smile. This is a skill that needs to be constantly ameliorated and refined and so it should be practised in the mirror as often as possible. There is a timing to the glance-gaze-smile that needs to be perfect. If timed too short, you risk looking bored or uninterested; if timed too long you risk being charged in a court of law. A reciprocated glance-gaze-smile could be a conduit to a verbal introduction and a more reliable form of communication in the form of a conversation—remember that while a glance or stare can convey a lot, it can't exactly be quoted word for word.

Once you get to talking, you can ask questions like "can we have lunch sometime?" and get a direct answer such as "no" without confusion. The difficult part is trying to gauge the likelihood of getting a "yes" before actually asking for some contact details. For this, it might be more reliable to pay attention to their body language. Are they laughing at your jokes? Is their body pointed towards yours? Are they continually glancing at you? Are they touching your arm? If the answer to all of the above is "yes", there's still a chance that they don't know you exist.

Words of caution regarding flirting: The heart can be a fragile thing; if the alcohol or tobacco hasn't already had some effect on it, this type of behaviour almost certainly will.

In conclusion, remember there is no end goal to life. While hard work and dedication does increase one's chances of success, there is no guarantee that success inevitably leads to happiness. Success isn't a destination, and to spend your every waking moment in pursuit of this concept is to be susceptible to missing out on enjoying your youth. For some, none of the undertakings mentioned above will incite any desire. For others there may be a spark of willingness to experiment. Either way, don't wake up when you're 40, having chased success your entire life, to find that you've made it but at the expense of good memories. ♦



KIA ORA!

It's Week 5 already. WHAT. It only seems like last week that AUSA was signing up new members, and getting pumped for all of the Orientation events that were coming up. Savage and Marshmello might be gone, and we're all getting ready for our mid-semester assignments and tests, but that means that the mid-semester break isn't far away, and you get two glorious weeks of relaxation!

Hopefully you've noticed that AUSA has undergone a bit of a facelift this year. We've been looking at our values, our services and our goals, and we've realised that what AUSA is all about is providing the best experience possible for all students. That might be through events that leave you buzzing, through making sure you can afford to meet all your costs in a week, or through providing you with the right advice to make sure you can achieve your best. That's why we are now operating under the motto 'Your Student Experience'. Whoever you are, whatever campus you're on, and whatever your degree is, our mis-

sion is to be there every step of the way - making sure your time at the University of Auckland is the best.

With this in mind, we've just launched the AUSA REWARDS initiative. Check out www.ausa.org.nz/rewards to find out what kind of rewards and discounts you get with your AUSA membership.

Not a member yet? Just head into AUSA House to sign up. It's totally free, and we'd love to have you!

AUSA'S EGGCELLENT EASTER

Date: Wednesday 12 April

Time: 12pm - 3pm

Location: City Campus, TBC

AUSA is so eggcited for Easter and we hope you are too! Our AUSA easter bunnies will be out and around before you

head off for mid-semester break, so be sure to stop by to get involved - all completely free!

What is Easter without an EASTER EGG HUNT?! Eggs will be hidden in the General Library and all over the city campus. The search begins at 10am!

Show us your AUSA membership sticker to receive a FREE easter egg. Allergy friendly eggs will be available - dairy free, gluten free, nut safe and no added sugar. If chocolate isn't your thing, grab a hot cross bun. If you're not currently an AUSA member, you will be able to sign up for free on the spot.

Give Toss the Carrot into the Bunny's Mouth a go, and you could be walking away with a boxed, luxury egg :O

Decorate an egg. At the end of the day, the AUSA Executive will pick the 5 they like the best, and you will win a tray of free range eggs for your flat!#studentlife

Keep up to date with further announcements on the AUSA Facebook Page, including what will be happening at satellite campuses.

That's all yolks!

Love your favourite student union xx



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A debate brought to you by the University of Auckland Debating Society

AFFIRMATIVE

I fucking hate baby boomers. It seems like every time the world could be a little nicer there's someone in their mid-fifties in Remuera denying climate change, blocking intensification, demonising prisoners. However, what I hate about baby boomers the most is their hypocritical voting pattern of shrinking the state whilst simultaneously ensuring there's a little nest egg at the end for them built off the broken backs of their children. It's about time the baby boomers face some adversity in their lives beyond a bad acid trip in the 60s. After this piece you'll hopefully be convinced that David Seymour is right and if you want to make a difference you can either hold your nose and vote ACT or furiously message your local MP to tell them to sort their super policy out. As for the actual content of this debate, I'll first tell you why the boomers have no moral claim, and then tell you why this policy is painfully unaffordable.

So, why do the boomers have no moral claim to superannuation? The first reason is

largely due to their voting behaviour. Back in the 80s and early 90s, a time of glory and liberty (or social degradation depending on political persuasion), a group of voters decided that the state should be smaller. So, through the power of the ballot, the boomers begun rolling back policies like free tertiary education, full employment and state control. All of this was to free up a massive reduction of their tax liability. If you sit on the right, it should be obvious that you don't cut some state support to make yourself richer and expect targeted hand-outs in later life. If you're on the left, most of the people that can live to claim super in the first place are the hyper-capitalists that have left you in this nightmare you face now. All sides of the spectrum should agree that in this instance what you vote for is what you get—no half-deals. I can hear the neg saying, "They worked expecting to get their super at 65!" To use an analogy, you wouldn't grant someone an insurance payout for a car if they were simultaneous-

ly drawing money from the insurance pool and recklessly spending it on spa pools. In the same way, baby boomers (by reducing the role of the state) can't reasonably expect social insurance to be something they are entitled to.

On affordability, why is super actually a mess? By 2031, super costs will balloon from \$9 billion to \$20 billion a year. What that means is that you, me, and the people who were not voting in the 80s will, without a super increase, have to shrink the state further or pay a lot more tax. While the neg may tell you that this isn't actually unaffordable, they are most likely being facetious. It would be like me trapping you on an island without any transport and saying you are free to leave at any time. You may technically be free to leave, but may not have the means to do so. In the same way, superannuation could still be afforded by tax increases, but your ability to live a comfortable life will be drastically affected by the necessary tax increases that follow. ♦

NEGATIVE

It's probably useful to be explicitly clear about what the issues facing superannuation are today. While superannuation is expected to have a cost blowout due to the baby boomers moving into their mid-sixties, it's not like super is something that is going to leave the rest of us as paupers on the street. When someone says super is unaffordable, what they are saying is that they're uncomfortable paying a top rate of tax higher than 33% and would like corporate tax to continue dropping. On the negating side, I'm going to tell you that this is an acceptable cost to bear and that youngsters should probably pay more tax because those extra dollars were probably going to go toward some gratuitous coffee at Starbucks anyway. However, this isn't to say that we shouldn't make changes towards our retirement. Compulsory Kiwisaver would be a good way to bolster the retirement savings of many soon-to-be superannuants. In the end, having some form of financial backing by the state is ultimately essential.

Let's deal with the moral issues surrounding superannuation. When we talk about superannuation, we have to talk about the key

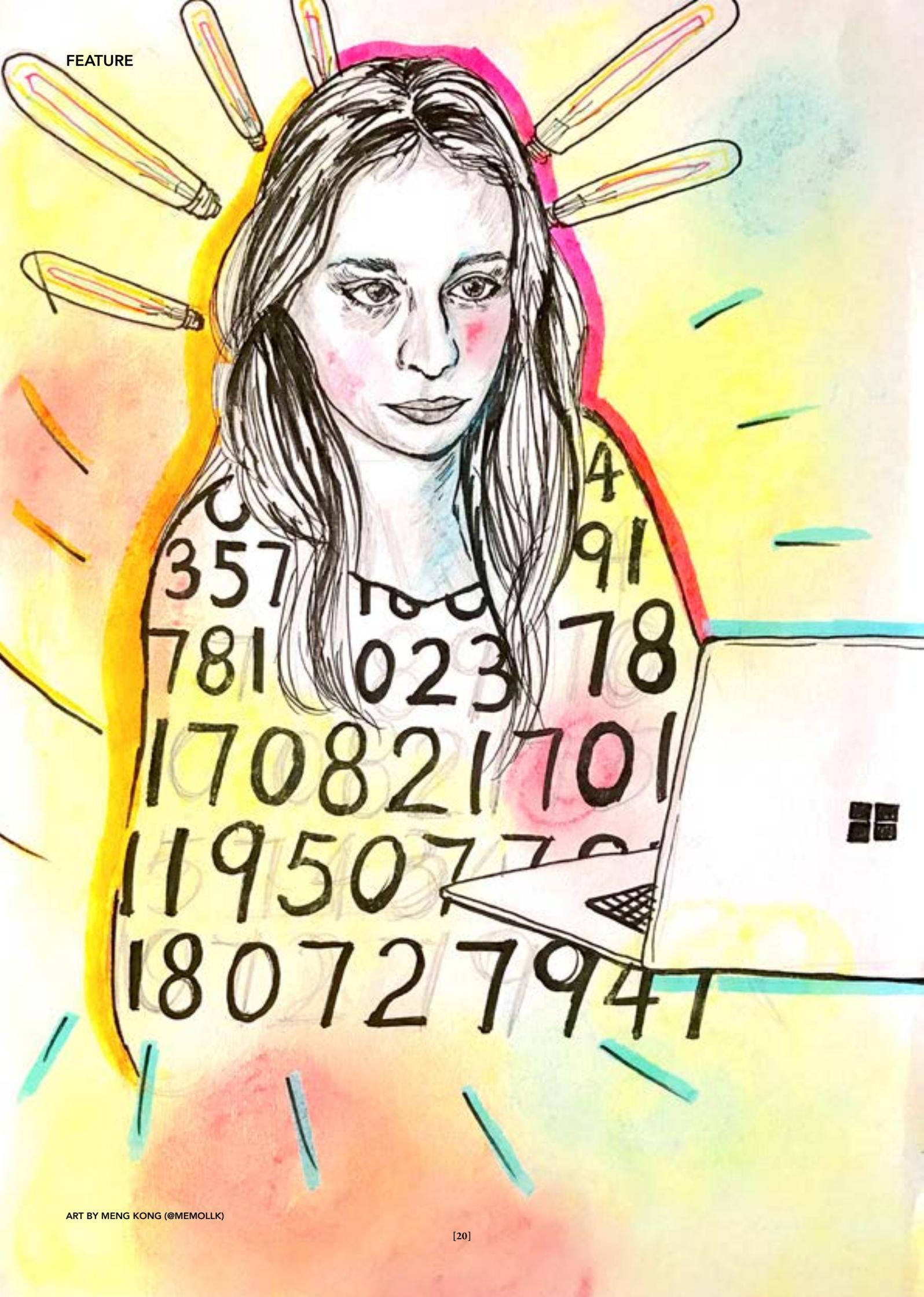
demographic that would be affected by ACT's policy—the baby boomers. While they may not be the most popular demographic amongst *Craccum's* readership, there are a few important reasons that we owe them some form of moral and financial obligation.

