

# CRACCUM

ISSUE 23, 2018



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new ideas was incredible.”

**Marcus Ferguson**

*Bachelor of Commerce*

*Semester exchange*

*Aalborg University, Denmark*



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# AD REQUIEM PER AUGUSTA

now I am not editor any more, here is a full list of opinions that “The Man” would not let me publish.

- we should have spent all the money we put towards building a new engineering building into a building a mini golf course
- in the vice chancellor’s office there’s a magic door that only appears in times of great need and to those who are worthy
- Meryl Streep hasn’t had a good movie since 2008’s “Doubt”, and doesn’t deserve to be thought of as our greatest living actress (NB: this is not a goof, I believe this for real and also once got kicked out of the craccum offices for sticking to my guns on this one)
- we need to spend more time online, in the VR world, learning about digital things
- dogs should be able to go to university and get a degree
- all commerce students should be forced to live in a network of tunnels underground until everyone else gets equitably funded
- the labour party and the national party should be forced to say sorry to each other every time they have an argument
- We should pave over the entire ocean so that we can walk on it
- auckland council should be spelt auckland “council”, so it’s spelled like it sounds
- there’s nothing illegal about breeding an especially big dog and then riding it around like it’s a horse
- If they had museums open at night time, the ghosts of all the mummies would come back to life and kill everyone inside.
- Mankind? More like Man Un-Kind
- uber drivers should be forced to wear

old-timey uniforms, like milkmen.

- not enough money is being spent hunting down and killing cryptids
- the inventors of tinder never figured out how to make the matching technology work, so they spend billions of dollars each year hiring actors and actresses to go out with you
- all businesses in the auckland CBD should shut down every time that it rains
- the FTVMS department should be forced to show the movie “harry and the hendersons”, to all first year students,
- The history department should emancipate themselves from the rest of the country and set up a sovereign state
- the linguistics department should be renamed the linguini department.
- chloe swarbrick’s first name should be pronounced with a hard “ch”, like in cheese
- we should put the entire university on a giant train and that train should travel around the whole world at top speed constantly in order to save us from the horrors of global warming
- the north island is actually 5-10x larger than the south island. no one talks about it because it will hurt the feelings of everyone who lives there.
- no one really knows where babies come from - it ISN’T through sex, though
- trucks ain’t boats
- the titanic was sunk on purpose as insurance fraud
- we should have spent more time as a species figuring out a way to domesticate the pig
- Most of the books in the General Library don’t have any words in them
- dinosaurs are still alive on stuart island. Stuart island is named after stuart little.

- the only really dignified way to eat food is with your hands, like they’re big shovels
- scooby doo is a documentary show
- cravates are about to come back in a BIG way, so you should invest early.
- babe 2: pig in the city is the single best movie of all time (this one actually isn’t a joke please watch it you will cry so hard)
- the earth isn’t flat, but not in the way that you think
- mermaids are real
- smells are indistinguishable from taste, it’s just that you feel them in the nose

i am not a crank

postscript:

Thank you, anyone who actually reads this editorial! This is, as you might have guessed, my last issue as editor. It’s been really cool being in charge of this operation for the last few months, I’ve met a lot of really fantastic people - many of whom I’m sure will become lifelong friends.

I’m really proud of the work that everyone who has contributed to the magazine. There’s been some really fantastic work put out this year - for which I can only take partial credit.

I also wish the best of luck for next year’s incoming editorial team, which includes a number of returning faces, who I am sure will do a fantastic job.

Have a great exam period, an even better summer, and a great 2019!



# 15 MINUTES WITH SIMON BRIDGES

Simon Bridges appeared on campus last Monday for a coffee chat at the Davis Law Library Café. The chat included an introductory speech, followed by Q&A from students. Craccum ventured into National party territory to speak to Simon, but only for fifteen minutes.

## How did you find the coffee chat?

I expected to walk in to a room with four people so to have many more attend was fantastic. What always impresses me is how the younger audience have so many questions, how they follow politics and how they really care about the future of New Zealand. There was really good discussion going on and good conversation about the future of the country.

## Why should tertiary students be voting for National next election, what are your plans to make students life easier and better?

