

CRACCU M

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND STUDENT MAGAZINE

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"This made me laugh, cry and start crocheting" - Governor Grey

TRIVIA NIGHT NETFLIX & CHILL

14 . 9 . 21 7PM



<https://fb.me/e/2x5KVNThy>

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The People to Blame

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BAR & EATERY

CONTRIBUTOR OF THE WEEK
VICTORIA NICOLL
WINNER OF \$50 SHADS VOUCHER
PAGE 26

TE AO MĀORI EDITOR
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stuff



Keep It Up, You're Doing Great

This week, *firstname_blank1* and *firstname_blank2* check in with how you're going this lockdown.

Here I am, tanning my cheeks in Alert Level 4 with my partner until we are suddenly swept in by a giant wave and an influx of seabirds, all different sizes. I turn, and there it is: The King Gull. He parts his long beak and reveals a small seagull at the fore of his mouth and... a Sex in the City on Blu-Ray at the back of its throat.

Eda awakes from another Covid dream. She hasn't even seen *Sex in the City* before.

Our only hope is that you may have some sort of a dream about being stuck in a reality TV series, so you spend your time crocheting and refining your Maccas order but then you realise that you're actually stuck in Elohim Academy and you wake up in a puddle of sweat.

By the time you read this, Auckland will have been at Alert Level 4 for almost, if not already, a month. While disorienting, the necessity for lockdowns is already well understood by us all at this point. That being said, social isolation is never easy, and no matter how expected it may have been, preparation doesn't make bearing it any simpler.

Many of us will not remember the moments leading up to lockdown. As a result, your thoughts may be entirely warped by the negative impact of social isolation. Perhaps you're like Eda, and even your dreams operate under the restrictions of Alert Level 4.

And maybe, if you're a fan of *Rick and Morty*, your dream inside a dream inside a creepy-killer-doll-fleeing dream requires mask-wearing when passing through essential services.

The unfortunate reality is that lockdown is something we cannot control, despite however many Māori vaccination codes David Seymour may choose to Tweet. What's more, is that lockdown may come at a time when people are already experiencing distress or hardship in their lives, leading to these feelings being amplified. If this lockdown is particularly difficult for you, we hope you will build a support system to listen and help you through your problems—whether that be friends, family, or an anonymous helpline.

While we can't possibly address everyone's situation, we want to start by providing some food to fuel your mental wellbeing. Being trapped at home forces us closer with technology, for better or for worse. As an indispensable tool for work and play, it's easy to become inseparable from our virtual profiles. The media we consume, pushed to us by algorithms, may not be conducive to positive wellbeing, instead having the potential to further distress and serve a bleak outlook on the world.

Before Judith Collins calls us plus-sized hypocrites, we have to admit this is

inevitably the case with *Craccum* at times too. Reporting breaking news, which is an important service we look to fill for students, can clash with fostering a positive environment at times. However, those who flick through our magazines know our priority is to promote the sharing of culture and society, and amplifying marginalised voices.

So, with the duality of media in mind, the best way to live a positive virtual environment is to foster meaningful connections. Schedule opportunities to catch up with friends, work/classmates, and family. University can make us feel guilty diverting our attention from work, but social isolation enhances the need for us to take time out however we choose—whether it's Netflix, playing games, or just Facetime conversations.

And, once you're sick of company, make sure you schedule that self-care time, too. If your premonition tells you it's time to pull out *Sex in the City* in high definition Blu-ray, you know what you gotta do.

Yours faithfully,

Brian Gu (he/him) & Eda Tang (she/her)
Co-editors of *Craccum* 2021

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The Great Lockdown Film Kahoot

Zoom, 8pm on 16th September

It's lockdown and what else is there to do but play online games! In the spirit of competition, your friends at FilmSoc are here to throw y'all a film themed kahoot night. As a special treat, we've got \$225 worth of prizes to give away, so come along and see if you've got what it takes to win! Register here: <https://forms.gle/dqLChFQEeiFATiGaA> and check out our Facebook event for more details!

SDG Solveathon 2021—powered by EY

Online, 10am – 4pm on 25th September

Social Innovation NZ, in partnership with EY, has collaborated with WWF, Mainfreight, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Meredith Connell, and Fair Food to create a case brief around a UN Sustainable Development Goal that teams of 3-4 work on solving. This ONE-DAY only ONLINE competition will involve workshops, mentorship from representatives from all five organisations, collaborative case-cracking sessions, presentations to the organisation, a \$1,000 cash prize pool, and plenty of socialising and networking opportunities. Register now to secure your spot here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.nz/e/sdg-solveathon-2021-tickets-165009575081> and visit our Facebook event page for more details.



Moderna Set to Begin Testing New HIV Vaccines



CHARLIE PARKER

Two new HIV vaccines will soon undergo their first testing phase. If successful, Moderna could reach the “first base” stage in creating an effective HIV vaccine.

The National Institute of Health's clinical database has reported that Moderna, the biotech company behind one of the COVID-19 vaccines, will begin its first testing phase for a new HIV vaccine. The human trials, which are due to begin in September, will test two new vaccines that are based on Messenger RNA (mRNA) technology.

Moderna's first tests will include 56 participants between the ages of 18 and 50, who are not currently diagnosed with HIV. The first testing phase is meant to study how the immune system reacts to the antibodies and whether the vaccine will be able to achieve a 'neutralisation' of HIV.

HIV is a sexually transmitted virus that currently has no cure. The NZ AIDS Foundation (NZAF) reported that currently, 2839 people in New Zealand are known to be receiving treatment for HIV. The transmission of bodily fluids through sex is one of the most common ways of spreading the virus. Students are in a higher risk group for acquiring the virus due to the likelihood of students having multiple sexual partners, and unprotected sex.

Dr Peter Saxton, a senior researcher and lecturer at the University of Auckland, told Craccum that effective HIV prevention options have recently undergone a revolution. “Students and young people can now choose which suits them best, from the familiar condom to newer biomedical options like pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).” PrEP is a single tablet that can reduce the risk of HIV transmission by up to 90% for people who are at high risk of HIV. A PrEP prescription can be given by your doctor or health care provider, as long as you test negative for the HIV virus.

Effective treatment means that people living with HIV can live long healthy lives without the fear of transmission. Despite this, people living with HIV often face discrimination and prejudice due to stigma, which contributes to self-negativity. Stigma surrounding HIV has come from HIV often being acquired through unprotected, casual sex. Homophobia is also a prevalent factor contributing to the stigma surrounding HIV, as gay men are overrepresented in HIV cases.

Saxton says that it is important to remove this stigma within New Zealand. “We can all play our part in eliminating HIV and sexuality stigma by correcting misinformation and calling out microaggressions. That way, everyone who needs HIV prevention options can feel supported rather than ashamed or embarrassed.” One of the personal stories published on the NZAF website states that the stigma is worse than the virus. “You can live with the virus... but the stigma will kill you emotionally”.

The vaccine aims to achieve the same

“If the new vaccine passes the first phase, it gets you to first base, but it’s not a home run... the mRNA technology may be key to solving the HIV vaccine issue, but it’s going to be a multi-year process.”

results as Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine that is available overseas, and shows efficacy rates of up to 94% in certain populations. Currently, an effective HIV vaccine does not exist due to the diversity in strains of the virus and the way in which the virus attacks the immune system. Vaccines for other viruses are able to protect against complete infection and limit the contagion, whereas an HIV vaccine would need to provide a complete barrier of sterilisation against the virus.

Robin Shattock, an Immunologist at Imperial College London, told Smithsonian magazine that even if Moderna's vaccine is successful, working towards a cure for HIV will be a lengthy process. “If the new vaccine passes the first phase, it gets you to first base, but it's not a home run... the mRNA technology may be key to solving the HIV vaccine issue, but it's going to be a multi-year process.”

If you need support with your sexual health, you can visit: <https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/on-campus/student-support/personal-support/student-health-counselling/self-help-resources/sexual-health.html>

For further information regarding HIV, you can visit: <https://www.nzaf.org.nz/awareness-and-prevention/hiv/hiv-in-nz/>



Students Call Out Disappointing Tertiary Support From the Government



JESSICA HOPKINS

The Government has announced their highly anticipated plans to support tertiary students during the COVID-19 lockdown. This has been met with criticism from students and student advocates who say it doesn't go far enough.

Education Minister, and breakout star of the 1pm Daily Update, Chris Hipkins recently announced plans to support students following the change in COVID-19 restrictions. The Government has decided on a boost of \$20 million into the Hardship Fund for Learners, which Hipkins says will help 15,000 tertiary students.

This additional money will be paid to tertiary providers, including the University of Auckland, who will distribute it however they deem suitable. Hipkins says that the funding can be used to help students facing financial hardship, or technology-related costs when there is not an option for in-person study.

Andrew Lessels, the National President of the New Zealand Union of Students' Associations (NZUSA) initially welcomed the announcement online. "This is a massive win for learners, and one that will ease some of the stress caused by lockdown restrictions." An increase in the Hardship Fund for Learners is one of three asks of Government in the National Student Action Plan on COVID-19, signed by the New Zealand Union of Students' Associations, Te Mana Ākonga, Tauira Pasifika, the National Disabled Students Association and 45 other student organisations across Aotearoa including AUSA.

However, the Government's student support plan has been criticised by some who say it isn't good enough. Lessels added that more needs to be done to prevent students falling into hardship in the first place. "Not only do we need to see a UEI (Universal Education Income) implemented to ensure ALL Ākonga are supported, but at the very least, doubling the amount of course related costs so that

students have quick access to funds they desperately need."

Green Party Tertiary Education spokesperson, Chlöe Swarbrick, also voiced that this isn't good enough. "At the very least, we'd been expecting a doubling of course related costs (despite all of the problems that come with greater debt) which would be available to the 250,000 students, instead of this potential help for a maximum of around 15,000." Last lockdown, the Government doubled the borrowing allowance to \$2000 for course-related costs.

The Green Party have started a petition calling for immediate, direct financial support to be available for all students. Swarbrick says the Green Party have continued to push for a no-strings-attached student support payment, and that a guaranteed minimum income would be the best case scenario. The MP argues this is especially needed for many students who can't access the wage subsidy scheme. Some post-graduate students also say they have experienced financial hardship during the pandemic, but have received no support from their University.

The party also voiced criticism from students about the process of applying for hardship grants, stating that it is inequitable to access. "Many students report access to these funds requires a substantial amount of time and energy, and that it can feel deeply embarrassing to have to prove just how poor you are to access them." Currently, support for UoA students includes the student emergency fund, and AUSA hardship grants, which students must meet an eligibility criteria for. This funding support is available to help with living costs but not course related costs.

As well as financial support, the National Student Action Plan on COVID-19 calls for an increase in funding for mental health support for tertiary students and young people during periods of social isolation. UoA has stated that

they are aware that the stress and uncertainty of COVID-19 lockdowns and remote learning can impact on students' mental health. Under Alert Level Four restrictions, students can make an appointment to talk to a mental health adviser on the phone or Zoom.

Swarbrick is calling for students to support the Green Party's petition, arguing that student poverty, debt and struggle shouldn't be normalised. "It's time to remind the Government of the power of a quarter of a million students and demand meaningful student support."

Green Party Petition: https://action.greens.org.nz/support_our_students?fbclid=IwAR2S3zh-ZiMsiMkJP849sn84PhAVtAOOfVDLnCLXvUv5w8CBX2YrHdFov8k

Financial support: <https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/study/fees-and-money-matters/financial-support.html>

“It’s time to remind the Government of the power of a quarter of a million students and demand meaningful student support.”

UoA's First Drug Checking Service Produces Potentially Life-Saving Results



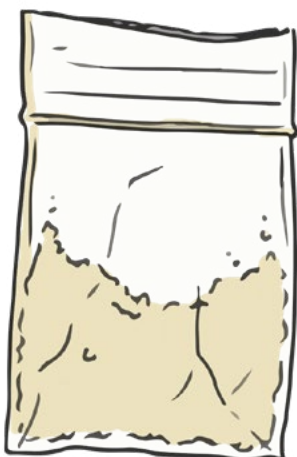
JESSICA HOPKINS

An official report of UoA's first drug checking event states it was a success, and resulted in tangible harm reduction outcomes.

During re-orientation week, Know Your Stuff (KYS) ran a pilot for a free, confidential, drug checking service in Albert Park, supported by UoA's Student Wellbeing Team and the New Zealand Drug Foundation (NZDF). This event was possible due to legislation passed last year, allowing drug and substance checking services to operate legally in New Zealand, with the aim of minimising drug and substance harm.

The clinic ran for three hours on July 19 at full capacity, with a total of 35 drug samples tested at the event. The most common drugs seen were MDMA, ketamine, and amphetamines. According to testers, the majority of people who visited the clinic were inexperienced drug users.