The first is that baby boomers have spent a large portion of their life expecting to retire at 65 whilst eligible for superannuation. They continually contributed to the economy with that expectation. If I told you that I would insure you for sickness and that I would require regular payments in exchange, you might be understandably frustrated when I decide to withhold that insurance in the end because I'd mismanaged my finances as your insurer. In the same way, we shouldn't punish baby boomers for the poor economic management of successive governments.

The second ground is that, on a basic level, baby boomers have spent a large portion of their life funding the state and the social services that have helped students like you and I thrive. Maybe the extent to which we are covered isn't entirely desirable, but it is true that

a large part of our prosperity comes from their economic contribution. On a basic level, some reciprocity would be nice.

Thirdly, let's look to feasibility and long-term effects. The crux of this point has already been introduced in my introduction—we can afford superannuation if we pay more tax. As much as David Seymour would like to have you believe that we are on the precipice of economic annihilation, the reality is that we will have to simply pay some more tax. This is a good thing! Superannuation was initiated as a form of public policy that helped a 60-year-old survive for maybe a decade if they were lucky. Now superannuation will cover a 65-year-old for another two decades if they are lucky. We should continue this trend and ensure that we aid the elderly in their advanced years. To the extent that we live in our capitalist society, we shouldn't be constantly trying to extract more from aging bodies. This is ultimately an issue of decency, which tosses up offering seniors comfortable years as opposed to a pre-death payout. ♦



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ALL CODES LEAD TO ROME

No longer satisfied with a life of technology-induced terror, Samantha Gianotti seeks to learn about coding, and why it's so important that we encourage young women to do the same

When it comes to code, I've only ever been familiar with that of the DaVinci persuasion, or the nightclub called Code on Shortland St that closed down, where it was always dark and the floor was always inexplicably sticky and I once had a bourbon and coke thrown all over me when a guy tackled another guy to the ground and I thought I was going to witness a murder and have to go into witness protection until I realised they were just two friends rough housing but honestly what kind of *mad man* tackles another person to the ground when the floor is that *sticky*. (Surely the information of those in the witness protection programme is stored safe and sound in databases that are created by programmers using code. I couldn't find out if this is entirely true, as there wasn't a huge amount of information on the ins-and-outs of the witness protection programme readily available, probably because of the whole "protection" part.) Code. Ye olde HTML. CSS. Java. I do not understand these words. I barely know how to resurrect the tab that I accidentally closed while trying to shut down the *other* tab playing the YouTube karaoke version of "Behind Blue Eyes" by Limp Bizkit.

And while Limp Bizkit sang about how *no one knows what it's like*, it turns out that *many* people know *exactly* what it's like—to feel as though they never had the chance to try their hand at coding and programming. Many of those people are women. The science, technol-

ogy, engineering and maths fields are still sorely lacking when it comes to the encouragement and inclusion of women; their involvement in these subjects stunted by stereotypes and social conditioning that suggests these areas are not made for them. Whenever they do manage to get their foot in the door, or carve out a nook for themselves in Silicon Valley, women regularly have to prove themselves more competent and qualified than their male counterparts.

In order to pull women from the sidelines where they have so often stood, to pull back the curtain of their own beliefs that the spheres of technology and programming are the bread and butter of men and men alone, substantial efforts have been put into encouraging young women to learn how to code. Code gives us the power to create websites and apps, to develop games and design programmes; data becomes a new medium at the disposal of those who seek to invent, providing us with new and ever-changing ways to communicate and create.

The importance of young women becoming fluent in these languages has gained considerable traction in the last few years. The organisation Girls Who Code was initiated in 2012 in the United States by Reshma Saujani, a politician and lawyer, who saw the need to counter the bias against young women in the tech industry by encouraging their involvement and offering them the tools to help them walk this terrain. The non-profit organisation

has worked with 40,000 young women across America, and the passion these young women so palpably possess is translated into their ability to create apps, games and websites that reflect their own worldview and fix problems that may have once seemed beyond their capabilities. To put it at its most profound, teaching young women to code not only equips them with a new, highly practical skill, but also instills them with the confidence to realise fully that they can be agents of change within their community, their society, in ways that might have once seemed far outside their wheelhouse.

In speaking with Alice Gatland from Girl Code, a group promoting very similar principles far closer to home (their workshops run out of Wynyard Quarter), she noted that it was necessary to call explicitly for the involvement of girls in order to see their presence. Running eight-week workshops with her brother, Matthew, for women between the ages of 15 and 25, she highlights the importance of providing a platform for young women to become literate in coding and programming, in order to realise the vast opportunities that these skills can offer, often hidden in plain sight.

Girl Code highlights the collegiality, flexibility and necessity of coding; their platform notably bereft of the qualities associated with the lone, nocturnal male programmer that has become our default, the stock subject we see in popular culture. (Think Jesse Eisenberg in *The*

“To put it at its most profound, teaching young women to code not only equips them with a new, highly practical skill, but also instills them with the confidence to fully realise that they can be agents of change within their community, their society, in ways that might have once seemed far outside their wheelhouse.”

FEATURE

Social Network, swigging on a beer in his Gap hoodie at two in the morning, hacking into the Harvard server while blogging feverishly about the girl who just broke his heart). It's a stereotype that women do not always readily identify with, and Alice notes that the language used in job listings for programmers often immediately isolates women from even engaging with the idea. Particularly, she went on to say, the use of the word "rockstar" as a descriptor in these ads has proven to be a deterrent. A report published in 2015 by the University of Illinois about expectations of brilliance in relation to gender offers some insight into just why words like "rockstar" leave women feeling under-qualified. In fields where raw or innate talent is key, women were underrepresented, as this quality is one traditionally associated with men, a stereotype that academics see taking hold and insidiously growing within the mindset of both young boys and girls. Not only do we begin to believe in certain correlations between our gender and our genius from a young age, but the stereotype of the brilliant man is also one regularly reiterated in popular culture. (Think Matt Damon in *Good Will Hunting*, tearing a pony-tailed jamoke a new one in a bar as he quotes insights on eighteenth-century capitalism that he picked up from a book he probably read, like, five years ago, as Minnie Driver looks on with unmitigated admiration.)

With knowledge of the gendered biases that hold tight to the self-confidence of young girls, workshops that specifically seek out their involvement in programming and technology deserve kudos for striving to chip away at the attitudes that have left women excluded. The trickle-down effect of bringing women into areas is super important—as we (continue) to work towards gender equality (we're not there yet), and work towards equal representation within the workforce (will this nightmare ever end), having broader perspectives

that better represent a cross-section of society to be verbalised and acted upon is key. Take, for example, the recent introduction of tools designed to counter harassment on Twitter, which allow users to pre-emptively avoid online threats and bullying by filtering out and muting tweets containing certain words (Twitter too often becomes a clusterfuck of hatred and gross name-calling). Programmer and game developer Brianna Wu (who was a target of a substantial torrent of Gamergate fuckery) notes that these tools don't seek to prevent the existence of harmful material, but simply make it invisible to those who choose to filter it out. She discusses the fact that this is an improvement, *sure*, but it is almost *worse* not knowing what someone is saying about you, what attacks on your character (or even your person) they might be planning. Experiences of harassment are yet to be addressed adequately—potentially a result of the fact that those creating such tools are not necessarily members of one of the many demographics routinely targeted by online assault. To include women within such a forum (and at an even broader level, to bring in the perspectives of other groups who are routinely subject to other forms of harassment and online discrimination) allows them to translate their experiences into effective tools that counteract hatred. If we begin to see substantive inclusion of those who are the continued subjects of online harassment, we would likely see much more satisfying results.

And so, with this newfound knowledge of just why we need to encourage young women into coding, and the benefits that their specific ideas and experiences could reap, it was time for me, a young woman (in body) to step up to the plate. I signed up for free coding lessons on the website Codecademy (username: TheSocialNetworkisFinchersMasterpiece, a horrifying 37 characters long), and began to work through the modules on how to write HTML

& CSS. I worked slowly. As Bilbo Baggins once said, "It's a dangerous business, Frodo, opening up your browser. You start on a line of code, and if you don't keep your feet, you might miss a slash or a bracket and have no idea why nothing is working and suddenly it all turns to shit." But with patience, I started to understand slowly, inordinately jazzed by seeing the characters I typed have an instant effect on the corresponding webpage. I, the girl who named her laptop after Gavin DeGraw upon purchasing it in 2011 (probably coming in at number 87 on the list of Top 100 Most Embarrassing Things Samantha Has Done in Her Life) and for the past six years has had zero clue how to change it, was beginning to understand code.

Coding and the skills it imbues are simply one part of a larger movement towards encouraging young women into believing in themselves, their capabilities, and the value of their diverse perspectives. It's a matter of equipping ourselves with whatever tools we have at our disposal—the first hurdle being the need to conceive of the full range of what is at our disposal, and not count ourselves out before we even begin. Whether you come to the table with the ability to write a line of code, or do long division, or turn a phrase that makes people think—it's when we see value in all of these skills, and believe that we can take on any of these skills, that we can begin to make the most progress. It's a little bit like writing code itself, really (or like the nine members of the Fellowship in *Lord of the Rings*)—one part just won't work without the rest. ♦

Codecademy.com offers free online modules to help you begin to learn how to write and build with code. If you're in need of more guidance, information about the Girl Code workshops can be found at girlcode.co.nz.