Firstly, when students leave university, to have the future that they deserve and expect, in New Zealand, there needs to be a really strong economy that is creating jobs and seeing wages rise. We plan to create a vibrant and exciting economy for this to happen. When the economy is going down, people, and in particular young people, leave the country for greener pastures, however when it is thriving people are staying, so we are offering a future that is much better in that regard - More opportunities in New Zealand.

Secondly, we have a really serious tertiary policy for universities but also trades and other tertiary institutions. I am a university guy I believe in the power of universities to enlighten, educate and transform students. I want to make sure that we are continuing to increase the quality of our universities, as other universities around the world are getting better. We are in a global race and I get upset seeing the headlines of our universities going from X number to a lower number because that does not help our students in the global competition and help the opportunities that students can have. We will have a policy that helps to turn that around.

## Does the National Party think of the falling placements of New Zealand universities in the global rankings

## as an issue that needs to be addressed?

New Zealand universities are not getting worse; other countries are getting better. It's not all money, it comes down to other factors as well, but in Australia they do invest more and the same is true in China. China now has several universities in the top 50 which they did not have previously when I was a student. We cannot be complacent about that and that means investment and thoughtfulness about not only how we stem the slipping but also how we try and enhance our positioning. We are in a global battle for talent and deserve universities that can compete with the best and we will be prioritising that.

## What do you think about the Fees free policy for universities?

I'm pretty cynical about the two billion plus fees free policy. The evidence, from the government itself, is that it did not result in more people coming into tertiary education and hasn't seen more people from vulnerable backgrounds coming to university and on that basis you can only say that the policy rational for the free fees hasn't met any kind of expectation and has been much much worse. I cannot tell you exactly what we would do however we would still want to spend that money on education but not simply bums on seats but increased quality for those who are at tertiary education including trades, polytechnics and universities.

## What are your thoughts on the government's performance so far?

I think there is a bunch of things the government has got wrong. They are not bad people but they are inexperienced and that's both outside and inside of parliament. We have seen a number of ministers underperform and even be axed. We have seen Winston Peters running rings around the labour party and get what he wants from it. More than that we have seen the economy, which was going great, winding down a bit. We have seen massive costs piled on through tax and spend and I'm critical of those things. The National Party in opposition must do a couple of things. We must hold the government to account and that means calling them out

on the dumb stuff but also working with them and being positive. We are working together on climate change. But more than that we have come up with our own positive plans. In 2020, we will be really clear about what we stand for and I feel that one of the biggest problems of the government is that they weren't ready and they didn't do the hard yards in opposition to come with the plans for New Zealand and that's why we are drifting and in fact going backwards. We need to make sure we have done that work so that there is a real contrast at the election and people will know exactly where we stand when they buy into a National lead government.

## Recently Winston Peters has made some pretty disparaging comments about you. What is your relationship with NZ First and do you still think you would be able to enter a coalition with them in 2020?

My entrance into parliament was the Member of Parliament for Tauranga and I still am the Member of Parliament for Tauranga and Winston stood in that first election in Tauranga so I'm used to Winston. But I think it's too early to say about a relationship with NZ First in 2020. There are too many questions such as will they be there? If they are what will they want to do? Will they continue to tie themselves to the Labour party waka or will they be looking to make a change giving the incompetence that they are seeing. We will make calls on these things and what our position is around the 2020 election so voters know exactly whether we can or can't work with NZ First

## You talk about being transparent to voters and how voters will perceive that. The National Party are polling rather strongly, however your own personal numbers as preferred prime minister are low. What are your plans to increase those numbers?

On one level, I don't take it too personally given that I became leader after an election and so haven't had the hot glare of a campaign where people really get to know you. I think it's fairly typical for an opposition leader in my circumstances not to be doing fantastically in the polls.

Most of it is about name recognition. I don't take it lightly however; I think New Zealanders want to see leaders who work hard at it and earn the right to be Prime Minister not just have it handed to them. I will be doing everything I can for that purpose. I do however take some credit for where National is right now. We have left the era of John Key and Bill English, two massive political figures. Notwithstanding that change National today is still hugely popular, we have a fantastic team and we are working really hard and have every chance of winning the next election. We are in a remarkable spot right now because the normal course of history is a year in of a new government the opposition party goes down the toilet, we are doing anything but that, we are holding are strength and possibly even getting stronger. We just need to keep building the momentum.