Drug checking is a proven effective drug harm reduction strategy. According to KYS, drug checking reduces the risk of death from drug use by ensuring people know what substance they have, and the risks associated with it so they can make an informed choice. An official report of the event revealed only 57% of the samples tested were consistent with what the client had presumed them to be.



After further ESR testing of one sample presumed to be a fake Xanax, it was determined that the drug checking service most likely saved a person's life. "If the full pill had been ingested, it would have resulted in death within a couple of hours for the consumer."

KYS testers also reported that a large number of the samples presumed to be MDMA, were, in fact, the harmful synthetic cathinone, Eutylone. On their website, KYS states Eutylone is "potentially even the crappiest drug since the N-ethylpentylone boom of 2017" and that you cannot tell the difference between MDMA and eutylone based on sight or smell alone. "Eutylone has been linked to a number of hospitalisations, and a much larger number of people just having a terrible, scary time, with some feeling unwell up to 10 days later."

Testers reported that when they found that a substance was not as presumed, 0% of people said they would go on to take the drug, and they disposed of their samples on site. "It is clear that knowing what is in a sample affects people's decisions whether or not to take it." Following a conversation with the AOD practitioners, 81% of people who had the drug they presumed said they would likely still take it.

According to those involved, due to the success of this event, many are interested in future drug checking services on campus. "It was great to see tangible harm reduction was achieved through this event and that it was well received by staff, students, and members of the public alike," commented UoA Health Promotion Adviser Carley Fletcher. "We hope it will be extended beyond this pilot and offered on a more regular basis to the University community." KYS and the NZDF have also expressed their support for UoA running more drug checking services, recommending that UoA becomes gazetted and purchases their own spectrometer.



According to KYS, drug checking reduces the risk of death from drug use by ensuring people know what substance they have, and the risks associated with it so they can make an informed choice.

Resurgence Support Payment and Wage Subsidy Scheme: What You Need To Know



KARANAMA RURU NGĀTI RAUKAWA/NGATI MANIAPOTO

Last week, the Government announced an extension to its Covid-19-related support payments to businesses, organisations and employees across the motu. Here is what you need to know, and your rights as an employee

The Covid-19 Wage Subsidy are payments from the Government to employers, to ensure that employees unable to come into work due to movement restrictions are paid. Applications for the second Covid-19 Wage Subsidy August 2021, known as Wage Subsidy August 2021 #2, are open for two weeks until 11.59pm Thursday 16 September 2021.

Payments will be made weekly to employers so they can pay their staff, and the amount varies between full, part time, and hours fluctuate and casual employees. Employees that have been included in the subsidy will be paid at least 80% of their wages, with all of the subsidy to be used only to pay employees.

Much like the RSP, businesses must meet certain criteria before they can receive the Wage Subsidy. Businesses must be expecting at least a 40% revenue decline because of the Alert Level change over a period of 14 consecutive days between the

period 31 August 2021 and 13 September.

Under the Privacy Act, employees have the right to request access to the information that employers have provided to the Ministry of Social Development. Employers are also unable to require employees to use their annual holidays or sick leave, leave without pay, or other leave entitlements. The wage subsidy also does not change the terms and conditions in the employment agreement. Being asked to use leave entitlements or make any changes to the terms in employment agreements cannot be done unless the changes have been discussed and agreed with you in good faith and are in writing.

Also reinstated from previous lockdowns is the **Resurgence Support Scheme (RSP)**, a one-off payment to businesses and organisations that meet specific criteria, should the Government decide to activate it whenever the Covid-19 alert level rises to level two or higher. Businesses that are facing a reduction in revenue of at least 30% may apply for the scheme. A 30% decline in capital raising ability over a seven day period due to the alert levels is also an accepted prerequisite.

All businesses, whether large or smaller and communal, may apply for the RSP should they meet the eligible criteria. Should an application be approved, businesses may apply for the lesser of:

- \$1,500 plus \$400 per full-time equivalent (FTE) employee, up to a maximum of 50 FTEs
- Four times the actual revenue decline experienced by the applicant

The payment is intended to help businesses cover fixed costs, such as rent, and was originally for businesses at least six months old. However, this has been reduced to at least one month.



Businesses are able to apply for the RSP from Thursday 9th September, and Inland Revenue will contact applicants who had previously been declined under the particular requirement.

Finance Minister Grant Robertson states that he understands the difficulties that businesses face under heightened Alert Levels, and encourages people to apply for the scheme.

"We know that many businesses are doing it tough during these heightened Alert Levels".

More information regarding the RSP and wage subsidy can be found on the IRD and Ministry of Social Development websites, respectively.

Under the Privacy Act, employees have the right to request access to the information that employers have provided to the Ministry of Social Development.

Broadcasting Standards Authority Rejects 95bFM Complaint

KARANAMA RURU NGĀTI RAUKAWA/NGĀTI MANIAPOTO

A complaint about a 95bFM promo that includes a long-time used string of swear words has not been upheld.

'F***-knuckles, c**k and piss, balls, thank you.' These are the closing words of a 95bFM notice played on-air that 'Bosom Radio' listener and eventual complainant Jeremy Evans filed a complaint to the station about. The promo informs listeners that the station does its best in adhering to the rules and guidelines set out by the Broadcasting Standards Authority (BSA), and the complaints process itself. Within the complaint, Evans acknowledged that the words were meant to be 'irreverently humorous', however also claims the string of words breaches the good taste and decency standard set out by the BSA, as the words "conjured unpleasant images of a sexual nature", while also apparently antagonising of the BSA itself.

95bFM's Programme Director refused to uphold the complaint. "The reason our BSA ad contains a somewhat cheeky coda, is far from a disrespect to the institution - it's a knowing wink to our listeners. A wink that says: we know you're a discerning listenership - a listenership that's informed, caring, pushes the envelope, and is far more likely to complain about political or social injustices, rather than 'cuss words'."

The complaint was moved to the BSA, with the Crown authority deciding not to uphold it on Wednesday. BSA acting chair Suzie Staley stated that the swear words used in the segment are not used in an aggressive or sexually graphic manner, and do not carry any discernible meaning as a combination of words, but are rather being used satirically. Staley continues, adding that 95bFM is an independent station located on the University of Auckland campus, and is owned by

Auckland University Students' Association Media Trust, with its target and likely audience being young adults. "The Authority found, in the context, and particularly in light of 95bFM's target and intended audience and its expectations of the radio station, the segment was unlikely to cause widespread undue offence or distress or undermine widely shared community standards."

The words are considered by many to be iconic in bFM's history, having been used on-air for 25 of the 52 years of the student radio station's existence. Merchandise made with the slogan printed on it have become best-sellers, according to bFM's Programme Director. This is the first complaint made to the BSA about 95bFM in sixteen years, with the last one being in 2005, and the first complaint ever in 25 years about use of the words.

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Governor Grey Owns a Home and You Don't



EDA TANG

Owning a home in Auckland Central is no easy feat when housing prices have shot up to sky high records. Yet, our little biscuit, our beloved feline friend, Governor Grey, showed us that the key to home ownership was simple.

Grey resides inside a basic log cabin hidden under a majestic tree with low hanging branches near the iconic heritage landmark, the Clocktower. In Governor Grey's past life, she* was a man and her home was burnt down in a fire. Grey has learnt some valuable lessons since.

Grey tells us that the key to home ownership is this: your house need not windows, for windows make a house expensive.

However, Grey understood the importance of sunlight for the absorption of bone strengthening minerals, regulation of the circadian rhythm, and for general wellbeing. Grey spends most of her days outdoors "running important errands", although she would not disclose what these involved.

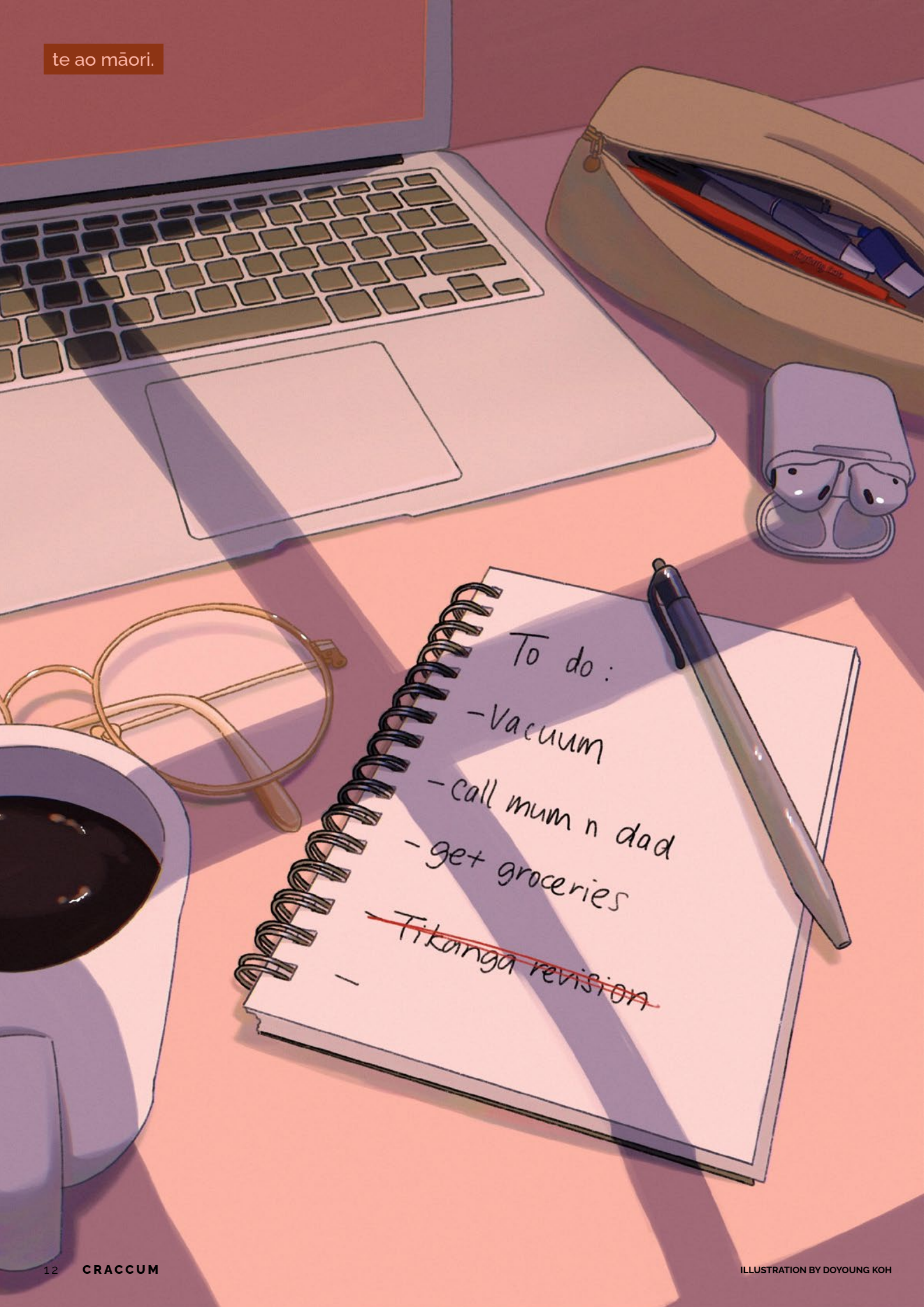
It is not known whether or not Governor Grey is an enrolled student at the University of Auckland, but based on her home ownership status and the amount of time spent outside, it is unlikely.

Grey has been attending "open homes" since she was six months old. She says that you should not be too focussed on ornate features, but on the basics, such as the location of the cat treats. "If my home floods, I use my pretty privilege to seduce my neighbours and they not only let me stay with them, but I can also use their appliances".

"And finally, location, location, location", Grey emphasised. "It's only practical to live a few strides away from the nearest *Craccum* distribution box".

**Governor Grey has prominent nipples, idk*





To do:

- Vacuum

- call mum n dad

- get groceries

~~- Tikanga revision~~

Discrimination Through Dismissal

Are we playing our part in cultural competency?



BEN HEATHCOTE

By now most UoA students should know of the open letter signed by various university professors that kicked up some controversy a couple of months back. The letter was published in the Listener at the end of July, and claimed that increasing the use of mātauranga Māori in science education was a bad idea as it was not science. Soon afterward, the Vice-Chancellor made a statement saying that the views put forward in the letter didn't represent the University and the Acting Dean of Science, Douglas Elliffe, stepped down from the position. End of story...right?

Unfortunately not. I believe the publishing of this letter was ultimately a good thing as it brings to light one of the more subtle ways in which racial discrimination can surface through condescension and dismissal of indigenous knowledge, values, and issues.