“Not only do we begin to believe in certain correlations between our gender and our genius from a young age, but the stereotype of the brilliant man is also one regularly reiterated in popular culture.”

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Liberal snowflakes are melting in the street*

With Anoushka Maharaj

As an inherently unfunny person, I have little to no fallback in terms of charisma. It's rough sharing tables at parties with people who effortlessly pop out witty bangers like Pez candy. But if you're an excessively observant person, you will find that in amongst these weird interactions, there are quiet moments where insecurity lives. And from these ugly feelings, comedy is born! You fill the silences with jokes and draw a few more years of life from people's faces lighting up because *you are just so damn delightful*. But in truth—comedy is an inimitable microcosm of society. I can comfortably say that *The Office*, in all its sentimentality and cringey Michael moments, has sheltered me from many emotional storms. It still does.

Good comedy unravels the human condition, and *really* good comedy holds a mirror up to the collective, exposing us for what we are, and what we are not. Now, I'm not sure if this is one of those awkward situations where comedy "experts" are going to say that I am demeaning its complexities and casting aspersions based on limited knowledge. Well, to that I say—probably, yeah!

Following the modern day resurgence of Nazis R Us, there has been an expected influx of bridge monsters, who lurk in comment sections saying things like, "*libtards, you are all so sensitive! freaks! I'm president and you're not!*" which is true, in the literal sense—we are much more sensitive to social injustices because we are most often the ones who are victims of them. While I have personally found that some social debates do test the limits of absurdity, it's not my place to say whether or not they are worthy of being fought, or invalidate the feelings of someone who is genuinely offended (unless you're a jerk). Louis C.K. summarised these arguments best when he said, "*If someone tells you that you have hurt them, you don't get to decide that you didn't.*" If we operated on this vanilla, chilli-o, cool beans method of existence, there might be fewer arguments and fewer

hurt feelings—but this is not the world we live in today.

This instance of political warfare permeates almost every area of our lives, and none of us can get away from it. Interestingly, this is what comedy—specifically, stand-up comedy—hopes to retain. A facet of entertainment that exists outside a realm of accountability because... well, why? It seems obvious as to why jokes about rape and incest differ from "traditionally" offensive comedy tropes like swearing or sex jokes—because they are fundamentally wrong and cause the victim irreparable harm. It can also be narrowed down to the concept that poking fun at someone's autonomy—or lack thereof—is what feels the most "icky". In Dave Chappelle's latest Netflix specials (*do not roll your eyes at me, or so help me God*), he has been criticised in the media for using rape as a punchline, and repeating tired, transphobic jokes that just seem out of place. Despite all this overt distaste, people still found a way to justify it (see: reviews by any major publication), usually with a careless "Dave has *always* been like that". But accepting what has always been does not a revolution make.

I thought Trevor Noah's stand-up, *Afraid of the Dark*, was brilliant—his use of accents was clever and funny, because he noted that accents determine how we perceive others, even though, as he said, an accent is "*just someone speaking your language with the rules of theirs.*" He managed to direct most of his jokes toward some kind of cosmic truth, and in my opinion, struck a perfect balance between being contemplative and being entertaining. *You can be both, you know.* But what I found ridiculous when reading reviews of this is that a lot of people had an issue with his mentions of colonialism, with one commenter even saying, "*not funny. He is furthering the racial divide within this country.*" But joking about rape (and the rapist being Donald Trump, which is terrible for another 289038 reasons) is somehow passable, and claiming that it's "too far" labels you another

hypersensitive liberal.

What this suggests to me is that people are uncomfortable being confronted by blatant truths (colonialism), but are okay when comedy panders to whatever intolerance may exist within them (homophobia, transphobia, misogyny)—but don't want to admit it. For instance, what makes Chappelle's bit about gay people and "prison f*gs" especially disgusting is that it isn't him joking—it's how he really feels about them. There was no "deeper meaning" behind his segment on transition; it was just an opportunity to reduce trans people to a joke and air whatever gross misconceptions he has about them.

Maybe I am not evolved enough to endure stand-up comedy—but making fun of groups that have only just become accepted, and even now face a barrage of difficulties, seems to be the lowest form of humour. Participating in rape culture or transphobia is not synonymous with "taking a break from being PC"—because no matter how far minorities seem to come, they are still fair game, and still just that—minorities. While inequality can be reinforced by them, nobody is demanding stand-up comedians steer completely clear of potentially incendiary issues like race or religion, because when approached in the right way, they can spark important and necessary reflections. But maybe comedians could have a little more foresight, and audiences should hold entertainers accountable for their out-of-date views.

Look—we are all trying really, really hard to say and do the right things. Your speech is free, but it is your responsibility to use it wisely. And if you feel like you're being "censored" or that it's "unfair" that you can't joke about certain things anymore, all I can say is this—grow the hell up, mate! If you can't say something offensive then—be better! Be wittier! Find another way to be clever! There's a whole wide world filled with funny things, and none of them have to be at the expense of another person. ♦

*a real comment I saw after HRC lost.



ART BY DANIEL VERNON (@THE_CURVE_VERNON)

A Potted, Truncated, Brief, and Probably Just Oversimplified and Incorrect History of Irony-on-TV

With Jordan Margetts

Like most early/mid-twenties males, I basically spent high school ingesting vast quantities of *Family Guy* and YouTube clips from various comedy shows. And no matter how many years I spend doing an Arts degree, I just can't get away from the shitty references. And they really are shit—a personal favourite is Peter and Lois having a discussion about the Titanic, Lois calls Kate Winslet's character fat (already dodgy and offensive and immature), and Peter condescendingly responds, "that wasn't a girl, that was Philip Seymour Hoffman". That one joke basically summarises *Family Guy*—it's fat shaming, it's borderline sexist, it's also random and not at all clever. And I have about a million of those stored somewhere in my limbic system.

I'm not convinced my taste has improved, but the shows I binge on now seem to have gotten a bit better. Or I guess a bit realer. The impetus for this article was a column by the AV Club called "*BoJack Horseman*, *Rick And Morty*, and the art of cynical sincerity". The contention of which was that a certain type of show, namely the titular ones, have taken the ironic/referential/cynical humour that's a mainstay of a certain type of contemporary sitcoms and used it as a sort of door-stop that lets shows say something emotionally real to the hyper-cynical and referential viewers of today. A simplistic example of this would be *Rick and Morty* sealing an old alcoholic's cry of pain in a stupid catch phrase, or *BoJack* surrounding a season long look at depression with animal puns.

It wasn't a bad article. Maybe read it. But it got me thinking about the way TV has changed. My sort-of cheap version of events would go something like this: in the beginning there was TV, and then companies noticed there was TV and said "let there be ads". And

the ads played on people's micro-narratives about the world. And now everything was being referenced all the time. A memory of a family-dinner would be referenced to sell frozen meals. Hippies would be referenced to sell Coca Cola. Years later the song "Mad World" made famous by a cover used in *Donnie Darko* would be played to sell the game *Gears of War*. So not too much later we all got super used to everything being some sort of internal joke or hyper-reference.

By the time the 90s rolled around, we were not only used to this but increasingly cynical of it. *The Simpsons* for instance is constructed out of almost nothing but self-aware references to broad types: the lazy, beer-loving but basically good, working-class father; the long-suffering housewife; the naughty son; the Indian dairy owner; the corrupt Irish-American mayor; and so on ad nauseum. Raphael Bob-Waxberg (*BoJack* creator) when talking about his own show noted the tendency of sitcoms like *The Simpsons* to inexorably expand outwards. And while this isn't a bad critique it also slightly forgets that this is a show that uses the cartoonish stereotypes of life and to build a little microcosm of reality. To be clear: *The Simpsons* is totally genius at doing this, and the references are way more sophisticated than the cheap shite you get from, say, anything by Seth MacFarlane. The types are functioning together in larger stories that are themselves references (e.g. Sideshow Bob in an episode that models Cape Fear—you have side references to Gilbert and Sullivan, to Kelsey Grammer's run on *Frasier*, and to a whole lot of generic stories like the cynical private eye, or the witness relocation programme).

And thus the referential sitcom was born. And I think this basically tracks the two enemy-twins of the sitcom world: sitcoms born

"We have shows like *BoJack Horseman*, *Louie*, and *Atlanta*, that use all these postmodern 'meta' tools and details to get you to take really human stories, about depression, failed romance, cycles of unhappiness and so on, seriously."

from earlier, happy, distracting shows (think *The Cosby Show*, through to more recent stuff like *New Girl*, or *How I Met Your Mother*); and snarky ironic kind-of-meta shows (recently think *It's Always Sunny in Paradise*, *Community*, *30 Rock*, and even *Family Guy*).

As per the article I've mentioned above it seems like a third-type has emerged. Sidenote: in the nineties, literary critics got excited and tried to introduce the term "post-postmodern", and like all terms with too many prefixes it didn't stick around. But what they were trying to describe was a particular type of fiction that was popping up that used all of the wry, referential, form-bending stuff that showed up in the big postmodern books (think Thomas Pynchon or Don DeLillo) but was also concerned with answering sad questions about sadness and modern life (at the complex end of the spectrum you have *Infinite Jest* in this camp, at the more chill end you have, say, *The Corrections*). This trend was becoming big in the 90s. And in the same way that postmodern fiction exploded onto the scene in the 60s and 70s (but not really on to TV till the 90s), the same is happening now. We have shows like *BoJack Horseman*, *Louie*, and *Atlanta*, that use all these postmodern "meta" tools and details to get you to take really human stories, about depression, failed romance, cycles of unhappiness and so on, seriously. Basically, for a certain type of viewer (the type that finds *How I Met Your Mother*, or *Scrubs* cloying or ridiculous) you need to get absurd in order to get real.