Ultimately, it's the party vote that matters. The party vote determines who becomes prime minister and gets to decide which party, or parties, become the government.

National takes a lot of heart from that, we aren't complacent and have a lot of work to do but we are in a good position going into the next election, unlike any opposition I have seen in my lifetime.

**Recently there has been a contentious idea come out from NZ First regarding 'values of a New Zealander'. What are your thoughts regarding this bill?**

I'm very cynical about this 'Kiwi Values Bill' and I think it is headline-grabbing nonsense. NZ first said they would slash immigration, they haven't. They said they would get rid of Maori seats, they haven't. They know they aren't going to do this but it's just a bit of red meat to try and get their support up. If they actually wanted to do it, Winston Peters could, he has the real power in this government and has used it to get billions of dollars for his own pet projects and also to pass a Waka-Jumping bill so his own MPs don't desert him.

That being said, I do believe there are

uniquely kiwi values. But I don't believe that we need a charter for new immigrants to believe in those values. I think that the immigrants that I meet everyday become some of the most passionate New Zealanders and take those values deeply to heart.

**To finish our 15 minutes, how was your time at university and what advice would you give to students to survive it?**

I loved university. I was a Bogan westie with a mullet who came to law school woefully unprepared for everything that was here. It wasn't easy and I worked three jobs but in the end, I worked university out and I did well. I learned a lot of lessons about what to do and what not to do. I made some of my first political mistakes amongst the university students groups and the Young Nats. But I will always look back fondly on my time at university. People always say your years at university are your best years and sadly that because it is true.

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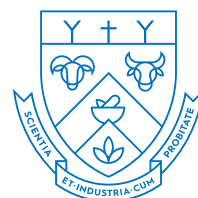
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TE WHARE WĀNAKA O AORAKI

# SAMOA HOUSE LIBRARY

Samoa House Library opened its doors this semester in response to the announcement of the closure of several specialist libraries. Craccum spoke to Hannah Davis-Gray, from the library about how the library was started.

## So what is the Samoa House Library?

Samoa House Library is an open and evolving educational platform emerging in response to the closure of our arts libraries at the University of Auckland. Samoa House Library is located at Level 2, 283 Karangahape Road, inside the Samoa House building.

It is a growing library collection of arts focused texts, based off very generous donations from our community of artists, collectors, publishing houses, writers, and galleries. Samoa House Library is also an inclusive and open study space valuing community development, engagement and, communal learning. We hope to start hosting workshops, lectures, screenings, critiques, and events taught by - and for - our community in the very near future. Our approach will be open and democratic, with an emphasis on peer-to-peer education.

Samoa House Library is open from 11am-8pm Tuesday to Saturday. We have free internet and complimentary coffee from our generous sponsors; Eightthirty We are here to help you through our catalogue and answer any questions you might have.

## Why was there a need for an independent arts library?

The University of Auckland is currently going through the process of integrating its Creative Arts and Industries libraries into the general library. Students at the university will be losing their valued specialist library staff, their specialised communal study and learning spaces, and their ease of access to the library collection. 50% of the books will be relocated, 25% will go to off site storage and 25% will be removed.

Samoa House Library's organising committee came together while protesting the University's decision to close the Elam School of Fine Arts Library. Through sustained discussion, organization, and, action we came to understand the nature

of the university and discussed our ability to self-provide the 'services' it purports to offer. From the outset, discussions about the Elam creative arts library closure has revolved around its tremendous value, not only as a collection, but as a place: one in which people from our communities can meet, learn, and discover. Places like this are incredibly precious! We've opposed the University of Auckland's decision, but it seems equally urgent at this point to act on our opposition in a generative way.

## Have you had any comment from the university about the library?

No. Since the library closures were first announced the University of Auckland management has made little effort to communicate, listen or respond to us, despite the protests, petitions and, consistent contact from *Save Our Libraries UoA*, *Samoa House Library* and the wider UoA community against the closure of specialist libraries. However, we have had extremely positive responses to Samoa House Library from students and other university staff who have been incredibly supportive of our opening.