To claim that mātauranga Māori is not science is not an idea or position that requires an open letter, as it is not something mātauranga Māori tries to be – it is knowledge. However, there is a difference between acknowledging the difference between the two but regarding them as equally valid AND treating one as superior to the other. The defensive way in which the letter insists that mātauranga Māori is in some way less valid than western science indicates the authors are attempting to do the latter. It adds insult to injury when a few of those authors aren't from science faculties, namely, philosophy and critical studies in education. This belief, which is only held by a few academics spread across several different faculties, is something I think needs to be discussed more, as it's something not limited to university higher-ups.

Being a pākehā, I strongly doubt that I'm the best person to discuss issues like this, nor do I want to be the last word on this subject. When I was younger I perpetuated the problem: goofing off and not taking Māori classes seriously at intermediate and in high school, which is something I regret now (sorry Mrs Orr!). So while I can understand how those behaviours can be perpetuated into uni, it can be deeply uncomfortable to observe. I can't even begin to imagine how disappointing and hurtful it is for Māori students to see their peers so dismissive of the inclusion of Māori into any subject that doesn't explicitly reference it in the course title. As a Global Studies student, I've bounced between more than a dozen different academic fields: from comparative literature and sociology to international business and public law. This shotgun scatter of a uni experience means

two main things: I've been able to see how different fields incorporate Māori knowledge and principles into their curriculum, and how students taking those courses have responded to it. Unfortunately, that response has often been negative.

As a whole, and this is certainly not applicable to every student, it definitely feels like some view parts of their courses that focus on Māori to be less important than the rest. This can surface in a number of ways, from making those lectures lower priority when it comes to studying to neglecting assignments based on the content. Personally, I have noticed a drop in attendance when lectures including Māori interests and perspectives are conducted. It's not much; maybe about 10-15%, but it's consistent across multiple different faculties. The exception to this in my experience has been in my law classes (but don't tell the law students, they'll be even more up themselves).

The most insidious aspect of this type of prejudice is that it can be held and acted upon by people with little to no self-reflection. And while a few who participate in this behaviour understand what they are doing and do it deliberately, most assume that since they hold no negative beliefs towards Māori then their actions are overall positive. Counter to this line of thought, casual dismissal or a generalised sense of lower importance can be greatly harmful to the people and culture being dismissed.

Consistent devaluation of Māori knowledge and values in primary and secondary education has led to a culture in academic spaces that dismiss things like the telling of Māori stories, the learning of one's own pepeha as mere obligatory tokens, which must be performed in order to move on to the actual important stuff. This not only lessens non-Māori understanding, but maintains the systems which create this issue to begin with. There is also the potential issue for a vicious cycle, where to boost engagement, existing Māori content is lessened or made easier, which in turn makes it easier to invalidate.

As a way to give more direct feedback, it seems a good idea to highlight the best and worst faculties (in my own personal experience) for the inclusion of tikanga in their curriculums. However, a small disclaimer: since my experience has been so broad, my knowledge of each faculty and its teachings isn't as good as someone majoring in that field. I'm also aware that my own academic focus, Global studies, focuses primarily on Europe

and Māori aren't prioritised as much in a lot of my classes.

With that out of the way, here are some of the more disappointing fields followed by the better ones:

Earth science: While I understand that Earthsci doesn't involve people that much, one would feel a course on how natural hazards impact people in Aotearoa should include some Māori knowledge, or at least an acknowledgment.

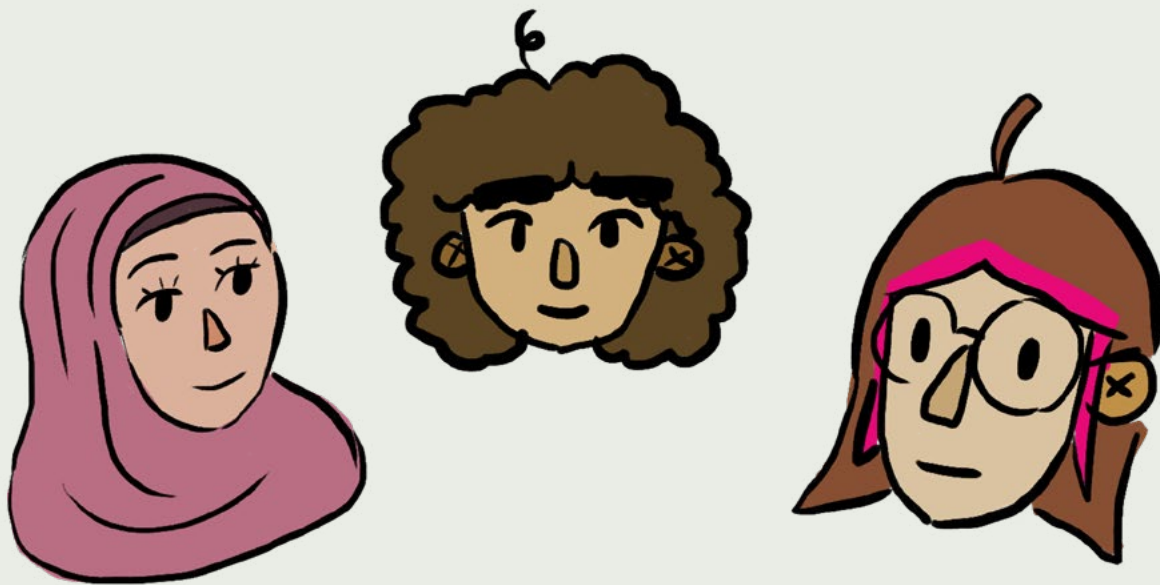
Geography: I've taken a few Geo courses, primarily urban geography and while Māori as a group were mentioned a few times, it was never substantial, usually as a sort of footnote to the main material. You know the type of thing, 'blablabla this, blablabla that - oh and this also affects Māori'.

Global Studies: It's a bit hard to discuss GS' inclusion of tikanga in their courses since it's such a massively diverse field by definition. However, the core courses do a good job at making students aware of potential issues with effective communication and interaction with different cultures, with special attention given to contemporary Māori values and issues.

Comparative Literature: Probably not a big surprise, but Complit's incorporation of Māori stories and the knowledge and history weaved into those stories into the subject is both useful in bettering one's understanding of Tikanga but also helps to counteract the trivialization of Māori storytelling.

This dismissal can have severe knock-on effects in student's future careers, especially those going into fields where frequent interactions with the public are expected. Imagine if a Law student were to neglect an elective like Māori justice and then goes on to become a criminal lawyer. Māori are disproportionately overrepresented in this area and since these classes are not compulsory the student would be unequipped to work with tangata whenua.

Even those that stay in more academic spaces can be negatively impacted by their lack of knowledge, as most Arts courses are heavily based on the discussion of different ideas and perspectives. By rejecting Māori knowledge, you effectively remove an additional perspective from your mind, ultimately limiting how impactful your work can be. So...get off your ass and get to your tikanga classes now!



Reality TV's Problem with Women

A deep dive into your lockdown bingeing



VICTORIA NICOLL

Dance Moms, *Toddlers and Tiaras*, *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*, and more similar shows, are often advertised as a deep, unscripted, and unedited look into these people's lives. The shows profit off anger, off catfights, and off women being edited to look like they're irrational, dramatic, and emotionally overwrought. Dramatics make good television, and it seems like the cost of that is to further exploit these women and girls.

Young girls are often portrayed as materialistic and superficial. This has *always* been to do with media portrayal, the stories of little girls in books. It just so happens that over the last 20 years, reality TV has profited off these young girls, their temper tantrums and, for example, their love for dance. This was the age of *Toddlers and Tiaras*, and just before the beginning of *Dance Moms*. In other words, it was in the middle of TLC's car crash TV golden era. Car crash TV *has* to be sensationalised, the subject matter would be otherwise mundane and unwatchable. The cost of this, though, is that it's pushing the narrative of women and girls being unnecessarily angry, hard to control, irrational, and emotional. These women are made into

caricatures of themselves, and even if we think we're smart enough as consumers to not take it too literally, it'll push this narrative and bias all the same.

TLC's shows about performing kids, often, didn't hail the kids as the centre of the drama. Instead, it was the parents, the mums who'd do anything to get their kids famous and by extension, them. Now that I'm a bit older, I can see the transactional nature of these feuds between the women and the producers of these shows. Women are there for entertainment alone, with apparently no intellectual value. I'd love to say that I haven't watched many shows like these since, that I'm better, more grown-up, with a sense of moralistic superiority, but I haven't. Like so many other people across the world, I've fallen into seeing the supposed *inside worlds* of these television personalities and hoping to "get to know them" on an apparently personal level. I'm talking about shows like *KUWTK*, *Love Island*, and even *The Bachelor* (on occasion).

Why, then, do we get so much out of these shows? Are they really as confessional as the media moguls behind them would have

us believe? Why do the sensationalist parts of these shows more often than not focus on women? What are we supposed to make of this media we watch to get away from thinking about real-life stuff? Why is it *Dance Moms* and not *Dance Dads*? It comes down to the profitability of women's emotions and anger. If two people have a catfight, it makes for good television. If two women have a catfight, it's prime material for teaching kids what *not* to be. However, it also means that these women, who're simply getting into arguments, as we all do, are being exploited for their anger and emotions. It pushes the narrative of women being hot-headed, fiery, and more often than not, irrational. It's reductive, but we all fall into watching it.

Reality TV is so often hailed as a personalised, insider look—a confessional. It's more than that, it's a way for producers to archetype people into What You Don't Want To Be, a way to exploit people's very natural responses to highly stressful situations, and villainise emotions. Women's emotions are once again on the chopping block of consumerism, and women are time and time again reduced into being there purely for entertainment value.

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UoA's Own: How To Get Away With MURDER

The probably not at all comprehensive story of Cyril and Betty Belshaw



BELINDA HOPMAN

[Features Editor's Note: "UoA's Most Notable Alumni" was run in Craccum's Issue 17, published on the 16th August, where I investigated some of UoA's most interesting and bizarre graduates. One of my profiles focused on Cyril S. Belshaw, who stood trial for the murder of his wife Betty (also a UoA alumnus) in 1980. Belinda Hopman, a UoA student, kindly emailed me a week later with this fascinating summary of Cyril and Betty's story. We figured we would publish this for all the true crime nerds out there such as myself—enjoy!]

Cyril Shirley Bradshaw was born on the 3rd of December 1921 in Waddington (a village about 50km west of Christchurch, for us JAFAs). He attended the University of Auckland (then known as Auckland University College) in the early 1940s, becoming the prestigious and not at all completely boring Secretary of Publications and Public Relations in the Students' Association in 1942. He was described in our very own *Craccum* as: "Youthful and enthusiastic. Dislikes mismanagement. One of the few people I'll round the place who does his work thoroughly and without fuss." (Is this where I subtly mention his wife's body wasn't identified for 9 months?)

Speaking of his wife, one Betty Sweetman (later known for being Cyril Belshaw's wife and then dying suspiciously), was the Chairman of the Social Committee on that very same Students' Association in 1942 where she was described as: "Effervescent and voluble. Always gets there in the end. Likes acting and has thoughts on food values." Lovely. They married that year.

Cyril did his M.A. at Victoria (then called Victoria College),

and earned his Ph.D. in Social Anthropology abroad at the London School of Economics in 1949, where his thesis was on the society built in three Melanesian territories—he sounds like a blast at parties...and I'm an anthropology student. This later became his first book, published in 1954, at which point he had already been under the employ of the University of British Columbia (UBC) for a year, making him an established anthropologist.

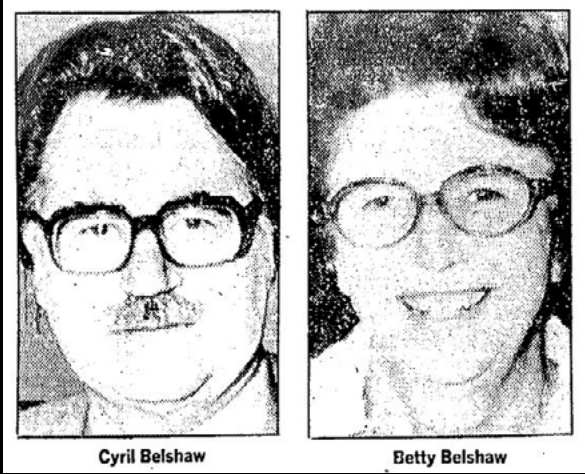
Apparently, Betty was very integral in Belshaw's work and research. On a year-long stay doing research for another book in Hanuabada, Papua New Guinea, Betty was instrumental in getting viewpoints from the women in the city as she befriended them and participated in everyday activities. (Warning: I'm about to roast a dead guy for, honestly, the rest of this article.) Belshaw, however, didn't even learn the language and had to rely on any English speakers and his wife, who did learn the language, in order to gather research data (which only breaks the surface of why social anthropologists of this time are the absolute bane of my existence). He continued to write about Melanesian countries until he wrote about the U.S. instead, and that's really about it. Wait, I lied: he also has a three-part autobiography (that I'm sure doesn't embellish or cover up anything about his life).