And since I'm being rhapsodic and kind-of-jumbled I'll quickly summarise where I think we're at. It seems like there's been this trend across the course of sitcom history to move towards the increasingly ironic and referential. I think this happened in basically three phases: first, there was the standard (usually working-class) family comedy. Then there was the referential comedy. Now we have the sort of "cynically sincere" comedy (or what Emily Nussbaum calls "dude mope"). This also pretty well mirrored the trends in avant-garde fiction, where it became postmodern, then sort of cynically sincere.

But now we've hit an interesting wall, because the cultural centre of our lives has shifted. Both TV and fiction in the second half of the last century were at least partially attempting to deal with the fact that TV itself had become central to modern Western life. But this has

changed recently. We have the internet now: shows are almost completely streamable (definitely torrentable), we watch in binge sessions instead of weekly rotations, and with the event of the download and the ad-blocker, commercials no longer make up a core part of the viewing experience. And I think this puts us at a weird juncture in where these sorts of shows are going. The form has caught up, the referential density has been packed on in a way that's perfect for a dissecting internet public. Quick fun example: *BoJack Horseman* season 1, Diane is on a panel for "ghost writers", at the corner of the table completely silent is a cartoon Nicholas Cage (because he was in *Ghost Rider*...get it?). But the substance hasn't. Characters have Facebook and cellphones, sure, but their main interactions are face-to-face. Their lives could easily be understood by the pre-internet viewer.

Partly I think this is because it's infinitely difficult to represent the internet. Think about Facebook; imagine trying to explain to an otherwise totally savvy friend who'd never seen Facebook for what it was. "*So, like, it's this website. And it has all your friends on it. And you all have a page with your pictures and a bunch of information. And anything you want to "post". Oh right, well posting is when you publish something on your wall. Okay, well a wall is the page your information is on... get it? Good... It also has a form of texting so you can talk to your friends...*" and on and on it would go. In my crap-monologue you'd also need to somehow explain that the website where we get all of our news is also the place we store all our personal photos, and organize all of our parties. These are massive seismic shifts; way more world-changing than when lounges started to be organised around a staticky box with a pair of antennae on the top.

Here's the food-for-thought: the internet poses limitless information. It also poses limitless cross-references way beyond anything Pynchon could have dreamed up. Just spend twenty minutes on 9gag or Reddit to realise that the whole thing is this massively diverse community testing out meta-jokes on each other. So as these avant-garde TV shows try to access our actual lives as well as the jokes we make, how are they going to depict the internet? Given the trajectory I would have said look at what fiction is doing, but fiction hasn't really figured the internet out yet either. So where's it going from here...? ♦

“It seems like there’s been this trend across the course of sitcom history to move towards the increasingly ironic and referential.”



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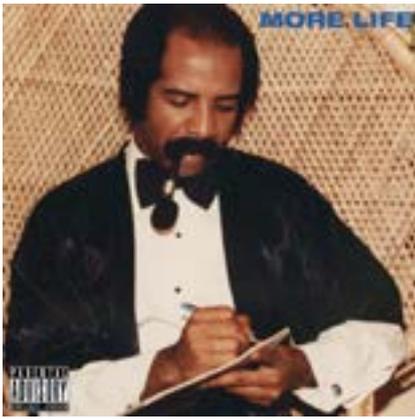
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More Life Drake

ALBUM REVIEW BY CHRIS WONG

On the massively hyped *More Life*, the 6God showcases a various array of diverse sounds and delivers us some “more chune for your head top”, complete with an all-star cast of features. Drake brings a fresh feel to the table on tracks like “Passionfruit”, where the track’s lush and irresistible tropical vibe make it a sure-fire hit. Tracks such as “Nothings into Somethings”, “Teenage Fever” and “Since Way Back” see Drake returning to the smooth and nocturnal Toronto ambience he pioneered early on in his career, while cuts like “Madiba Riddim” and “Blem” recall the dancehall influence he dabbled in on “One Dance” and “Controlla”, resulting in a somewhat similar uninspired effect.

More Life boasts a huge collection of guests including Quavo, Travi\$ Scott, Kanye, and Young Thug, which would be sure to please almost anyone. The project also takes up the task of spotlighting the UK scene with an abundant host of features in the form of UK grime leaders Skepta and Giggs, as well as upcoming R&B songstress Jorja Smith. British crooner Sampha is given his own track on the excellent “4422” that he manoeuvres through with ease. Aubrey himself seems to think that he’s from England too on “No Long Talk”, employing an unconvincing English impression for his verse. This isn’t the only example of Drake appropriating outside sources on *More Life*, with scatterings of British slang, Jamaican patois and many other overseas influences throughout.

At 22 tracks long, it’s inevitable that *More Life* would have a few hits and misses; the flex tracks don’t go as hard as on *If You’re Reading This*, while the emotional tracks don’t seem to impact on us as heavily as on *Take Care*, leaving us with a number of half-baked fillers. All in all, *More Life* is still a satisfying listen, but you definitely wouldn’t be alone if you only end up with a couple tracks from the project on your playlist after the month is over. ♦



Peer Gynt [recycled]

THEATRE REVIEW BY MARK MOCKRIDGE

Eli Kent was taking a casual stroll through the University of Auckland. The show he wrote, *Peer Gynt [recycled]* had closed a few days ago, and he was surprised to find a belated review in the latest edition of *Craccum*. He took a bench in the quad, and read:

“An absurdist, post-modern theatrical rollercoaster about millennial narcissism, the ownership of a creative work, and possibly a hundred other things, *Peer Gynt [recycled]* is a clever piece of theatre performed with confidence and aplomb by a talented and charismatic cast.

The writer, Eli Kent, is the central character in his own fiction, leading the audience haphazardly through loosely connected scenes and situations as he adapts Henrik Ibsen’s original (Norwegian) masterpiece, *Peer Gynt*. Eli is both trapped in his own play, and aware of the audience; both author and participant in the carnival of surrealism presented to us. His playful interaction with the audience and characters is always engaging and fun.

The sheer energy and unpredictability on stage makes for extremely entertaining viewing, but not necessarily easy viewing; many of those who walked out during interval were likely expecting a more conventional, coherent show. But if you don’t mind your narratives wacky and your humour bizarre, you’ll have an absolute blast for the entire runtime.

The largest criticism I would level at this production would be its self-obsession with its own cleverness; within the opening minutes it is referred to within itself as Eli’s PhD thesis, and spends a lot of time (especially so in the second half) dissecting its own themes and ruminating on theatre itself, losing much of its rambunctious momentum.”

Eli Kent let out a contented sigh. A review in *Craccum*! He bet Henrik Ibsen never got one of those! He’d have to show his mum. He wandered happily off university grounds, fully erect at the thought of adapting a meta-review of a meta-play adapted from a play, into another meta-play. It was a good day. ♦



The Weight of These Wings Miranda Lambert

ALBUM REVIEW BY SARAH BUTTERFIELD

Yes, this is a review of a country album. But before you turn the page at the sheer nerve of this *Craccum* album reviewer (*who the hell approved this?*), listen to the album!

This is Miranda Lambert’s fifth studio album, and her most down to earth and heartbreaking album yet. From “Vice” to “Dear Old Sun”, Lambert lets her audience into the pain of her divorce from country superstar husband, Blake Shelton (yes, the tall guy from *The Voice* who is now hooking up with Gwen Stefani). In “We Should Be Friends”, Lambert spells out the aftermath of her break-up in a way that rings true for the audience: “*from losing sleep / and gaining weight / pain and shame / crazy trains*”.

Lambert largely stays true to her country roots in the soundtrack of this album with the same twanging guitars, banjo riffs and bass solos as her other albums, but branches out in “Pink Sunglasses”. In this masterpiece of writing, Lambert explains the catharsis of retail therapy in the form of her dollar-shop sunglasses. Anybody who has been through a break-up will identify with this song, and testify to the greatness of buying stuff (especially from Kmart omg) to fill the dark void.

What makes Lambert’s album different from other break-up albums is the lack of bitterness. Instead of ruthlessly destroying her ex (ahem, Taylor Swift), Lambert focuses on her recovery from the break-up. In the final song “I’ve Got Wheels” Lambert explains her process of moving on: “*I can’t count time / I can’t count money / but I’ve been counting every mile for a month on Sunday / whatever road, however long / I’ve got wheels / I’m rolling on*”. Lambert perfectly captures the feeling of regaining normality after a bad break-up and serves as #movingongoals.

If you think you’re too cool for country music, you’re wrong—country music and Miranda Lambert are too cool for you. Listen to the album. ♦



Power Rangers

FILM REVIEW BY TRUMBO GALT

By the time I got to the cinema I was flustered because I definitely did not catch the right bus and ended up halfway to Mt Wellington, which was fine because I jumped off and ran back and still made it, but it was not ideal for my demeanour when we encountered our first speed bump, which was when we couldn't get in because they didn't have my name on the list, which was fine because we got there in the end and they had slushies, which pleased Zane as earlier in the day he had asked me if there was going to be any *Power Rangers* merch, to which I replied "there is free popcorn I hear," to which he replied "yes but will there be merch," which there wasn't, but in the end the free slushies were enough and as we walked in Jamie from *Jamie's World* was behind us, and someone said hi to her, and she said something that sounded like "uh bluh huh, ah uh oooh fsssssssss," which didn't really mean anything other than 'I do not know you and I am just here in a desperate attempt to stay relevant now that people have finally realised that my videos are not funny,' and as we walked in we were offered a free Coke or Sprite or bottle of water, and I took the latter because I'd foolishly ingested a can of Creaming Soda less than an hour earlier, not knowing that there was to be free fizzy, and then there WAS free popcorn on each seat but Zane and I both ate ours really fast but the cinema wasn't full so we took a few extras off the spare seats but godDAMN it was salty and I was incredibly glad for my complimentary water, and after cleansing my mouth of the excessive NaCl I finally saw through the glitz and the glamour and the *Jamie's World* and realised that the movie was utter shite so don't even bother. ♦



Dave Chappelle Netflix Comedy Specials

COMEDY REVIEW BY DANIEL VERNON

In a social climate fueled by far-left and right politics, it's becoming increasingly difficult to share opinions or thoughts, let alone *jokes*, without igniting people's opinions. So it seemed fitting that Dave Chappelle would choose this time to come out of retirement, walk some very fine lines, and make us feel comfortable with laughing again.