## What is your vision for the samoa house library?

We hope Samoa House Library will be a vital and vibrant space for our community. Throughout this project we have asked ourselves "what happens to an educational community, and a creative community, when its library - as a space of connection to ideas, to one another and to genealogy - is removed?" *Samoa House Library* acts

from the position that this loss can be recovered in its creative approach to gathering community and resources under one roof to continue collective learning and interaction with knowledge and practice.

## How big is the library collection so far?

Samoa House Library currently has 957 publications in our catalogue, with approximately one hundred donations that are still being processed. We feel incredibly lucky to be caring for such a special collection. Already we have received so many donations of exciting and important books and rare small press publications, artist books and zines.

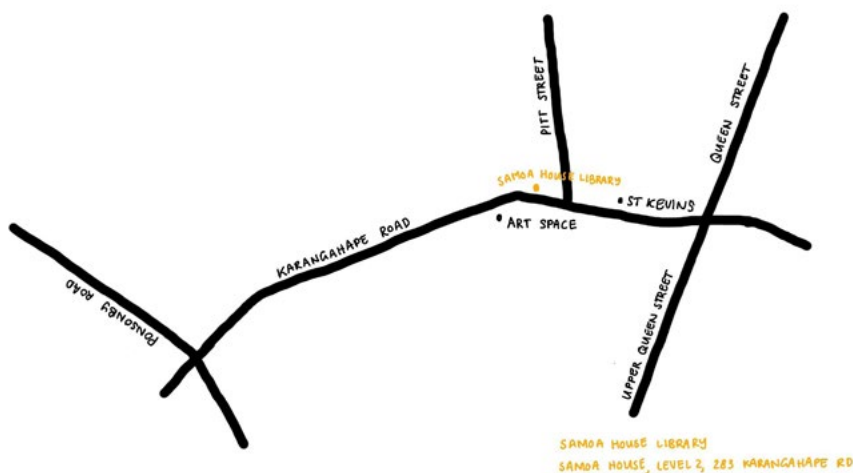
## How far is it to get to from campus?

Samoa House Library is only a 15 to 20 minute walk from Elam and AUT. At Level 2, 283 Karangahape Road we are located within steps of some of Auckland's best galleries, event locations, bars and food.

## How can students contribute to the library collection?

The best and easiest way for students to contribute to Samoa House Library is to use it! We hope to see as many of our peers and community members using the space to study and learn; exploring the collection and being involved in our future public program.

**If you'd like to donate anything to our collection or volunteer your time to helping in the space we'd greatly appreciate it! You can contact us at [samoahouselibrary@gmail.com](mailto:samoahouselibrary@gmail.com).**







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# LEFT VS RIGHT: THE GOVERNMENT SUCKS

## THE LEFT WITH MEG WILLIAMS

It's been one year since Aotearoa put its hope into a new coalition government to solve the country's ills. Even the most cynical of us lefties would probably admit to sighing in relief when Winston announced his preferred coalition partner in October last year, the nine-year National reign being a death-sentence for so many of the country's most vulnerable. But after one year, I feel that cynicism toward the Labour government is justified, because they simply are not doing enough.

The coalition government has made some gains, it has to be said. Advances have been made in pay equity with things like the support workers pay equity settlement. The immediate implementation of the first year fees-free policy showed that Labour might be ready to take tiny steps towards accepting tertiary education as a public good, though arguably this is a very small step and does not go far enough in alleviating the crippling effect of student loans. The \$50 a week raise in student allowances and living costs personally had a huge positive impact for me and my standard of living, but many students were not so lucky when their extra \$50 was offset by landlords capitalising on the opportunity to raise student rents since there was no implementation of protections for renters in conjunction with the raise in student allowances. The passing of the Healthy Homes legislation was also very positive, with new standards being set that would prevent landlords from being able to rent out dangerously cold and damp homes.

Even though there have been some positive initiatives out of the coalition's first year in government, let's not pretend that they are doing everything they can to fix the country's most miserable problems. Homelessness numbers are still shocking. Though Labour has no problem with diagnosing the housing crisis, their Kiwibuild policy will do very little to fix it. The measures for Kiwibuild are out of reach for low-income families, so it simply will not benefit the people who need housing the most. The Kiwibuild approach is also just flooding the unregulated market with more private housing, meaning any

of these homes bought can just be flipped at market rate later on – this won't do anything to cool housing prices. If the policy were to favour state housing over of private housing, the effect would much greater as prices would likely cool and there would be a larger amount of housing available for the most vulnerable.