Okay, now to the juicy stuff. There's an article in Canadian magazine *Maclean's* that was published a month after Betty's body was identified that I'm just gonna end up quoting so I'll [link it](#). Betty, a well-respected English instructor in her own right, was going to France and Switzerland to study the works of Katherine Mansfield.

From December 1978 to May 1979, they were renting an apartment in Switzerland; Betty wanted to study there and Cyril was on sabbatical. In January 1979, Cyril reports Betty missing in Paris, with no real information about them being in Paris in the first place, saying he last saw her boarding a subway to a library. She goes through the missing persons system and Cyril goes back to Canada after a few months (you know, how you do when your spouse is missing in a foreign country).

In late March, Swiss officials found a decomposing naked body wrapped in plastic by the side of a road. This road led out of the village the Belshaws were renting in. Dental records were relied on for identification, and Cyril, obviously not in the mood for helping (sharing is caring, Cyril), intentionally doctored Betty's dental records when asked for them. Swiss police eventually identified her—after six months—by getting her dental records directly from Vancouver. Swiss police visited Vancouver to investigate Cyril further, and eventually asked him to accompany them back to Switzerland. He was not terribly cooperative. An international warrant was put out for his arrest and he was arrested in November 1979 while attending a UNESCO conference in Paris (I love irony sometimes).

Cyril was kept in a Lausanne prison cell for a year until the trial started in December of 1980. The trial itself lasted three days, with a verdict on the fourth (Hello *Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney*). There was, according to another Macleans article published just after the trial ended, no real means or opportunity discussed because the remains couldn't offer any cause or time of death. The motives, however, were aplenty. Revelations of an affair with a UBC student and other not explicitly stated evidence showed a strained and unhappy marriage. Cyril's defence included character witnesses, not limited to UBC faculty and his own children (interesting bonus: Cyril's daughter Diana is an actress and director and has a theatre award named after her at Humber College in Toronto). Cyril was acquitted of the crime due to a "very slight doubt," and had to pay



ABOVE IMAGE FROM THE GLOBE AND MAIL 1980

\$21,000 in court costs due to the police action required from falsifying the dental records.

Side note: I did look up the mistress, Elida Harris. She was a nursing student at UBC, graduating in 1962 (so ages before Betty's death, but that doesn't mean he didn't have other affairs more recently) and wasn't married at the time when she was a student, contrary to most media reports. She married the year after she graduated from UBC and moved to Montreal. She was also almost 18 years younger than Cyril (which feels pretty on par for grossness with this guy).

After the trial, Cyril went back to his job as a professor at UBC (after a vacation), and worked there until his retirement in 1987. The murder of Betty Joy Belshaw (née Sweetman) wasn't even a footnote in her husband's plentiful obituaries, and finding any information about any continued investigation after the trial was basically impossible, so I would like to leave you with her picture in the 1943 University Magazine, which she edited, and her graduation quotes from the same publication:

Betty Joy Sweetman
*Ain't the discussion bizarre,
 Golly how Russian we are.*
—A. P. Herbert
Bounce me brother with a solid four.

--1942 (BACHELOR OF ARTS GRADUATE)

Betty Joy Belshaw
Methinks the lady doth protest too much.
—Shakespeare
Shoo fly! don't bodder me! I belong to company G, I feel like a morning star.
—Bishop

--1943 (MASTER OF ARTS GRADUATE)



BETTY SWEETMAN, WOMEN'S VICE-PRESIDENT, STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION, 1942-1943 (UOA ARCHIVES)

Exclusive: Former Elohim Academy Cult Member Speaks Out

I closed my previous articles with the thought that in our lockdown bubbles, we would be safe. Or so I thought.



KEEARA OFREN

CONTENT WARNING: VARIOUS KINDS OF ABUSE ARE COVERED.

I have covered the *World Mission Society Church of God* (WMSCOG) extensively—search craccum.co.nz to see more!

In late 2020, I received messages ranging from Howick to Wellington Central from individuals who had been approached by Elohim members, requesting 'young people' and that the pandemic was a sign of the 'End Times.' Since then, the r/Auckland forum on Reddit has also been buzzing about recruitment attempts in West Auckland. With no further contacts, my leads dried up there. One recent rainy lockdown day, this changed. In the message was a grateful letter from a former member of seven years who was recruited at 15 and left at 22. She reached out to me in the hope that her story would solve the mystery and that she could empower others with her story to warn against cults. With this, I knew I had to share her story.

Arishma is a bright and expressive University of Auckland student with a warm disposition. However, behind the cheer, it was apparent that she and her family had gone through emotional extremes under years of severe control that they lived under, and that this continues to shape her warnings to others. Arishma's story starts out much like some of the respondents of my articles, with her family as the subject of a door knocking campaign. The introduction into Elohim Academy was a welcoming group they longed for, akin to a large family always asking what they needed and how they could help, but looking back, Arishma states that this was a lovebombing technique to entrap her family into withstanding unreasonable and abusive restrictions on their lives.

Breaking rules (missing service, missing a recruitment schedule, forgetting to bow, missing mandatory donations, breaking dress code, etc) would warrant swift punishment.

Arishma was baptised in her own home, and an Indian woman was brought to the home on the second visit to win the trust of her Indian family. And so, her journey with Elohim Academy began.

Elohim Academy/WMSCOG's Ideology

According to Arishma, WMSCOG has 7000 branches worldwide, with Korean originating members on temporary visas. The church has grown to the point that Deacons and Deaconesses are local and are seeking to target other religious minority and diaspora groups, namely Māori and Pasifika Christians.

The WMSCOG keeps the true name of their church secret, referring to themselves as 'Elohim Academy' or 'Zion.' Arishma states that they are aware of their bad reputation, but are insistent on recruiting as many people as possible as all other churches "will go to Hell."

WMSCOG members are taught that Jesus would come again from 'the East,' with a new name bringing a new Passover. To members, this meant that a man named Ahn Sahng-Hong and later, his female successor, Jang Gil-Jah were incarnations of the messiah and that emphasis on 'God the Mother' is to have members accept a female mortal form of God. Jang Gil-Jah is known as the 'Heavenly Mother,' with members vying for a chance to go on a pilgrimage to Korea to meet her.

Who and Why do they Recruit?

WMSCOG's aggressive recruitment preference towards young women has led to numerous universities in the United States raising the group to law enforcement, suspecting human trafficking. I ask Arishma straight away if this is the case. She explains that the aim of the church is to recruit as many people as possible, and that members are told to approach young women, as they are more 'vulnerable and easy to manipulate,' something I have noted in previous *Craccum* articles.

Arishma expresses to me that she was once one of the recruiters, saying "It was so hard to recruit people. People think you're nuts. If

anything, it was more of a tool to bring us together as a group and expose us to punishment and fear to prevent us from leaving."

Inside the Group

Psychologist Dr. Michael D. Langone is known for his methodology in determining cult behaviour. He bases his definition in his experience rehabilitating former cult members as well as enduring cultural markers of how society defines cults. These signs are listed but not limited to: being excessively zealous, unquestioning commitment to a leader, exploitative manipulation, harm to members of society, extensively dictating the behaviour of others, viewing themselves as having exalted status or knowing a secret 'goodness' or 'truth,' intense opposition and alienation from society, and various deception tactics.

Arishma explains a set of bizarre conditions for WMSOG members. Members are expected to separate themselves from social media and friends outside the church, have 100% attendance in mass, 100% attendance in recruitment sessions, give 10% of their income, conform to a non-denim dress code, reject music and masturbation, and to lose weight to fit Korean beauty standards.

Witnessing members breaking down due to harsh public shaming was common. Members were ranked by recruitment success rates, with the lowest ranking ones—even minors—rebuked. Breaking rules (missing service, missing a recruitment schedule, forgetting to bow, missing mandatory donations, breaking dress code, etc.) would warrant swift punishment.

Arishma states that church members were forced to repeatedly watch a 44 minute video from another Korean church. It was an animated simulation of the different punishments in Hell, saying that this video was 'like torture' to scare members into their recruitment drives. The video includes graphic depictions of rape, sexual torture and body horror. Members were also encouraged to show this video to LGBTQI+ or anyone who they recognised as 'sinful.'

Elohim Academy Loves Virgin Women!

A vital turning point in Arishma's journey was the day where young female members would be interrogated on their reproductive choices and sexual experiences.

Abortion would be encouraged as the church was insistent that the world is the End Times, where mothers would struggle, citing Matthew 24:19 as 'proof.'

Young women would then be separated into 'virgins' and 'non-virgins.' These members would be discouraged from having a boyfriend outside the church, then with the pastor instead organising arranged marriages. Often, parishioners would be arranged with a Korean partner to have the Korean members remain in the country. Arishma describes these weddings as having varying success, with some happy, to others married off to Korean members who were not fluent in English. The day when the pastor reneged on outside dating and

However, WMSOG would bombard Arishma with threatening texts, implying that Arishma would get cancer as a result of leaving the religious movement. Instead of developing cancer, Arishma wound up questioning organised religion and its desire to evangelise.

encouraged young women to date and thus recruit outsider boyfriends was the day that Arishma realised she had been lied to in order to fulfil the church's interests. And if this was one lie, what else were they lying about?

Leaving

WMSOG members forcing her frail and physically disabled grandmother for money was the last straw for Arishma and her family. They all left the church. However, WMSOG would bombard Arishma with threatening texts, implying that Arishma would get cancer as a result of leaving the religious movement. Instead of developing cancer, Arishma wound up questioning organised religion and its desire to evangelise. "I felt betrayed. I felt emotionally behind my peers. The isolation made me suicidal. I was determined to rebuild my life and study. I have dreams and an identity beyond my past involvement in a cult and now, I can build healthy and strong relationships. It's important to support others who leave extreme movements so they can realise this for themselves too."

I finish our interview by asking Arishma if she has any advice for anyone who will come across Elohim Academy/WMSOG. "Run. Read about something before you join. I was 15, I was naïve and so easy to convince. I lost my youth and a precious part of my life growing up to emotional abuse. And that is a part of my life I can never get back."





There are moments when you walk around in a garden and find magic in the little shrubs sprouting amongst the vege patch walls. That's what I found when exploring my dad's beautiful garden and I wanted to capture that in this photo.

PHOTO BY KIKI HALL



Why It's Okay To Do Absolutely Nothing

To do or not to do, that is the question.



ARSHVEEN HORA

Hey, this is me, your locked-down conscience. Do you feel tired, bored, exhausted, terrified, overwhelmed, numb, or just anything between and beyond these? Do you also want to give in to the niche knitting of scarves, bake another sourdough or just manage to complete a Chloe Ting workout? This is your locked-down conscience asking you to STOP.

Don't get me wrong; I am ALL for sanity. If I can binge through the entirety of my pre-watched movies to feel *something*, I assure you, your pursuits towards productivity are headed in the right direction. So, why am I telling you to put your knitting needles / rolling pin / study notes down? Well, for one, you know this is 'unprecedented.' A lockdown is not a staycation, because you are continually browsing for threats in your surroundings, your mind is the furthest from a stress-free holiday it possibly could be.

Secondly, someone's gotta pay the corporations that survive on your lust. Yes I am talking about online fashion stores, the "20% off on ~essentials~", the new feta cheese and cherry tomato pasta, the new house plants—whatever—pick your capitalist poison. These will momentarily make you feel better, and you deserve that! We stan you. But, not only is it bad for your poor wallet, it is fuelling your urge to slam a weak band-aid of materialist dopamine over your deep-seated void of covid existential crisis. In reality, my friend, you know it is pretty fucked that no cute delivery package could fix you overnight.

And lastly, most importantly, this is not the *normal* world we quite live in. Between being terrified of the rising community cases and simping over Daddy Ashley, remember that you are not supposed to be functioning normally. In survival mode, it is okay to turn to your nicest escapes and forget that the world is one big collapse of the dominoes. Yet, you are permitted to be sad, irritable,

angry, bored, scared and just hopeless. Repeat after me, you *do not* have to be productive or normal during lockdown. And repeat it until you believe it.

"Hey so what should we do? Just wallow in our void?" Well, no and yes. I do not ask you to confront your hopelessness every night. In fact, I hope you do not have to do that. But here is the thing, you need to swallow the bitter pill of this lockdown: nothing will make it better. Yes. *Nothing*. No lecture you catch up on will make yourself feel productive. If there is anything that will make you feel better, it is acceptance. Because productivity in itself is a capitalist illusion designed to make you feel shit. Now you might deem me crazy with this realisation, but how the *fuck* can you expect yourself to be productive right now? This is a nationwide shutdown to save lives. We are locked in our houses and inside our minds. If you still think this is an opportunity for getting ahead? I hate to break it that this is remotely not a hobby-development camp to monetise on. The sooner you realise that you were not meant to work all the time for self-salvation, the better. And then maybe we will talk about our need to spend money on those knitting yarns that will gather dust when we again become robots.