Chappelle came back in full force to heal the wounds of Trump's presidency by hosting the first *Saturday Night Live* after Trump won the ticket, and made us laugh, even as he danced around touchy subjects such as the Pulse night club shootings and the Black Lives Matter movement. With more freedom, and less censorship, Chappelle takes this further in his two recent stand-up specials on Netflix. He dives straight into issues around the alt-right, transgender rights, the Bill Cosby allegations, and feminism. It can, at times, be awkward watching Chappelle talk about rape and feminism, but he saves the silence by offering honest, refreshing and intelligent opinions and always being able to nail a punchline. No matter how uncomfortable you may feel watching this at times (and you will), Chappelle always masterfully manages to tie it all in together in one hilarious joke.

Chappelle's swagger and confidence envelops the viewer, so when he walks the line into controversy you can't help but keep your eyes and ears on the man, as if he is taking on the world's deadliest animal. Chappelle braves the shallows with a wide-eyed confidence, refusing to show fear. The Chappelle specials aren't for everyone, and he is unapologetically forthcoming about this, but if you are looking to take a break from all the seriousness in our current social climate, and just want to laugh at human error and human nature, look no further than this. ♦



Mass Effect: Andromeda

GAME REVIEW BY REBECCA KANUTA

Like many of you, the *Mass Effect* trilogy left its mark on my soul, so BioWare's new installation *Mass Effect: Andromeda* had a lot to live up to. However, instead of crying five hours into my playthrough as I expected, I was conflicted and a little disappointed. The plot follows Scott/Sara Ryder, the son/daughter of the *Pathfinder*, a man chosen to lead one of four arks filled with intergalactic explorers to the Andromeda Galaxy.

Your mission is to find a new home for humanity, which sounds easy at first, until you are awoken from cryosleep 600 years later to find Andromeda crawling with new threats. Although an interesting concept, I was a little disappointed to find that a story meant to take place long after the iconic Commander Shepard is filled with more than just glimmers of the original trilogy. Your most encountered enemies in the Andromeda Galaxy, the Kett and the Remnant, are awfully similar to the Collectors and the Geth; the Nexus is pretty much the same as the Citadel and there's an ancient civilisation that has left its technology laying about for you to decipher. While this makes *Mass Effect: Andromeda* sound very repetitive—and it is—BioWare has introduced a lot of new, exciting perks. The dialogue continues to impress with Andromeda cutting out the black and white responses and filling it with more "shades of grey" (not *that* type). This creates unpredictability, a few surprises and more personality. Your usual loyalty missions are far more stretched out and meaningful—say goodbye to "visit planet, kill things, complete mission". The combat is much more interesting because of your jetpack, which allows you to hover, jet-dash in any direction and generally feels less cumbersome.

Now, I've barely scratched the surface here, but basically, *Mass Effect: Andromeda* has the potential to be great. It falls short in many areas but if you're ready and willing for a new adventure in a familiar world then you'll want to play this. ♦



The Most Banging Episodes of *Buzzfeed Unsolved*

With Samantha Gianotti & Catriona Britton

We know *Buzzfeed* kind of has a rep for clogging your newsfeed with shite quizzes, or collations of other people's quality memes that they use to trick you into thinking that they themselves are funny (jabronis). But hear us out. *Buzzfeed Unsolved* is the crime/supernatural mystery web series of your dreams. Two pals (we assume they are actually friends, if their Instagram stories are anything to go by), Ryan Bergara and Shane Madej, select an unsolved mystery and probe into the weird and wild explanations and theories that populate professional opinion (and the opinions of less qualified folk on the internet). Ryan is the wholehearted believer, giving credence to every lead from creepy insurance salesmen to alien abductors. Shane is the realist, the skeptic of the two, the one who tries to sleep peacefully in

a house considered haunted by a demon while Ryan lies awake fair dinkum shitting his pants.

We live for the banter, the buzzwords, the things that go bump in the night. These are our five favourite episodes. Peruse at your leisure (preferably before dark, lest the series' unsettling music leave you on tenterhooks, leading you to lie in bed listening to Celine Dion's *Complete Best* on repeat to regain your emotional equilibrium. Or so we hear).

5. *The Spirits of the Whaley House*

The history of the Whaley House is filled with some pretty colourful characters, and some pretty tragic shit. Built by Thomas Whaley for his family in 1857, his infant son died from

scarlet fever, his daughter from self-inflicted gunshot wounds, both within the walls of the home. Various visitors to the house have reportedly encountered the Whaley family, but the spirit who cuts the most sinister figure is one Yankee Jim, a dreaded desperado who was hanged on the land where the home now sits for trying to make off with someone else's boat in 1852. This episode is filled with all the hallmarks of a haunted house investigation, including attempts to record electronic voice phenomena, and sitting alone (and afraid) in the house's spiritual hotspots. Plus, Yankee Jim's tragic tale of tomfoolery would probably make for a great addition to the *The Fast and the Furious* franchise (*The Fast and the Furious: 2 Yankee 2 Jim*).

4. *The Bizarre Toxic Death of Gloria Ramirez*

This one doesn't really fit within either the supernatural or crime categories that the *Unsolved* vids usually slot into, but it's rife with government conspiracies and cover-ups that will have you sliding into your best *X-Files* cosplay faster than you can say "David Duchovny". Gloria Ramirez was admitted to hospital in 1994 with all sorts of bizarre symptoms that in turn led to hospital staff experiencing some freaky deaky illnesses and ailments themselves, including fainting, apnea and extended stays in intensive care. The reasons behind her toxic symptoms and the subsequent sickness of those who treated her remain (you fuckin' guessed it) unsolved, but the most reputable explanation is the suggestion that the twenty-three hospital employees who fell ill were all experiencing mass hysteria (which is *exactly* what The Man would want you to believe). However, our fearless leader Ryan dares to believe in the possibility of government plots to conceal malpractice, and even the possibility of alien abduction (much to Shane's immediate dismay). The Truth Is Out There.

3. *The Chilling Exorcism of Anneliese Michel*

If you're the sensitive sort who doesn't like to hear a young woman spouting the names of demons in guttural Latin right before bed, do not watch this at night. Learn from our mistakes. Do better. Our boys dissect the real-life events that inspired the film *The Exorcism of Emily Rose*. Poor Anneliese was plagued by strange episodes that doctors originally thought were seizures, as her brain patterns were for the most part normal. But things heated up pretty quick, as her mother apparently witnessed Anneliese with jet-black eyes,

chunky paws for hands, and the both of them smelt burnt faeces around the house (because we all know what our shit smells like when we light it on fire, amirite? Classic gag). Anneliese was convinced she had the devil inside her. A priest was brought in, the psychiatrists maintained she had epilepsy. The girl couldn't get a break. The exorcisms began in 1975, seven years after her first episode. Shane is ever the skeptic in this one, so much so that Ryan quips: "Your unrelenting skepticism is exhausting... it drains me of all happiness and energy." We know how you feel, Ryan, especially Catriona (@Mark: please stop tagging me in articles dragging *Sensing Murder*). After Anneliese's death at age 23, the case went to court, further highlighting that your demons can continue to haunt you beyond the grave. (Too far? Okay.)

2. *The Strange Disappearance of D.B. Cooper*

Have you seen *Without a Paddle*? Well, one of us has. (The other has missed out on an important cultural milestone.) The hidden treasure the film's heroes set out in search of is the very same as that which was stolen by phantom of the skies, D.B. Coops. The case of D.B. Cooper is the only unsolved incident of air piracy in commercial aviation history. This smooth fella, with a love of bourbon and soda, hijacked a US domestic flight in 1971, demanded some cash, jumped out of the plane and vanished. A small amount of the ransom cash was discovered by a riverbank, but no parachute or body was ever found. D.B. Coops is an enigma. The man was strict business, dressed like a low-grade version of James Bond, complete with dark sunglasses, a long black trenchcoat, and a clip-on black tie. If the latter doesn't scream badass to you, we're afraid you won't be allowed on board the Coop-train. We hope he lived, or is even still living a full life. We like to imagine him set up

nicely on a remote beach in Mexico, sipping bourbon and sodas in the midday sun, burying his toes in the sand or fixing up a boat à la Andy Dufresne at the end of *The Shawshank Redemption*.

1. *The Mysterious Disappearance of the Sodder Children*

God, this is a good'un. The Sodder family of Fayetteville, West Virginia, made up of parents George and Jenny and their nine children, awoke as their house went up in flames on December 24, 1945. Of the family's eleven members, six escaped. Five of the children, who slept in the upstairs rooms, did not make it out of the house alive—or so it was believed. While it was initially thought that these five children had perished among the flames, it soon became clear that something supremely suspicious was afoot. With unbelievably transparent threats made by an enraged life insurance salesman, an absence of human remains among the ashes, and a piece of beef liver in a hidden box (a plot twist to rival the climax of David Fincher's *Se7en*), it soon became clear that the Sodder Children may not have died, but instead disappeared. The last remaining Sodder child, Sylvia, continues her parents' search, and our friends at *Unsolved* offer just a few pieces of the far-reaching puzzle. Was the fire service in on the ruse? Why was the help of the FBI refused by local police? Did the Sicilian Mafia have a hand in it all? Someone call Francis Ford Coppola, we've got material for *The Godfather: Part IV* on our hands (*The Godfather: Part IV—2 Fast 2 Fiery*).