Housing policy is just one example of how the coalition government has constrained itself by its fear of taxing the rich and its Budget Responsibility Rules. To put it frankly, the government currently lacks the political will needed to actually affect meaningful change. Grant Robertson recently revealed a \$5.5 billion surplus, but said that he would "save it for a rainy day." Ordinary working people are still struggling to make ends meet each week, homeless people are still dying on the streets, the country is still doing very little to reduce carbon emissions while the world heads towards disaster. Basically, everything still sucks. A common line is that those problems can't be fixed within the space of one year, but, while there is some truth to that, the government's fear of appropriate tax policy and spending on public services will only prolong the suffering of New Zealanders. How desperate must we get before it is declared to be a "rainy day"?

# LEFT VS RIGHT: THE GOVERNMENT SUCKS

## THE RIGHT WITH THOMAS CARR

The coalition government led by ~~Winston Peters~~ Jacinda Ardern have been naïve and incompetent regarding how to run a government. The coalition promised everything under the sun and it's just been chance determining which election promises they decide to uphold. But that's the way of the Labour Party, you never really know what you are going to do, but then again, it's not like they know what they are going to do either. In all fairness though it is hard to know what you are going to do when your members of parliament consistently underperform and get axed on a weekly basis.

So far, the coalition has rolled out many feel good policies which sound nice on paper but when you really look at them you see plenty of unanswered questions. Let's take for example the fees free policy. This policy sounds all well and good however, the Labour party has spent \$2.8 billion in an attempt to breakdown the financial barriers to tertiary education. However, 'only 29% of kids from decile 1-3 schools attained university entrance in 2017, versus 65.7% in decile 8-10 schools'. Labour have not made it easier at all for lower socio-economic households to send their children to university and are instead subsidising education for those who could already afford it. \$2.8 billion is a significant amount of money, money that could be put towards paying teachers more which the government has not been able to afford to do. Instead of wasting money on fees free the government should accept it was wrong and try and give students a chance at being prepared for university through better teaching and more teachers.

The coalition have become experts at not thinking about what they are doing though. For example, the simultaneous policies of wanting to stop oil exploration and then also increase fuel taxes. This genius plan has simply led to higher and higher fuel prices, which according to Jacinda Ardern is not her fault but the fault of the fuel companies. This is just another one of the many examples of poor planning and reckless spending.

The government is so concerned about its personal image that it has stopped caring or thinking about how its actions affect New Zealanders.

To top it all off though, Winston Peters is being allowed to run circles around the coalition, being allowed to do whatever he wants and get whatever he wants. Just look at the waka jumping bill Winston Peters basically forced Labour and Greens to agree to. It is a bill solely designed to stop Winston's own MPs from ditching him. The bill takes away power from the MPs to decide what they stand for and especially if you are standing for an electorate and your goal in parliament is to best represent that electorate then this bill is simply undemocratic. It is clear Labour would never want to pass a bill like this but Winston backed them into a corner and simply bullied them into it, and if that doesn't scream leader of the coalition then I don't know what does.

Overall the coalition has not even come close to achieving 'great gains'. The coalition has achieved nothing but making the lives of New Zealanders harder and although their policies sound nice and look appealing, they aren't. There is no thought, no experience and there has not been the hard work done that there should be. This government is hurting New Zealand and that's really all there is to it.



**COMMUNITY**





# BEAUTY STANDARDS IN WESTERN SOCIETIES AS A WOMAN OF COLOUR

“You’re really beautiful!” - words kindly spoken by a smiling lady to my sister, not at all foreshadowing the next words that slipped out of her mouth, “For an Asian.” I’ve heard similar sentiments myself, subtle discourses that at the time, I didn’t realize were internally reinforcing Eurocentric beauty standards. It took me a while to realise the impact these narratives had on me. These standards, naturally unattainable for someone like me, became the ideals I strived towards, resulting in a detrimental rejection of my identity.

It was meant as a compliment when people told me I was pretty because my eyes were unusually big for an Asian. It was meant as a compliment when I was told I was pretty because I was born with double-eyelids instead of mono-lids. It was meant as a compliment when people told me I was getting prettier as my skin tone was getting lighter, confirming that I should deny myself a childhood of beaches and sunshine.