"Do *nothing*? What about uni?!" I wish this rallies into the ears of those in-charge, but truthfully no one expects you to submit that essay by 11:59 pm. If nothing, absolutely nothing, in your life is normal right now, should assignments and workload be? If you can still work, I am proud of you. If you cannot, I am sorry and I am proud of you. However, expecting you to be on top of everything is the most miserable thing one can do. There are students who are trying, with shitty laptops, shitty internet, shitty environments and a shitty mind space. You think every day that you or your loved one could be the next community case. You wait for the 1pm briefings every day in hope that this is over soon. You worry about your sick

loved ones and those you cannot meet. It is just you, locked in with a sea of worries and piles of work. If amongst all this, you reckon you can still work *normally*, well, fuck that. Something's gotta change.

So, do nothing. Do something for yourself. Figure out what you 'need' to survive this awful time. Miss the homies? Video call them right now. Tell your loved ones you miss them. Because the world will live another day without experiencing another home workout TikTok. So, repeat after me, you do not have to be okay. You do not have to be productive. Your lectures can wait but your well-being cannot. If you're behind, it is okay, and thousands of us are with you. Hey, I wish I could send this directly to the VC but this counts for something. Go give yourself a hug for carrying on. I am proud of you, even if you don't got this. We got you. And don't spend all your money on online shopping, okay?

**So do nothing.
Do something for
yourself. Figure out
what you *need* to
survive this awful
time. Miss the
homies? Video call
them right now.**

Reviews.



FILM **HE'S ALL THAT** DIR. MARK WATERS (SORT OF)

CAMERON LEAKEY AND MADELEINE CRUTCHLEY

The best remakes take classic plotlines and pull from contemporary cultural context to reimagine a story for a new generation. *He's All That*, Netflix's adaptation of 1999's *She's All That* does none of this.

There's no way to put it lightly—this is not a great movie. As students, we love a bad film. There's a long tradition of watching them, but this is something different. It's so clearly a commercial product with no real creative direction, making even the most ironic watching so tedious. There's nothing to hook you in and very little reason to keep watching. Shoutout to **Kourtney Kardashian** though; it was amazing to watch her both debut and close her acting career in the same movie.

I mean, there was potential here, and there are ideas about social media, class and beauty standards that could be interesting, but it's just covered in plastic. It's a highly sanitised, uninvited update to a fine enough go's classic. If *She's All That* is COVID-19, *He's All That* is the Delta variant.

One of the most sinful decisions was to remix the iconic track "Kiss Me" from the 1999 film. The original, a romantic slow ballad, now turned into a Dance remix from your mate who can't even get a gig at Bar 101. If you go in with low expectations, it's actually somewhat watchable. But don't go expecting anything deep, I mean it's **Addison Rae**, minus a right hand, singing "Teenage Dream" making over the 'loser' who has six pack abs. It is what it is, and nothing more.

"He is definitely not all that."



FILM **COMING HOME IN THE DARK** DIR. JAMES ASHCROFT

ELLA SHEPHERD

If you like thrillers, you will love this film. If you don't like thrillers... you will probably still enjoy this! But, like me, you might have a few moments where you want to hide behind your popcorn. **James Ashcroft** does not disappoint in his feature film directorial debut. The film follows a high school teacher forced to confront his past when he encounters a couple of ruthless drifters who have sinister plans for him and his family.

Ashcroft's background in theatre was apparent through this flick. He managed to hold and release tension throughout the entire film without once letting go of the underlying threat of danger. The film starts in a nerve-racking way but becomes more tense and twisted as the story goes on. The stand-out performers were the beautiful Aotearoa countryside (the film was shot around Upper Hutt) and **Miriama McDowell**, who played the lead's traumatised wife.

Despite in some ways being a quintessential New Zealand production, *Coming Home in the Dark* does require you to suspend disbelief throughout several periods that are interrupted with American-style gratuitous violence. Some of the true terror of the film is at times lost in this style of violence that is distinctly un-New Zealand and thus, unbelievable. However, without having any jump scares the sharp dialogue will leave you with a knot in your stomach, wondering whose mouth will fire the next shot. It's a film with a kicker ending that will leave you with more questions than it answers.

"Three (point five) out of five."



TV **THE PANTHERS** HALAIFONUA FINAU AND TOM HERN

OMNI ARONA NGĀ PUHI, NGĀTI WAI

This miniseries is framed from the perspective of **Will Ilolahia**, Chairman of the Polynesian Panthers, and Robert Muldoon, Prime Minister and Leader of the National Party. On a quest to fight against the demonisation of his people, Will finds inspiration in **Huey P. Newton**, co-founder of the Black Panther Party, uniting a group of young, radical teenagers to form the Polynesian Panther Party.

The show's portrayal of the Dawn Raids is heart-breaking. The representation is traumatic, fucked up, and brings more attention to just how scarring this time was for Pasifika peoples. It forces the audience to question if an apology is sufficient for what these families have been through and the intergenerational trauma that the raids have caused.

The soundtrack is phenomenal, composed of modern Aotearoa creatives who do not tie themselves down to 70s music, switching between soul and activist hip-hop. The local artists include **Melodownz**, **Troy Kingi**, **Diggy Dupé**, **SWIDIT**, and **Ranuimarz**. The music composition serves as a musical tie from Aotearoa's Māori/Pasifika youth to the American Black Panthers and hip-hop. One of the things that bond indigenous people is telling stories to the drum, and hip hop, in its essence, is telling your story to that drum.

The series shows that Pacific Islanders and Māori have survived. It displays Pasifika excellence in every aspect of the show's creation, from the soundtrack to the acting. It shows that we are more than just the manual labour we were brought here for. We are intelligent, creative, and proudly Pacific. Here's hoping for a Ngā Tamatoa series.

Check out an extended version of Omni's review on our website!



MUSIC "ONE WINDOW" HONEYBEE

MADELEINE CRUTCHLEY

The indie pop four-piece **Honeybee**, based in Tāmaki Makaurau and filled with UOA alumni, have dropped their first single since their debut EP *Dusty*. As AUSA faves, they've returned with a familiar sound, pulling an 80's garage influence to exert some anxiety about youthful romance.

The intro is a bit grungy, with guitar that's almost apprehensive, igniting a curiosity strong enough to string you along for more. This guitar is the main meal, in fact, really holding your attention throughout. The lyrics match that early energy, uneasy and earnest, small confessions that would be cosy in a carefully guarded diary. Most satisfyingly, the final two lines answer the nervous introduction: 'I want to feel the warmth of other suns/I tried my best but now I think I'm done'. It's a casual and non-committal break up lyric, that might hit a little too close to home for some (listener discretion advised).

The music video takes the garage sound of the track to a really literal place, with all of the band members squeezed into a backyard shed. It's cosy and there's a clear chemistry between all four musicians. Overall, "One Window" is a track that fits this time of year quite nicely — rainy weather seems highly appropriate for a listen with headphones.

"If you've been looking for a breakup song to score the end of your situation (sorry)... this is it."



MUSIC SOLAR POWER LORDE

GABRIELLE DE BARON

Not that I'm religious, but **Lorde**, I love you. But objective lens on, let's go: *Solar Power* is at a deficit next to *Melodrama*. As much as I want to praise the 2021 album, it's hard to admit that Lorde peaked when *Melodrama* came out. The poetry, artifice, aesthetic, and specific sound of *Melodrama* was a sum in its essence: nothing to add, nothing to take out. But understandably, it's unfair to review an album dependent on the last one, thus, *Solar Power* isn't a detriment.

Lorde released it knowing it was coloured gold (in relation to her synesthesia), and that it's as bright as an Auckland summer... and truly it is! Sonically, *Solar Power* is perfectly ordered from "The Path" to "Oceanic Feeling"; one can really spot the production difference. It draws a more organic form of music making, with identifiable uses of instruments.

"Mood Ring" is an interesting satire about how white women perpetuate a false deconstruction of wellness culture. Lorde's writing continues to impress... "California" has its flaws, but there are lovely moments: 'Now I've spent thousands on you, darling/... And I'd pay it all again to have your golden body back in my bed/ But I don't miss the poison arrows aimed directly at my head'. Just proper. It's that yearning that Lorde has perfected and exemplified in "Stoned At The Nail Salon" and "Secrets From A Girl (Who's Seen It All)", and that's why they're the best tracks. So, I wouldn't say that *Solar Power* exists in succession to *Melodrama*, but rather adjacently. The album encapsulates this tiny space of liminality, between grief and assent.

"'Chef's kiss' Solar Power is her own being HMPH! But I love Melodrama more, sorry!!"



WEEKLY TOP TEN

- 1. DRAG**
Reuben Hudson
- 2. SYMBOLS**
Stinky Jim Frying
- 3. FOXBRIGHT**
Reb Fountain
- 4. THAT LIFE**
UMO
- 5. CRACK THE WHIP**
Vera Ellen
- 6. SLOW FADE**
The Forbin Project
- 7. BEFORE**
No Romance
- 8. GOLDEN SUN**
Vincent H.L.
- 9. MIND IS DUMB**
Archi Banal
- 10. FUTURE PRIMITIVE**
Data Animal

ILLUSTRATION BY NIRVANA HALDAR

In Defense of Instagram Poetry

Take your pretentiousness somewhere else



VICTORIA NICOLL

SHADOWS
BAR & EATERY
CONTRIBUTOR OF THE WEEK

I'm a writer, I'm 21, I'm Gen Z, and frankly, I'm tired of the pretentiousness surrounding poetry. I don't mean the Rupi Kaur format, where poets write what they're feeling in an understated, easy-to-read format I'm talking about quite the opposite. I'm talking about the poetry exclusionists, the people who can't or refuse to see the way in which poetry's moving with the rest of the world.

In 2014, I spent similar amounts of time doing BuzzFeed quizzes as I did on the Button Poetry YouTube channel when I first came across Instagram poets. They were small, clipped pieces, often in typewriter font, set against a white background. It was on Instagram, so it was a visual experience as much as a written one. With simple verses that stood without the conventions of poetry I'd come across in old books, it struck me, and it was a pretty good starting point for my writing and my reading of poetry.

Poetry's always been written, read, and studied, but it's very rare that someone will be able to make a career out of it. This begs the question, how long has Instagram-esque poetry been happening? To explain, by Instagram-esque, I mean poetry that's subverted poetic conventions of the time, in a non-academic, non-literary way (in the sense of being outside literary circles). The short answer is as long as poetry's been written, there's been a counter-culture like this. But, like everything else during the digital tech boom we've experienced in the last few decades, traditional conventions (not necessarily subject matter) of poetry went out the window. The short and snappy nature of these pieces, averaging about six lines long, rids us of the predetermined notion that poetry is hard to read and inaccessible. Poetry's always been written for people to enjoy. It's never been intended to be an intellectually exclusive experience, and there's no reason to exclude this sort of poetry from the wider poetic universe.

Generally, the themes of Instagram poetry are universal—something anyone who's looking at their phone can relate to. It's easy to understand, it doesn't take ages to read, and it's in a format we know and understand. The snappiness of the verse means it's easy for anyone on Instagram to read, and it encapsulates the short, micro-sized information this generation in particular has grown accustomed to. Instagram poetry takes conventional literary functions and throws

them out the window; it's almost all written in free verse, leaning more towards stream-of-consciousness than being rigorously bound by meter and syntax.

Poetry's always been an avenue to express your grievances. Whether those are with the world, with someone you know or are in a relationship with, or if it's about the weather, it's always been a way to air your frustrations. Instagram holds a unique spot in our universe, it's often the centre of communication and media consumption, making it a melting-pot for creatives.

Poetry has always been a way of sharing stories. *The Odyssey* was first composed verbally and shared orally. It's a social thing; it's a way for people to forge connections with one another, and an easy way to be entertained. That purpose hasn't gone out the window purely because we're spending time online. Being online has given us a completely new way of looking at the world, of understanding it, and trying to cope with it. Short, snappy, free-form pieces suit the format of Instagram, making the experience something easily accessible for even the most uneducated reader.

Accessibility is perhaps the most important part of any art form. To get rid of the intellectualism sometimes used to hide from the opinions of others, opens up something truly vulnerable, something which people can understand and form opinions on. It speaks to the openness of Instagram, but also debunks it, in a way. Instagram poetry often isn't polished. It's raw and it's written quickly. It's there for mass consumption, but it also means that masses of people are going to see your work and form an opinion on it. Instagram's been hailed as a highlight reel of someone's life. But Instagram poetry, a genre so personal and so raw, is pretty much the antithesis of a highlight reel. It showcases angst, heartbreak, soullessness, isolation, and unhappiness in a way that everyone, not just those skilled in poetry, can understand.