Bless you, *Buzzfeed Unsolved*. Should either one of us suffer an untimely demise (most likely Samantha, after being strangled to death by Catriona for ignoring repeated requests to stop monologuing Al Pacino's seven-minute speech from *Scent of a Woman*), we hope you'll investigate the shit out of it. ♦

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Jackie Chan Is Not My F*cking Dad

Helen Yeung looks at East-Asian films that are definitely worth your time.

When I was in primary, I was faced with a dozen little white voices that would ask me whether I was related to Jackie Chan or if I could show them “a couple of kung fu moves”. There was always that one kid that would end up speaking gibberish to me, all because he saw that one “Asian” man in the newest blockbuster his step-dad took him to on the weekend. Growing up in New Zealand, while we sat at the dinner table eating steamed fish or stir fried bok choy with rice at night, my Chinese migrant parents never failed to introduce me to a multiplicity of Hong Kong films. It gave me a break from the strenuous amount of effort I put into pretending to fan over Joseph Gordon-Levitt in *500 Days of Summer*, or reading up on Wes Anderson’s filmography, all in the hopes of not being left out at school. When I started university, I became really drawn into the world of east-Asian cinema and I found like-minded people that shared my interests. So here are a few of my personal favourites I’d like to recommend!

Chungking Express (1994)

“We’re all unlucky in love sometimes. When I am, I go jogging. The body loses water when you jog, so you have none left for tears.”

Navigating through the narrow alleyways and crammed buildings of Hong Kong, the movie has a twofold storyline of two police officers that have fallen out of love and are still brooding over the women that were once in their lives. Evoking a sense of nostalgia through the soundtrack, featuring The Mama & the Papas’ “California Dreamin’” and a dreamy cantonese cover of The Cranberries’ “Dreams”, Wong Kar Wai transports us into two stories where Cop One runs into Lin, a blonde-wigged drug runner, and Cop Two meets Faye, who takes her crush on him to the next level, obtaining a key to his apartment and secretly watering his plants.

Yi Yi (2000)

Set in Taiwan, this three-hour drama offers a glimpse into the complexities of the Jian family, a middle-class family living in Taipei, directed by

Edward Yang, one of the pioneers of Taiwanese New Wave Cinema (if you don’t know about this look it up!). The film is shown through the eyes of the middle-aged father NJ, his teenage daughter Ting-Ting and the son Yang Yang, who are too young to worry about the complexities of life. Beginning with a wedding and ending on a funeral, the story realistically depicts the complex feelings of love, regret, dissatisfaction and misunderstandings between the people in your life.

One Million Yen Girl (2008)

Ever wondered what it’d be like moving to a different destination every time you saved up enough money? This movie depicts a self-discovery journey for a young Japanese woman called Suzuko, who sets out on a trip across Japan upon being released from prison for a case of theft she did not commit. From discovering her talent for making shaved ice, to peach picking in the mountains, to deciding whether she should stay for the “right” boy, Suzuko’s inner thoughts are narrated to us, whether it be feelings of alienation, unrequited love or of absolute liberation. What really caught my attention in this movie was how Suzuko lived her life in a series of restarts, working to save a million yen then moving to a place where no one knows her. Something I’m sure all of your teenage selves dreamt of at some point right?

20 30 40 (2004)

“There are not many women’s films in Asia. I mean Hong Kong, Taiwan or even China, so I had this opportunity for making films for women, so I just do it.” — Sylvia Chang

In the male-dominated industry of Chinese film comes the Taiwanese actress and critically acclaimed director Sylvia Chang, someone I saw as a role model through my late teens. Unlike your average male director aimlessly portraying women as your stereotypical lovesick girlfriend or the family-neglecting businesswoman, she gives each of the female characters in her movies a fresh, individual voice. As the title suggests, the movie

depicts the lives of three women at the ages 20, 30, 40. The 20-year-old girl with adolescent dreams of becoming a singer, the 30-year-old flight attendant unready for commitment, and a 40-year-old divorcee searching for companionship. Revolving around themes of ageing, career and love, although the movie was made more than a decade ago, it definitely provides a new angle on the romantic comedy genre.

Ten Years (2015)

A low-budget indie flick, this recent release not only won one of Asia’s best film awards in the year it was released, it beat *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* in the Hong Kong box office. Set in 2025, this dystopian fiction film offers a glimpse of what Hong Kong may turn into under mainland China’s growing control. Reflecting the anxieties Hong Kongers have towards their human rights and freedoms, as evident in the Umbrella Revolution of 2014, if you’re into politics I’d definitely recommend spending 104 minutes on this—it is definitely worth your time.

Handmaiden (2016)

Giving a whimsical interpretation of 1930s Korea under Japanese colonial rule, Korean director Park Chan-wook, who also directed *Stoker* (2013) and *Oldboy* (2003), does not fail to provide a blood-soaked, sensual thriller. In the beginning, you may be tricked into thinking the movie offers a seemingly straightforward story of a con-man and a maid attempting to steal the wealth of an innocent heiress. But as the story unfolds we are exposed to themes of revenge, love, manipulation and sexuality, as an erotic romance blooms between Lady Hideko, the heiress, and the maid, Sook-hee. Although, I must say that it’s highly problematic that a male director is producing a lesbian film, I don’t know how much I need to emphasise the need for more women directors in depicting women’s experiences. Solely judging on the cinematography, visuals and soundtrack, it’s hands down one of the best films I watched last year. ♦

Wired In



With
Rachel Berryman

Getting the Party Started

In the pilot episode of THREE's quirky new drama *The Wrong Girl*, one of the early scenes involves a boardroom exchange between two characters with contrasting journalistic approaches. The older, traditionally-minded journalist is from the scene's outset exasperated. When his younger colleague suggests they run a story about Taylor Swift, citing Tay's sixty (now over *ninety-nine*) million Instagram followers as evidence of her #relevance, he exclaims, "You can't judge newsworthy moments by the number of likes they get!" In response, his colleague tightens her hold on her iPad Mini, raises an eyebrow and retorts, "How *else* are you supposed to judge them?!"

Of course, it's a delicate balance. I detest lukewarm takes on "viral" social media posts and celebrity exchanges as much as the next person. Not only do they overpopulate my Facebook timeline, occupying digital space I would much rather see inhabited by videos of pug puppies or sleepy kittens (three guesses whose flatmate is allergic to pets), but perhaps more irritatingly, these articles are regularly overly-sensationalised, bereft of any social or political context, and lacking any evidence as to why these events warrant our attention in the first place. These articles, in other words, miss one of the most critical components of an A-grade uni essay: what lecturers fondly refer to as the "So What?"

That's where this column comes in. Having just completed an MA in Media and Communications, I've spent years (and many late nights) steeped in articles about media of all kinds—particularly those of the social persuasion. Many media scholars believe that social media is the public sphere of the twenty-first century. Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Tumblr have rapidly become dominant venues for public #discourse, replacing the coffee houses where the eighteenth-century bourgeois once congregated to discuss news, politics, literature and art. As poignantly evidenced by the spread of fake news during the latest US election, the content circulated across social media has an incredible influence on our day-to-day lives, informing not only the topics discussed at our water coolers, but also the way we approach and under-

stand the world around us.

As a result, I take social media very seriously. Each week, this column will attempt to shed light on discussions taking place across the web, investigating the implications of some of the most interesting online happenstances from the past seven days.

I fancy myself well-equipped for such an undertaking. In addition to receiving the competitive title of Biggest Facebook Addict in Year 13, I spend an incredible amount of time on social media on the reg. Not only do I follow a (frankly superfluous) 1,200 users on Twitter and spend multiple hours every day perusing the latest additions to my YouTube subscription feed, I also have the ability to recall with eerie accuracy the content posted by each individual I follow online. As astutely noted by a certain *Craccum* co-editor: I am *constantly* wired in. And so too do I believe (to once again borrow the words of David Fincher's exceptional 2011 film *The Social Network*) that "the internet's not written in pencil, Mark, it's written in ink."

Given their permanence, I reckon it's about time we paid attention to the scribbles.

#YouTubeIsOverParty

In this inaugural installment of *Wired In*, I'll be looking at the social media furor over revelations that YouTube's Restricted Mode was censoring videos featuring LGBTQ-related content.

According to YouTube's Help section, the optional viewing mode draws on "video title, description, metadata, Community Guidelines reviews, and age-restrictions ... to identify and filter out potentially mature content". Though the tool was originally introduced in 2010, last week a number of YouTube content creators discovered that their videos were flagged as inappropriate on Restricted Mode simply for incorporating LGBTQ-related themes.

In her video on the controversy, "YouTube is Anti-LGBT?"; YouTuber Rowan Ellis proposes that such targeted restrictions are symptomatic of a culture that continues to sexualise and Other individuals from the LGBTQ community,

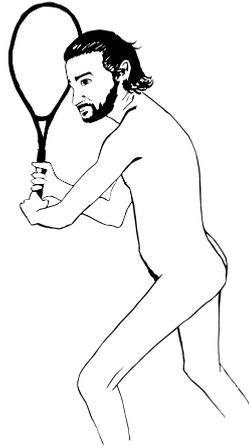
deeming their very existence "inappropriate". As Restricted Mode is specifically marketed to families, Ellis argues that the tool will prevent younger viewers from accessing the wealth of information YouTube hosts about LGBTQ issues. She speculates that this will prove particularly detrimental for youths who identify as LGBTQ themselves, noting that "YouTube is one of the only places that queer and trans youth, gay youth, bisexual youth, pansexual youth, asexual youth, [that] any of these kids have a way into community, have a way into knowledge, have a way into feeling like they're not alone."

Backlash to Restricted Mode's LGBTQ censorship quickly moved to Twitter, where the #YouTubeIsOverParty hashtag started trending worldwide. Following an ambiguously apologetic tweet from @YTCreators, many prominent YouTubers publicly decried the tool's ambiguous algorithms and the platform's lacklustre response to the community's criticism.

A follow-up post on the YouTube Creator Blog more comprehensively apologised for the feature not "working the way it should", with the team observing that their "system sometimes make[s] mistakes in understanding context and nuances when it assesses which videos to make available in Restricted Mode". The post promised further adjustments to ensure only those videos that *actually* contained "mature content" would be hidden for those using the feature in future.