It's like the rise of bedroom pop, soft, easy to listen to tracks, which are often written in an air of sadness or existentialism. Instagram poetry serves the same purpose, it speaks for a generation clouded in anxiety and dullness, looking desperately through the social web of our phones to understand what this life thing we're going through is, and trying to connect with people who maybe, just maybe, are feeling the same way. Instagram poetry, while often harshly sidelined and disregarded, has opened up the communal side of poetry, in a time where a community can be pretty hard to find.

Naomii Seah, a talented poet at UoA (and *Craccum* Features Editor) shares her thoughts about the changing face of poetry in the Instagram age, and its changing exclusivity level.

Why do you write poetry?

I think like many people I use it as a form of creative expression; I like

To get rid of the intellectualism sometimes used to hide from the opinions of others, opens up something truly vulnerable, something which people can understand and form opinions on.

words and I like how words sound together and the associations they hold, and I like poetry as a format to manipulate, unpack, hide and reveal meaning.

Do you think it's harder to write poetry now than it would have been 30 or so years ago? Why/why not?

I think the act of writing itself has remained the same, but the ease of publication is different. The internet now has many more options for publication that aren't necessarily gate-kept by the literary industry, yet still afford a large audience.

Have you found Instagram poetry to be something that has helped or hindered you?

I think Instagram poetry is a good place to start as an amateur poet because it's a place where someone can be vulnerable. Seeing my friends' semi-edited poetry, and seeing the reaction to shitty drafts I've typed up drunk at 3am and realising that it doesn't have to be perfect or edited to hold value was really helpful. I think Instagram poetry is interesting because it's almost a convention for it to appear less polished and edited and filtered, even when it is. However, that opens up room for experimentation for amateur poets, and breaks open the poetic canon into even looser forms. Seeing page poetry recreated in the grid format is also cool, because it helps me think about spatial poetics.

On the note of social media, have you found that it's made you more connected to what you want to write about or less so?

When I'm on socials I'm head blank; no thoughts, so probably less connected.

Do you think Instagram poetry is unfairly scrutinised or sidelined? Why/why not?

Yes. I have a lot of thoughts. Disclaimer that this is all my own opinion based on my own experience and observation!

I think Instagram poetry is unfairly scrutinised and sidelined and I think this for a couple of reasons. 1. It's a movement largely led by women, 2. It's a new format, and 3. Anyone who's read Dr. Seuss suddenly has an opinion on what "real" poetry is.

To deal with no. 1, anything women writers do tends to be dealt with less seriously, even if those female writers are respected as writers, e.g. second wave feminist poets always got bagged on for focusing on domestic issues.

Secondly, poetry has slowly moved from being for the elite to being for the masses, so opinions on its form and legitimacy have loosened over time, e.g. everything used to be written in metre—free verse wasn't really a thing until the modernists of the early 20th century. That's a drastic break with a long tradition, and I argue that Instagram poetry represents a continuation of that spirit. The format of Instagram poetry—the smallness of scale—means that poetic conventions about things like line-breaks are often broken out of necessity, e.g. ending on "weak" words like "you" rather than descriptive

Finally, to everyone who says Instagram poetry is "not real poetry," kindly fuck off with your Gaslight-Gatekeep-Girlboss take. It's like saying spaghetti isn't noodles—y'all look like clowns.

words. Arguably, neglecting these conventions makes a poem weaker. However, that's probably what the last guys said about Modernism. Poetry as a genre has also generally moved from being about grand abstract concepts to a more internal focus—if your complaint is that Insta poetry reads like a diary, then I suggest you look up the literary history of confessional poetry.

Finally, to everyone who says Instagram poetry is "not real poetry," kindly fuck off with your Gaslight-Gatekeep-Girlboss take. It's like saying spaghetti isn't noodles—y'all look like clowns.



How to Get Into...

ISOLATION FILMS



THOMAS GIBLIN

You're at university now—no more Avengers, no more fun explosions. It's time to become a real adult, with refined taste and an interesting indie sensibility. Resident film expert, *Thomas Giblin*, provides you with a pathway to a more nuanced understanding of film. You're going to be so much fun at parties!

As we, students at UoA, are trapped indoors while the rest of the country enjoys their zinger box meals and newfound freedom, there's no better time to look inwards at the films that highlight the themes of confinement and isolation. We might cry tears of catharsis, as these films remind us that we are not going through it alone. We have company, in the form of a sentient Roomba and astronaut Brad Pitt (the epitome of daddy issues).

Escapism is key in times like this, which this year's most popular blockbusters and television shows acknowledge. However, looking at what you could have, rather than what you have, makes the small routines we cling onto even harder than they need to be. Yes, life is tough. Yes, our world may never be the same again (yikes). But we must endure and persevere to find the beauty and humanity in these times.

The G.O.A.T

If you haven't seen *WALL-E* I have serious questions about you and your childhood. From Andrew Stanton, the director of *Finding Nemo*, *Finding Dory* and *John Carter* (let's ignore this one), Pixar's magnum opus tells the heart-achingly beautiful story of a kind robot—left on earth to clean up the mess humans have created. *WALL-E* has gained sentience and is now pining for friendship and love.

I was eight years old when this came out and I cried, for quite possibly the first time in a cinema. Years later, as an adult, it hits so much harder. The film's first half, which features almost no dialogue, is Chaplin-esque visual storytelling at its finest. The second half is Pixar brilliance. How a romance between two robots can be so human is remarkable,

but that is the genius of Pixar. It is rather ironic, though, to see such a damning indictment of capitalism from a monolithic corporation as Disney, but the film still remains as the perfect antidote to lockdown blues whilst being quite possibly the best-animated film ever made (yes, even better than *Shrek*).

"I will live and I will love."

On the opposite end of films set in space about loneliness and love, there exists *Ad Astra*. Described as *Apocalypse Now BUT IN SPACE*, James Gray's introspective sci-fi masterpiece features Brad Pitt at his best and his most handsome. The film is set in the near future, where a base on the moon conveniently houses a Subway and an Applebee's. You know, in case you get peckish. The film is as ice-cold as the space it's set in. The world that echoes our very own, with emotions seen as a liability. Roy McBride (Brad Pitt) must navigate his emotions and maintain a facade of indifference as he searches for his father who is lost in space. The absence of a father figure hits close to home for so many, but grounds a film that soars into the depths of the solar system in something deeply human. The nothingness of space and of McBride shouldn't be described as nihilistic but rather as a condition of a world

in which connection has become something alien—a feeling that we can all relate to whilst we are locked inside our homes.

The painful questions the film raises about what meaning there is to be found in love and life are complemented by Hoyte van Hoytema, who is one of if not the most accomplished cinematographers working today. Further compliments are paid to those images with a score of astounding grace and sensitivity from Max Richter (which I'm listening

to whilst I write this). If you're up for it, *Ad Astra* is a film that'll have you purging the anxieties of life as we now know it.

Dream Now. Travel Later.

What else is there to do when we can't travel other than to look at all the places we'll travel to once we can? This is my not-so-guilty pleasure. My favourite pastime. Rather than attempt to catch up on lectures and readings, I turn to TikTok videos of people exploring metropolises around the world for comfort. *Lost In Translation* is such a comfort in its depiction of two lost souls (Bill Murray and Scarlett Johansson) who find each other in the midst of a city of millions. Murray and Johansson together are perfection personified. Their chemistry is electric, yet understated. It is what simmers beneath that pains these characters, as they ponder the 'what if's?'. A question we are asking ourselves evermore, now that we do not have the freedoms we once had.

What is remarkable about this film is its screenplay, which is effortless in its simplicity and beauty. Imagined first, not as a script but as "little paragraphs" of impressions and experiences, *Lost In Translation* is able to capture the ethereal feeling of wandering aimlessly, searching for someone or something. It may be a tad slow for some, but stick with it, and you'll be rewarded with a viewing experience that will take you on a journey through Tokyo and your soul.

Escape From Your Shitty Student Flat In Kingsland

Time for something different. No more feeling sorry for yourself. Good vibes only. Yes, that film is *Cube*, a film about people escaping cube-puzzles full of death traps. Think of this as the metaphorical equivalent of leaving your house to go to the supermarket to do your weekly shopping for the flat. With the resources at hand, a sound stage, and 1 1/2 cubes, it's an effective original low-budget horror that more than succeeds in terrifying you with every art student's nightmare: maths. The film has more questions than answers and is riddled with painfully obvious metaphors about society, but don't let that sway you... it's a cult favourite for a reason.

The Secret Life of A *Craccum* Contributor

What is something we have been doing all our lives but never remember doing? That thing is a dream, and we are most likely doing more dreaming now than ever before. With *The Secret Life Of Walter Mitty*, THE Ben Stiller holds his weight as director, exploring the heartwarming story of the titular character Walter Mitty. The film is a cheese-fest that will perk you right up. As Mitty, a shy photo manager, travels the world searching for a lost negative, his dreams become our dreams. As the audience, we urge him to become the person he wants to be. The film wears its heart on its sleeve and swings for the fences, occasionally falling flat on its face. However, it's this earnestness and awkwardness that will have you falling in love with the film. It's full of sentimental cliches, but we'll excuse that as it's what I think we all need right now. Just think of the film as hot chicken soup for the soul, and you won't be disappointed.





Psychology and Me

Navigating Online Dating... It's time to get some e-pussy, folks.



FLORA XIE

In this day and age, a good number of us are probably on dating apps. In fact, those who do use dating apps probably use more than just one. The world is digitising, and this area of our lives is no exception to the change—much to the dismay of people who prefer face-to-face encounters. Don't worry though, I'm here to give you some tips on the psychology behind navigating online dating more successfully.

For those of you who are sceptical of online dating, I get it. It's a whole new world with what seems like a whole new set of rules. Communication has more barriers, and choosing potential partners feels more superficial and more impersonal. There's also the assumption that apps like Tinder are used just for the purposes of hooking up with people, which is definitely not true! Research into what motivates people to use Tinder has found that most people on the app actually want to find a meaningful relationship. A study conducted on university students in Wellington found that a third of the participants met someone through online dating, and about 10% of the participants formed serious relationships with people they met online. Other studies have shown also that couples who meet online are less likely to break up compared to the couples who meet in person.

Of course, it's not all good news. One of the downsides to online dating is the amount of options that you get. This might come as a surprise, because you'd think that having more to choose from would be better, but that's not actually the case. If you're an

indecisive person like me, the number of options might be paralysing. More choices encourages unrealistically high standards as the situation becomes more like evaluating products rather than people. This is called 'relationshopping' and can lead people to objectify their options. So, what happens is that more choices can result in you feeling more regret and less fulfilled. This is because when we have more choices, we start to revert back to heuristic decision-making, which would be like making decisions based on things such as people's height, their job, or appearance—all of which don't necessarily matter when it comes to how happy the decision would make us feel in the long-term. Having more choices also makes us feel like there might be better options out there, which leads us to regret the decisions we've made.

But what can you do to increase your chances of success after matching with someone online? Well, psychologists have found that the use of emojis is actually associated with more dating success, including a greater amount of first dates and more frequent sex. Now I'm not saying to go out and send strings of emojis to your matches or include an exorbitant number of emojis in your messages. Emoji use may just be one way of overcoming communication barriers in online dating. It may allow you to communicate more successfully with your match as only communicating with written words can make expressing different tones and expressions difficult, especially when you're just starting to get to know someone you've never talked to before.

Another good thing to do is to meet up with your match in person as soon as possible. There's always going to be a bit of a disconnect between interactions in person and online. When we talk to people face-to-face, we're getting more information about the interaction through things like non-verbal cues. So, when you first meet your match in person, there will probably be a bit of awkwardness in the interaction because it's a whole different dynamic. What actually happens is that while your knowledge about them increases after meeting them in person, some research has shown that your liking of and similarity to them may decrease. This means that you could be talking to someone online for weeks and then realise, once you meet them in person, that you don't actually have a lot in common at all. So, when you can, you should ideally meet up in person early on to avoid that. Obviously, situations like being in lockdown does make this harder, but a way around it could be to video call so you're still able to experience some aspects of in-person communication.

While online dating can appear to be daunting, take it from me, it's not all that difficult to navigate. If you're ever nervous about meeting someone, having a little stalk of their social media is harmless and can make you feel less anxious and more comfortable chatting with your match. So, if you've been on the fence about trying out online dating or getting back into it, this is a sign to just go for it and have some fun!

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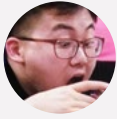
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How to Eat Takeaways During Lockdown (Legally)

Anything can be takeaway material with enough MSG!



MATTHEW YANG

I realise that by the time you're reading this, we may already be down an Alert Level. Fingers crossed. But if by any slight chance that it hasn't... or for any future reference... here's a guide. A foodie cheat sheet. During Level 4, I did a bit of 'research.' Tell me to do a 10% essay and I will probably need an extension. Tell me that you can get fried chicken, BBQ pork on rice, and pies at Level 4 and I've probably already eaten them. Here we go!

Supermarkets

Turns out, the only main food source open during Level 4 is a lot more bountiful than you think. Unfortunately, not every supermarket is born equal. **PaknSave Westgate** is the first branch I've seen in Auckland that does gorgeously juicy fried chicken and chips. With chicken salt. I'd say it was as good as Sensational. I hear **Ormiston** has it too. A drum, thick thigh, and a small shovel of hot chips is \$8. Turns out, this is pretty common in Northland... if anyone finds any other Auckland branches that do this, let me know.

You can't forget about the actual deli sections though—**New World Browns Bay** has a fully stocked pie warmer and... Thai red curry(?!?!). I'm sure the metro supermarkets have something similar.

Any supermarket bakery will have donuts, cupcakes, cakes, and scones to pick up—hey, it's not much, but it's something. But recently I've been seeing a lot of pastry development, especially with lockdown coming back in fashion. **Countdown Greenlane** had an assortment of those classic jam cream donuts, the long ones you can get at your local bakery. **New World Pukekohe** has freshly squeezed orange juice, cakes sold by the slice (a \$3 slice was enough for two people), and a copious amount of sushi.

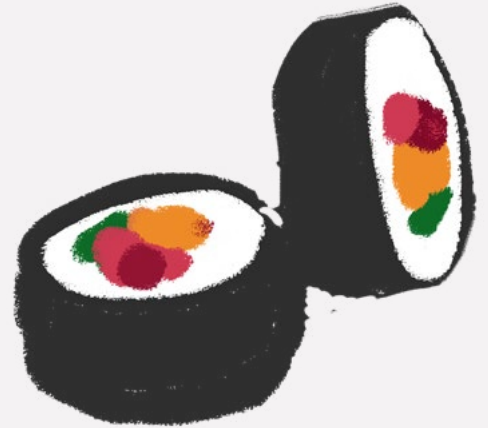
Now, promise you won't tell anyone? Here's the clincher: I was at **Jadan Chinese Supermarket** the other day. At the back of the store the BBQ section is selling hot BBQ pork (or duck) on rice. Combo meals from \$13. I didn't get anything, but it smelled really good and there was a decent group of people waiting for their orders, having already grabbed a soda from the fridge. I'm not super sure what happened with this, but as I was leaving with my pho ingredients, two big policemen cut the outside line to go in and investigate something... so if that operation is closed, someone snitched.

Bakeries

Thankfully, supermarkets are not the only option under Alert Level 4. Bakeries are allowed to deliver, along with places serving uncooked food items. Here are some of your options:

My local westie donut haunt, **Grownup Donuts**, is doing contactless delivery and online orders. They've come to the city campus a bunch of times and every time I get there the good flavours are all gone. Love a Lemon Meringue Donut. It's not as good as my all-time favourite—**Mama's Donuts**, which is also doing contactless delivery out of the Shore and Botany.

If you're stuck at halls, **Luna Café** (the wholesome little shop that does Vietnamese food) is doing online delivery Auckland-wide of their matcha almond croissants, cookies, baguettes and did I mention the croissants? Delivery is only \$7.5 and they will deliver as north as Long Bay and as south as Papakura.

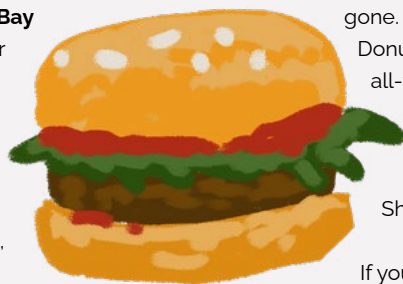


One quick mention to **Euro Patisserie Torbay**: my childhood bakery. The owner Sopheap Long became the first woman in history to win the NZ Supreme Pie Award this year with an insanely good steak and cheese. They are doing contactless delivery for their pies and everything else—but you need a minimum spend of \$40 and they only deliver around the neighbourhood. Perfect if you fit the prerequisites though (uni brain, what is wrong with me smh).

Fancy Schmancy

Yes, you are all poor, but also yes, most of you have expensive taste. Go crazy. A new boujee online service has emerged out of the CBD—courtesy of Savor group, which owns a bunch of fancy restaurants and bars. At **savor.co.nz**, you can get lobster roll kits from **Lobster & Tap**, croissants and sourdough from **Amano**, and even wine and cocktails delivered to your door. Idk how this works, but if your parents are rich or you invested in crypto early, go for it.

The other fancy lockdown thing you could do is get a meal kit box from **mynourishkitchen.nz**. You can recreate dishes from very acclaimed restaurants like the chicken parm from **Andiamo**, the sirloin steak from **Jervois**, and the mac n cheese from **Soul**. But be warned—dinner for two will set you back \$125, and they sell out fast.





New Gender Affirming Wardrobe on Campus



LAVI ABITBOL (HE/THEY)

A new gender affirming wardrobe has been set up in one of the rooms on the city campus' Queerspace. Queerspace can be found if you go up the stairs closest to Gong Cha/Uni Sushi, then walk in the direction towards Albert Park!

The purpose of having a gender affirming wardrobe is for genderqueer people to have more options to find clothing that help express themselves.

Most clothing options in stores are distinctly gendered. They are either meant for men or women. It's hard to find anything in between, or sizes that complement the diverse range of needs. Whilst we can't disrupt the gendered clothing binary (immediately anyway), we can create a completely separate structure for queer and genderqueer people to be able to find clothing without these pressures.

The gender affirming wardrobe is a really good opportunity for queer folk who are still

figuring out their gender identities to just come into the wardrobe, try on some clothes, and if it suits them, take them! The point of the wardrobe is not to present any barriers for rainbow-identifying people, but rather to act as an enabler to help people explore and understand their identities better.

New clothing can be quite expensive, and so this wardrobe is a really good way for people to be able to take some clothes without needing to pay!

So, if you've got any spare clothes, shoes, accessories or make-up that you don't seem to use anymore, the wardrobe would love to have them! Please make sure they are in good condition. The best place to drop them off is at the AUSA house reception!

Alternatively, if you are wanting some new clothes, the wardrobe is available for you to take any clothes you want or need!

All AUSA spaces are closed until we go back

to Alert Level 1, so unfortunately, this has to wait until we all go back into campus. But get hyped, and tell all your friends!!

If you have any questions, flick me an email on qro@ausa.org.nz (also flick the queer student council page a like on FB and flick us a follow on insta @queer_council). And come to Queerspace for good vibes!!



The Impending Loss of Originality-core?



HANNAH SOLOMONS

As the great Coco Chanel once said, "Every day is a fashion show, and the world is your runway." Over the years, we've come to witness that clothing isn't just clothing but a form of self-expression and an extension of our skin. The possibilities are truly endless. But with the rise of cores and aesthetics, we're now eagerly embracing—or being harshly shoved—towards a community that shares our same romanticised interpretation of a particular fashion style. A friend once made an off-hand comment that the pandemic gave rise to Gen Z's insufferable individuality complex. The desire to be the main character from an A24 film has arguably taken up too much space in our Pinterest board. But why do we feel the urge to differentiate ourselves? Perhaps it was all the media we consumed. After all, we're the generation raised on the ideology that being different is good.

However, the overwhelming popularity of

fashion subcultures seems to dismantle our belief in originality. Gone are the days where one could wear a flowy white dress with puffed sleeves and not be labelled as cottage-core. Three months ago, I saw a person sitting in Starbucks, their tall cold brew in one hand, an aged

poetry book in the other. Tucked behind an ear was a cigarette, and of course, to complete the look, they were wearing a pair of Dr Martens. Instinctively, I classified them as grunge meets dark academic (think *Riverdale's* Jughead Jones). I never meant it judgmentally, but it proves how easily it's become to determine one's personality by looking at an outfit. The intent isn't to disregard these fashion ideas as I occasionally enjoy these trends, but the problem lies in the fact that while trying to find a unique style, you find it in others. It's a

contradictory logic: we're all special, just like everyone else.

The popularity of "-cores" seemingly came out of nowhere, yet pioneering Tumblr users say differently. Rewinding to the year 2014, Tumblr was at its peak. Lana Del Rey and Arctic Monkeys lyrics swarmed your feed, and a tennis skirt was a wardrobe staple. Fashion was the largest community on the site, and numerous groups started to distinguish themselves by creating fashion philosophies. And so, grunge, kawaii/pastel goth, and hipster paved the way for our indie-, goblin-, princess-core. Simply, it's a perfect illustration of trend evolutions.

Being based on individuality and independence, the indie aesthetic is one of the most recognised styles on social media. It's the modern take on Tumblr's hipster, as outdated as that term is; at the heart of both categories lies the innate wish to be different. It again raises the question of whether you genuinely have that special spark if everyone surrounding you has it the same way. I used to think I had a moderately unique way of dressing until "indie" became the new normal, which essentially defeats the whole basis of the indie taste. Maybe denial was coursing through my veins at some point, but my epiphany occurred in late 2019 when a close friend said that I was the "indie girl." I'd never considered myself indie. It felt like a life sentence. To my dismay, I'd been categorised. The universe served me a massive plate of irony.

It turned out to be a premonition. The fashion gods were preparing us for Tumblr 2.0. An Aesthetics Wiki Moderator, Angela Yin, stated that "People always ask what their aesthetic is because they want something to define themselves."¹ If we do a little introspection, it all comes down to human nature. We need to belong. Whether it's religion, music, film, or a love for pottery, we gather around shared passions. Fashion, with a global market value of approximately \$759.5 billion², is no different.

What's fascinating is that my generation has accomplished the romanticisation of the most





basic, versatile clothing with the rise of Bella Swan / Twilight-core. Now is the time to read up on vampire mythology, appreciate forests and rainy weather, and have "Supermassive Black Hole" as the most listened to song of the month. Suddenly, a plain top with borderline skinny jeans and dirty converse is considered *the* outfit to wear. Not to mention, it was only a few months ago that Generation Z and Millennials were feuding over stylistic choices—are cores becoming more about conformity? As Bella Swan herself said, "From now on, I'm Switzerland okay!"³ Or maybe it's more about the power of projection—Bella Swan was created bland, but that didn't stop her from being the main character.

Belonging to a stylish mini-society must feel rewarding. It requires passion, effort, time, and money to make a look cohesive; it's a realm of creativity that emphasises the inner self. Validation and inspiration from mutuals is also a gratuity because as much as you want to believe you're doing it for you, fitting under the cottagecore hashtag with 7.4 billion views provides satisfaction. Or maybe the indie aesthetic with 6.4 billion views? Fairycore has 825 million, and even the lesser-known

urbancore has 8419 views.

Individuality seems to lose strength as soon as you're designated to an aesthetic group, and the line between individuality and conformity starts to blur. Conformity isn't a terrible thing. If you're comfortable, then disrupting things is the last thing on your to-do list, and it's understandable. Fashion trends are on a never-ending cycle, so why bother changing when it'll be back in a few years? It's a good argument, but fashion and our perception are constantly evolving. Low-rise jeans were considered a mistake in the 2000's and have had a significant and controversial comeback this year. Leg warmers were aerobic wear in the 1980's and are now worn with mini skirts and platform shoes. Cores and aesthetics have proven to work, maybe a little too well, considering it's "just a result of wanting to look cute on social media."⁵ But dress to impress yourself, break free and venture out. Just don't be too disappointed in realising your unique style was done by 10,000 other people before you. The unsatisfied victim complex is to blame.

¹Emily Ruane, 'From Cottagecore To Goblincore — What's Your TikTok Fashion Aesthetic?' *Refinery29*, September 9 2021,

<https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2021/03/10353481/core-aesthetic-fashion-trends-tiktok>

²Aaron Orendorff, '10 Trends Styling 2021's Ecommerce Fashion Industry: Growth + Data in Online Apparel & Accessories Market' *Common Thread Collective*, September 9 2021, <https://commonthreadco.com/blogs/coachs-corner/fashion-ecommerce-industry-trends>

³Slade, David, director. 2010. *The Twilight Saga: Eclipse*. Summit Entertainment

⁴Deborah N. Landis, 'Costume Design: Defining Character' *Oscars.org*, September 9 2021,

<https://www.oscars.org/sites/oscars/files/teachersguide-costumedesign-2015.pdf>

⁵Emily Ruane, 'From Cottagecore To Goblincore — What's Your TikTok Fashion Aesthetic?' *Refinery29*, September 10 2021,

<https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2021/03/10353481/core-aesthetic-fashion-trends-tiktok>





WHO ASKED YOU?