Restricted Mode is the latest in a long line of controversies whereby YouTube's quiet implementation of new features has provoked outrage from the blindsided users and creators at the epicentre of the site's success. The botched implementation of the tool (at least in recent weeks) attests to the continued precariousness of entrusting algorithms with deciding which content is not only advertiser-friendly, but also *important* for its viewers to watch. At the same time, the success of the reactionary #YouTubeIsOverParty hashtag also highlights the ability for online communities to unite, congregating in the digital public sphere to hold collectively the actions of their favourite social media platforms to account. ♦

How to Talk About Sport



With
Mark Fullerton

Backing the Black Craps

Each week Mark, disgraced former-editor-in-chief, tries desperately to rewrite his column after a series of editors tell him mere hours before print that no, for the last time, a six-page spread of his favourite cricket stats is not an acceptable excuse for a column.

What a way to end a summer of cricket.¹ A washout. The Black Caps batted their wee hearts out and plugged away at the Proteas exhausted batting line up until they had them at 80/5 in the second innings, still with a lead of 100 or so. *They had them on the ropes, man, they had them on the fucking ROPES*, I was yelling at anyone who would listen. A few more zingers from Henry co. and we would have had them. If de Kock went, the rest would follow. They were on track for an innings victory.

But the Hamilton rain finally came, and a day after the *Herald* said that anything less than a win would be a surprise, the match ended in a draw. Even the South African captain admitted they caught a lucky break.

Another test loss, another series loss, and another reason for the New Zealand public to roast their cricket team.

To be fair, there was a period where everything that the Black Caps touched turned to shit. Poor lil Danny Vettori, arguably one of New Zealand's greatest cricketers, will go down as the only Black Caps captain to have a winning percentage lower than his ODI bowling economy rate.² But those days are over, and since the halcyon summer of 2015, the Black

Caps have been going steady. They're 5th in the test rankings, 3rd in ODI and 1st in T20. They got spanked in the Chappell-Hadlee series in Australia, then spanked Australia in the return series in January.³ Bangladesh came, Bangladesh saw, and Bangladesh didn't even come CLOSE to conquering as the boys in the black caps swept everything.

The problem with New Zealand sporting attitudes can be attitud-ributed (lol) to the fifteen men in black who dominate the sporting discourse. The All Blacks' dominance of rugby union since like 1593, and their ensuing popularity, mean that the lead sports stories are almost always tales of victory. That's what we get used to. When a team like the Black Caps (who lost an ODI series 2-3 to the no. 1 ranked team in the world, a feat in which there is absolutely NO shame considering they fought to bring the series level TWICE, South Africa having come fresh off a 5-0 sweep of Sri Lanka) don't win everything in sight, they're considered a failure.

The Breakers, New Zealand's only team in the ANBL,⁴ had a stunning period of success. They won the competition in 2011, 2012, 2013

and 2015, before falling in the final match of the 2016 grand final series to perennial favourites the Perth Wildcats. But what did we do? Congratulate them on making it that far, and for achieving unprecedented success for a New Zealand team in an Australian competition? No. We derided them for being filthy losers, called them chokers and other mean things. But they just lost—someone had to.

This is the nature of sport. The LA Lakers and the Miami Heat played earlier this year to a half-empty Staples Centre—four or so years ago, that would have been the game to pay top dollar for, while the Cleveland Cavaliers and Golden State Warriors were hovering on the fringes of no one really giving a half-assed hoot. Despite last week constructing a convincing argument for their immediate shooting,⁵ I really am a Crusaders fan, and their slow demise and the ascension of former cellar-dwelling Highlanders and Hurricanes is the best thing to have happened to the competition.

The thing that the Breakers and Super Rugby teams can claim over the Black Caps is constant exposure to high quality opponents. The buddy-buddy ICC arrangement between India, Australia and England mean that the rest of the cricket playing world is shut out while the gap between the Big 3 and the rest steadily grow.

In short, because I'm running out of words, don't be mean. Appreciate them while you can. ♦

¹ Yes, my column is cricket heavy, but that's because my home life is severely lacking in cricket conversation. E.g. this conversation with *The Lover*:

"I recognise the words because I've heard you say them to me in relation to cricket, but at least half the time I don't know what part of the game they refer to. Like wickets and overs—"

"Surely you know what wickets are."

"I don't."

² Not true (2.13 runs per over to 18.75%), but it's called a hyperbole, you fucking philistine. And he doesn't even have the lowest test win rate so just BACK OFF OK.

³ Despite my almost literal wanking over the Black Caps, the defining innings of the summer came from Australian Marcus Stoinis. The unknown all-rounder scored 146* in only his second international innings, coming only seven runs away from almost singlehandedly winning the game himself, only to be undone by poor running from Josh Hazelwood and an ingenious piece of field work by Southee/Williamson in a thrilling finish that Eden Park has a habit of producing, and then revealing himself in the post-match interviews to be everything that Australian cricketers aren't, i.e. actually quite a nice guy.

⁴ The Australian National Basketball League, or the Australian Network to Ban Landmines, depending on who you ask, but most likely the former.

⁵ See Fullerton, Mark. "How to Talk About Sport: Super (average) Rugby (format)." *CRACCUM Magazine* 90, no. 4 (2017): 34.

By Popular
Demand



With
Michael Clark

Ode to *Portal*: How *Portal* Counters Our Growing Algorithmic Culture

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

In 2007, Valve released a small experimental game inside *The Orange Box*, a compilation of video games. The game was called *Portal*, and it was included as a way of saying sorry for the lateness of said compilation. The game was an instant hit. It involves using a gun that can shoot two different coloured gates onto surfaces that link up and create, well, a portal. Using this device, the player must navigate through a series of rooms that act as puzzles in order to complete “tests”.

There is also a story that involves a seemingly friendly test instructor voice-over slowly revealing herself through the course of the game to be a psychotic sentient A.I. called GLaDOS that killed everybody else in the building some time ago and left you as some sort of lab rat.

Portal is considered a masterpiece by many gamers, reviewers, and academics. The game won a ton of awards and holds a place in The Museum of Modern Art’s video game collection. A sequel was released in 2011, which most people thought was just as perfect as the original, if not even better.

The combination of producing creative solutions with portals while hearing our audio instructor slowly revealing her hand is deeply satisfying. But the true fun comes from the moment we break away from the rigid test chambers, during the scene where the veil is lifted and our suspicions of GLaDOS are confirmed. Instead of leading us to the exit, GLaDOS sends us into a fire pit. Using the device that we are given by GLaDOS for testing, we must escape her death trap and in that instant, the device becomes a tool of empowerment—a weapon against the algorithmic world that we’ve been playing in.

In the beginning, *Portal*’s world is sterile and cold. We are placed in this massive research facility run by robots, automatic machines, and

other non-human processes. GLaDOS’s programming is relentless and results driven, even if that is at the expense of human lives. *Portal*’s sequel explores more of the self-sustaining laboratories that make up the sprawling complex, which include the conveyor belt systems used to pack then instantly unpack test elements, the method of machine quality control, and the ridiculously redundant process of conflict resolution amongst machines. Without humans to oversee the processes, the algorithm keeps chugging along, doing what it thinks is right, oblivious to the fact that it has been corrupted. It is a Kafkaesque nightmare of being trapped in a system of rigid processes, from which one cannot escape.

This is a frustration we are beginning to face in our daily lives. Algorithms control a lot of the systems used in real life: the stock market, security, bureaucracy, who gets insurance, what we see on our social media feed, and so on. Sometimes it’s just easier to let a system automate itself in that way, but the cost is that algorithms aren’t adaptable and we are forced to play within the confines of the algorithm’s creator. Algorithms shape our behaviour and ideology, but it is not without some semblance of resistance. Michael Burden calls this “The Algorithmic Experience”, observing “the ability of algorithms to perform sufficiently better in the regulation of human affairs leaves us without the confidence of our own identity.” We’ve all felt the anxiety of being targeted by an ad on Facebook or being recommended a purchase on Amazon; the injustice of letting a machine decide who gets put on the no-fly list; the tension when a machine thinks it knows better than you.

Portal puts into the limelight these invisible strings that pull our lives and allows us to break free from them. The test chambers are a physical representation of the algorithmic process,

forming a linear path to be solved and satisfied. The algorithm forces you to do things without choice. During one chamber, you become companions with a large inanimate cube in order to stave off death and complete the course, only to discover that the only way to unlock the door to the next level is to send it down an incinerator. Another mistake in the algorithm sends you through a live-fire course meant for military androids.

The test chambers are the player’s algorithmic prison, so it becomes immensely satisfying when we as players are able to break out of this prison and see what is happening on the other side of the chamber. Burden notes that “this quick peek behind the curtain reveals not the person behind the machine, but the machine behind the person.” Here, we are introduced to what’s really going on: the processes involved in making these chambers, how the courses work, their intents, and GLaDOS herself. In this moment, fuelled by humanity’s urge to survive, we overthrow the Kafkaesque, bureaucratic nightmare of the GLaDOS’s regime, an allegory for our tense algorithmic culture, and forge our own path.

There is no doubt that we have concerns about our algorithmically controlled world—concerns that involve agency, identity, and who the man behind the curtain controlling aspects of our life is. *Portal* helps us deal with these anxieties by making an enemy of them. The act of defying GLaDOS in the game is the same as countering the algorithms that we are forced to give a part of our lives to. It feels good to break away from the test chambers, because for a brief moment, we feel as though we’re rebelling against the machine or, literally, the mechanical processes that have such a huge impact on our life. ♦

Quarter-Life Crisis



With
Caitlin Abley

I Said Yes!