Welcome to *Craccum*, where we put the “agony” in “agony aunt.” We’re not qualified to deal with your problems, but neither are you.

I have a crush on one of your writers, but I don't know how to approach asking her out. Do I slide into her DMs? Send her my CV? What's the best way to do this?

Here at Who Asked You LLC, we pride ourselves on delivering you the best advice possible. So, we reached out to our writers to find out what the best way to snag yourself a big ol' Craccum fish is. Here is what our efforts wrought.

Naomii Seah, Features Editor: Your application can be submitted as a CV, headshot, and cover letter, taped to the lid of a large pizza box (along with the requisite transaction fee of pizza) and dropped at the *Craccum* office.

Alternatively, offer a ritual sacrifice to the Pisces moon in Libra season; we will be telepathically connected to you because most of us are indecisive cry-babies.

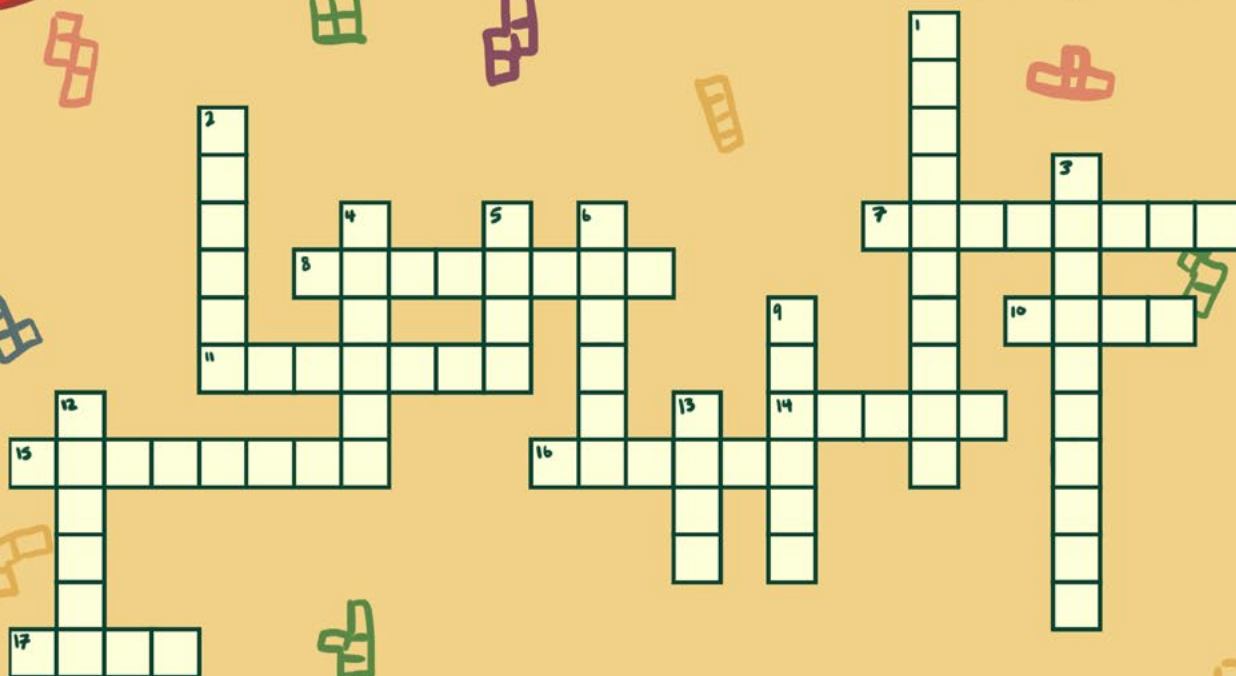
Sophie Sun, Visual Arts Editor: They need to build me a fort out of iced animals before I will even CONSIDER allowing them to court me. But, if iced animals aren't available, I'm also open to red panda videos and love letters (in that order).

Jessica Hopkins, News Editor: The Spice Girls said it best: if you wanna be my lover, you gotta get with my friends. If you're trying to shoot your shot with someone on the *Craccum* team, all of us have to like you, or it probably won't work out in your favour. Feel free to send in your CV via email, but just know that we will be collectively evaluating your eligibility as a candidate to date one of our own. Free food will probably help your case.

Lachlan Mitchell, Lifestyle Editor: The simplest answer is the best one! Tell her you want to moisturise her and wear her as a skin suit.

Well, there you have it Romeo. Based on this intelligence, your best bets are a combination of food, a professional resume, and carefully removed human skin. Good luck!

PUZZLES



Down

1. Superman defends this place (10)
2. Sigourney (blank), star of Alien (6)
3. Korean spicy stir-fried rice cakes (10)
4. Eats five dozen eggs, large as a barge (6)
5. Tarzan eat her ass in treehouse mmmmmm (4)
6. Japanese era of rule that ended in 2019 (6)
9. Catholic priest of a high rank (6)
12. Thievin' demon bird, scourge of Aussies (6)
13. Not Ginger, Posh, Scary or Sporty (4)

Across

7. River deep, (blank) high (8)
8. Main enemy of the Smurfs (8)
10. Awful video conferencing platform we all have to use now (4)
11. Day when God's true believers will rise into the sky (7)
14. Gotta go fast (5)
15. Lover of the Russian queen/Russia's greatest love machine (8)
16. Capital of Saudi Arabia (6)
17. Rhymes with Smurf, dumb as shit opinions on women (4)

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[Click here to access a printable version of the puzzles page.](#)

HOROSCOPES

As we slowly get ready for spring and the long summer ahead, it's time to reacquaint yourself with the bugs that are *always* surrounding you. And with *Delma Vinkley's* horoscope, you can!

Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19) *Giant Dragonfly*

Zooming along at speeds unknown to most of us, you surely get to your destination on time. But do you learn anything along the way? Your eyes are so large, but what do they really see? Lucky numbers are 42 and 81.



Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20) *NZ Giant Centipede*

You did not get that big without making some choices. In your hunger for stability, what do you gobble up? Is it fruitful for your continued growth, or are you just being driven by insecurity and gluttony? Work it out. Lucky numbers are 31 and 32.



Gemini (May 21 – Jun 20) *Huhu Beetle & Grub*

You symbolise two stages of life—complete and utter immaturity, revolting in your alien nature, and the strength of maturing past that point into a strong provider. And you know what? You're turning a corner! You're not quite out of the grub stage yet, but you are getting there. Proud of you. Lucky numbers are 14 and 3.



Cancer (Jun 21 – Jul 22) *Green Stick Insect*

You love your home dearly, and you hold the belief that how you act and how you live intuitively reflects itself in how your home looks. You are where you reside. In that case, why has your shit been so messy lately? Good god. Lucky numbers are 34 and 67.



Leo (Jul 23 – Aug 22) *Chorus Cicada*

You just don't ever be quiet when you have something to say. To many, that's what they can't stand about you. But to others, your presence marks the new season where we all leave our houses and listen to your boasts, entranced by your annoying song. Lucky numbers are 26 and 56.



Virgo (Aug 23 – Sep 22) *Whitetail Spider*

You are usually associated with capability, determination, and an ability to rise above. But left unchecked, your determination to succeed can be venom—and no one knows that better than the people you have bitten and tossed aside, left to nurse their wounds while you ascend. Lucky numbers are 17 and 19.



Libra (Sep 23 – Oct 23) *Praying Mantis*

Honestly, I respect your game. You lie in wait, not moving, just focusing on the next person who will tell you compliments that day. If they don't, you attack them, slicing and biting. But if they do? Brief satisfaction, then you bite their head off and look for the next source of compliments. Lucky numbers are 22 and 88.



Scorpio (Oct 24 – Nov 21) *German Wasp*

People want to categorise you so unfairly. Yes, you're mean, yes, you're prone to stinging on the slightest upset. But you can't help it that you're just so good at warfare. If people weren't so weak, they wouldn't be bothered by very basic responses to unwanted behaviour, no? Lucky numbers are 77 and 100.



Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21) *Giant Weta*

Though you are hunted by many jealous haters in your daily life, you always find excellence and calmness inside, especially when you are ready to go for a trip. Although lockdown may have kept you rooted for a month now, when you can leave the neighbourhood, you will absolutely thrive. Lucky numbers are 11 and 91.



Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19) *Blue Moon Butterfly*

We're slowly coming into your season. Take care. Much like the new ABBA releases, it has been a long time coming, but it will all be worth it in the end. We're just happy that it's finally time for you to take flight. Lucky numbers are 49 and 73.



Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 18) *Woolly Bear Caterpillar*

You're struggling to keep warm. Not with actual heat, but rather, the warmth of loving connections. You've decided that only you can provide for yourself there. Why are you isolating yourself in this new period of growth? We all want the best for you. Lucky numbers are 10 and 18.



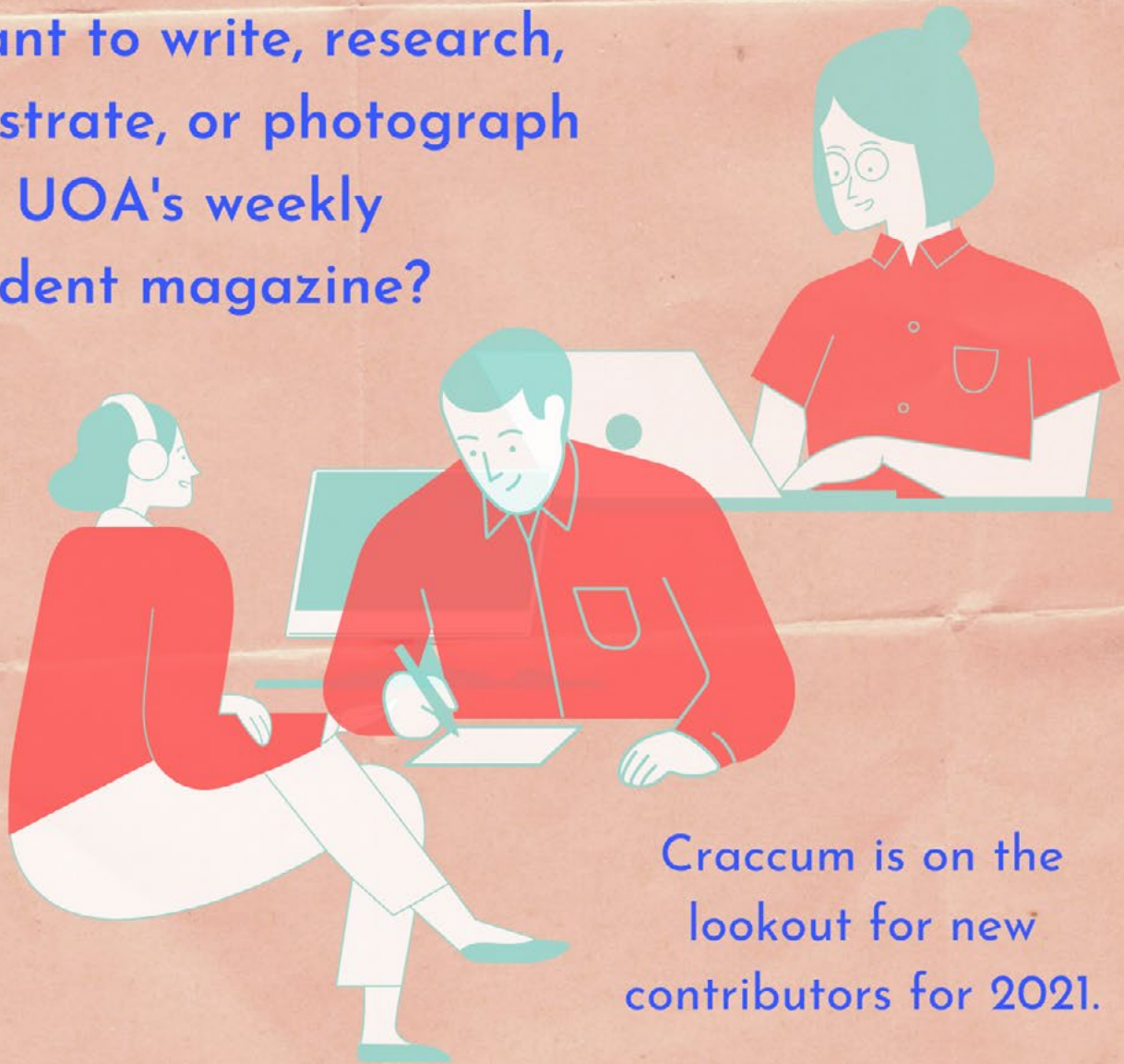
Pisces (Feb 19 – Mar 20) *Aphids*

Did you know that aphids are born pregnant? Quirky! And much like the aphid, each day you are reborn with the pit of worry inside you, feasting on your vitality. How can you put an end to the cycle? Do you even know how to try? Lucky numbers are 90 and 98.



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