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

At a fundamental level, I am not a Yes Person. I constantly say no to things. I say no to a fourth glass of wine because I'll *definitely* spew; I say no to wearing bikini-style undies because they dig into my gunt; I say no to going out in Ponsonby because it's boring and every time I see white people singing along to "Ignition" I just want to stab myself in the neck, and then stab them in the neck. I wouldn't say I'm a No Person—just a Sometimes Person. Most of the time, I am happy as a Sometimes Person. I tell myself that being a Sometimes Person doesn't inherently mean that I am grumpy or contrary or unadventurous; it just means that I know what makes me happy and I am confident enough in myself that I can assert that.

Sometimes, though, being a Sometimes Person can be a slippery slope to becoming a No Person. The philosophy of self-care is such an important one, especially for university students who are trying to juggle study, part-time jobs, social lives and relatively healthy habits within an often isolating university environment. Balancing so many pressures can be stressful, and lonely, and a little sad, so knowing when to take the night off, put your dressing gown on and watch *Midsomer Murders* with a cuppa and a nice choc-cie biscuit is actually really important. But—for me personally—when I'm going through a low patch, I call on self-care as a catch-all excuse for retreating into myself and refusing to leave my room; which, in my case, makes me feel much worse. When I shift from being a Sometimes Person to a No Person, my mood lowers dramatically.

This is exactly what happened a couple of weeks ago. Uni was unexpectedly overwhelming, my dormant anxiety attacks were flaring up, and I was saying no to just about everything. In light of this I decided to tackle number 4 on my list (alarmingly written in capital letters):

SAY YES TO EVERYTHING!

I started on Sunday, feeling positive. My Hon-

ours supervisor emailed me with an application form for a conference in Australia. I had next to no chance of getting funding for it, but for the next week I was to be a Yes Woman—I spent the next five hours labouring over my application. I went over to my Significant Other's house, and his mum offhandedly asked if I wanted to use her old FitBit. YES PLEASE I would very much like to know exactly how little I exercise in a day OH BOY let me strap this little bundle of disappointment right to my arm and let's get STARTED. The FitBit app asked me if I wanted to set a goal of 10,000 steps a day—sure, yes, that is precisely what I wanted, LOCK IT IN. I went home and maniacally strode around the house, swinging my arms around so the pedometer would be tricked into thinking I was going on an actual walk.

On Monday, I woke up at 6am, feeling like an old ham sandwich left in a lunchbox overnight, because I had heartily agreed to drive a mate out to the airport. Then I met a sort-of friend for coffee who in usual circumstances would have definitely been the recipient of a "sorry, I'm just *so slammed* right now, maybe in a week or two" text. Straight afterwards, I had to race into uni, paying \$12 for parking because I was so damn late, to attend a think-tank session with a visiting academic which I had RSVP'd to with great gusto. When I finally arrived home, my mum casually asked whether I planned to go back to Zumba classes any time soon, so instead of collapsing in bed I slid on my Skechers and walked down to the local YMCA (I could have driven down but the FitBloodyFit kept reminding me that I had TenBloodyThousand steps to do) and paid \$10 to be out-exercised by a room-full of middle-aged women.

Tuesday and Wednesday passed in a blur of voluntary extra readings for my classes and coffee catch-ups with acquaintances. Up in the *Craccum* office, a certain tiny editor-in-chief challenged me to a game of Fluffy Bunny and

I dribbled reconstituted marshmallow all over myself and got an immediate sugar headache. I passed out at 8pm on Wednesday with a searing migraine and slept for a solid fourteen hours. By Thursday I was so completely depleted that I turned my phone off, so I couldn't be forced into any more activities. I lay on the couch, trying to figure out how to get my brother to ask me if I could finish the entire third season of *How to Get Away With Murder* in one night, so I could justify doing it for column purposes.

On Friday I enthusiastically agreed to attending both a potluck and a friend's gig, and spent a solid part of the night Ubering between the two. I accepted every drink I was offered, ignoring my usual limit because I was a Yes Person and Yes People DON'T SAY NO.

I woke up on Saturday at 1pm with the worst hangover I've had since my "Lindaeur Summer Fruits" phase in 2009. My car was still parked in Kingsland, and my FitFuckingBit whinged on about TenCuntingThousand steps, so I walked for an hour to collect it. I got home, feeling like arse on toast, in time for my friends arriving for dinner. "Do you feel like curry Caitlin?" Did I fucking feel like fucking curry. My insides felt like they'd been put into a NutriBullet, swallowed, shat out, and left in the sun to dehydrate. "Oh yeah, definitely," I whimpered, a solitary tear dripping down my wizened cheek. The Chicken Korma hit my vodka-soaked stomach and immediately fermented. I drifted in and out of consciousness, listening to my friends argue over whether to start the excruciatingly long Studio Ghibli film *Princess Mononoke*. My stomach churned. I prayed for either the sweet release of death or the sweet release of a big poo. It hit midnight. My Yes Week was officially over. I told everyone to fuck off. The minute the front door closed behind them, I ran to the toilet and chundered ferociously.

I woke up to a text the next morning: *wanna go on a bush walk?* I didn't even reply. ♦

EASY SUDOKU

6			5	2	1			9
3		7				5		8
9		5		3		4		1
		1				8		
2		3		5		6		7
7		2				1		5
1			2	9	7			4



KISSES AND QUIZZES

EASY (ONE POINT)

1. What common household item has the chemical formula NaCl?
2. Who is currently the Deputy Prime Minister?
3. What image is featured opposite the Queen's profile on the 50 cent coin?

MEDIUM (TWO POINTS)

4. The "Cornetto Trilogy" consists of *Shaun of the Dead*, *Hot Fuzz* and what other film?
5. Finish the sequence: Al Gore, Dick Cheney and ... ?
6. How many years did Harry Potter study at Hogwarts?
7. Ne-Yo has written two songs called "Let Me Love You". One he recorded himself but who recorded the other, in 2004?

HARD (THREE POINTS)

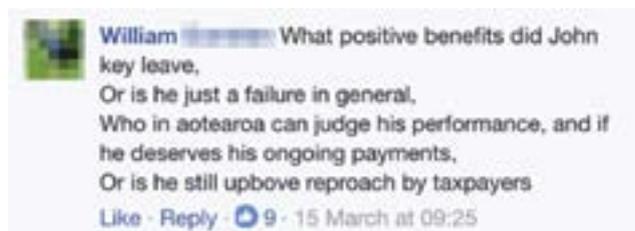
8. *East of Eden*, *Tortilla Flat* and *The Grapes of Wrath* are books by which Californian author?
9. Does the adult human body have 206, 216 or 226 bones?
10. The longest tennis match in history lasted three days in 2010—at what tournament was it played?

HARD SUDOKU

9					7			4
		3	8			1		
	2			5				8
1				9				3
		9	5		8	6		
	5			2				9
	9			1				4
		6			9	5		
4			2					8

HERALD'S HEROES

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



- is William a poet, almost.
- his writing flows like the river, almost.
- or is he an angry citizen exercising his right to online democratic action, maybe.
- or is he just some guy from Tauranga, his sense of word rhythm and meter a talent upbove all others, almost.
- he writes his comments in haiku, almost.
- if haiku were four phrases of eleven then eleven then twenty-six then twelve then
- and only then
- would William be a poet.

Answers: 1. Salt 2. Paula Bennett 3. The Endeavour 4. The World's End 5. Joe Biden—the three most recent US Vice-Presidents 6. Six—he went on a year-long camping trip with his mates for his last 7. Mario 8. John Steinbeck 9. 206 10. Wimbledon, between John Isner and Nicolas Pietrangeli

the people to blame.

EDITORS

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

SUBEDITOR

Hannah Bergin

DESIGNER

Nick Withers

SECTION EDITORS

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

WRITERS

Caitlin Abley, Nikki Addison, Hannah Bergin,
Rachel Berryman, Catriona Britton, Sarah
Butterfield, Michael Calderwood, Michael
Clark, Mark Fullerton, Trumbo Galt, Samantha
Gianotti, Saia Halatanu, Rebecca Hallas,
Grace Hood-Edwards, Rebecca Kanuta, Laura
Kvigstad, Anoushka Maharaj, Jordan Margetts,
Mark Mockridge, Patrick Newland, Danielle
Parshotam, Eloise Sims, University of Auckland
Debating Society, Daniel Vernon, Chris Wong,
Helen Yeung

COVER ARTIST

Ye-Bin Lee

ILLUSTRATORS

Mark Fullerton, Isobel Gledhill, Josh Hart,
Meng Kong, Keeley Lash, Ye-Bin Lee, Daniel
Vernon, Nathan Wood, Julia Zhu

SHADOWS "CONTRIBUTOR OF THE WEEK"

SHADOWS

Laura Kvigstad

Head to Shadows to redeem your \$50 bar tab!

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Flick us an email at editor@craccum.co.nz if
you're interested in contributing.

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EDITORIAL OFFICE

4 Alfred Street,
Private Bag 92019,
Auckland

ADVERTISING

Aaron Haugh | advertising@ausa.org.nz

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is back for 2017



It's Crunch Time!

Bevee



DEVONCHÉ



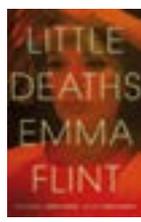
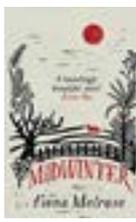
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India.



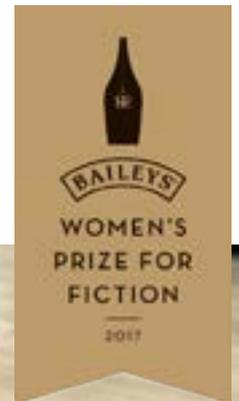
SHADOWS

More partners added each week

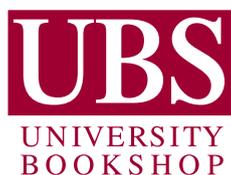
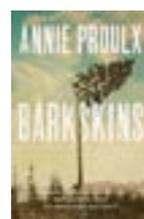
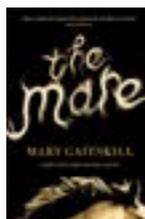
Checkout ausa.org.nz/rewards for more info



Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction



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Who will it be?



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