Isn’t it odd that the simple, factual statement of, ‘You have double eyelids,’ - a Eurocentric feature - is received positively as a compliment? Yet, an equally simple statement, ‘Your nose is flat,’ is received negatively and considered an insult. Eurocentric features as the standard of beauty is the reflection of a society with systematic racism, one upholding a colonial hegemony. This is evident in ad-

vertisements all over the world, especially for high-end brands, which are dominated by models with European features. People of colour only made up 27.1% of the models walking the runway in Milan during this year’s Fall. This, although an increase from last year, is just not good enough. The women supposed to be representing ‘beauty’ are almost exclusively white, and this message is feeding into our subconscious, damaging women of colour’s self-worth.

Society’s idea of beauty often carries over into everyday lives, how people treat us and how we treat ourselves. And this obsession to only value one type of appearance is dangerous. As a teenager seeking to establish my identity and self-esteem, there was even more pressure when I realized that I was born with too much melanin, born with features inherently and unjustifiably considered unappealing. As I got older, I began to question these beauty ideals. Why is beauty synonymous with Eurocentric features? Why was it that as a darker-skinned Asian living in a western society, I could never feel beautiful?

Beauty products communicate what society defines beauty as; go take a look at the beauty products being sold at your local store. Here, there and everywhere, this Eurocentric ideal is explicitly expressed. Contouring, a huge makeup trend, is a great example of

this. People are contouring to aim for a slimmer jawline, higher cheekbones and a smaller and sharper nose - Eurocentric features to a T. This may be the opposite of what you were born with, but despite the messages projected by society to pressure you to change your natural features, your non-European features are BEAUTIFUL too. Many contour-lovers are probably not even aware that they’re conforming to a standard; all they understand is “this is beautiful”. They’ve been conditioned that “this - and only this - is the meaning of pretty. This is what pretty **only** looks like.”

At age 3, a friend of a friend babysitted my fairer-skinned sisters but refused to look after me because I had brown skin. At age 10, I had a fervent and detrimental desire to be white and blonde. I think it was the first time I begged my mum to let me dye my hair. Age 11, I began to heavily avoid the sun - a habit that even now, seven years later, I haven’t completely broken. I didn’t know exactly why at the time, but now I can see that even my younger self recognized that Eurocentric features and lighter skin were some form of social capital, and that that was how I could finally squeeze myself into society’s definition of ‘beautiful’. Lupita Nyong’o mentions, “I remember a time when I, too, felt unbeautiful. I put on the TV and only saw pale skin. I got teased and taunted about my night-shaded skin. Any my own prayer to God, the



## COMMUNITY

miracle worker, was that I would wake up lighter-skinned.” This experience, although incredibly sad, is far from uncommon for most women of colour.

As of June 2017, GIA projects that the skin bleaching industry will increase to a US\$31.2 billion industry by 2024. They stated it is “driven by the still rampant darker skin stigma and rigid cultural perception that correlates lighter skin tone with beauty, cultural refinement and personal success.” The majority of these products have horrifying side effects, including kidney damage and an increased risk of cancers, but the products are still in extremely high demand because of the racist, not-even-subliminal message projected from any advertisement, clothing and beauty industry: the darker a woman of colour is, the uglier and lower class she is. Beauty companies seem more than happy to exploit people of colour’s insecurities over their natural features, using for-profit casual racism to persuade customers to purchase their products.

The important thing to note is that beauty products offered to women of colour aren’t there to enhance our God-given features. They’re there to make us look more like white women. White skin is used as the basis from which everything is formed from, and this standard does not allow for multiple ways of looking.

Another important instance to understand is when someone says, “Well that doesn’t apply where I live, because in western societies we like being tan.” The thing is, however, western societies only like tan skin when it’s combined with Eurocentric features. And most of the time, white people aren’t tanning to look like people of colour. Whether they realize it or not, most of the time they’re tanning to show that they’re wealthy enough to go on holiday or to look ‘exotic’, which has harmful flow-on effects because they’re ignoring the fact that they’re still maintaining their privilege. Tan skin has become a fashion accessory to white people, and this is evident when Rashida Jones was complimented on her tan during the 2015 SAG Awards, to which she replied, “I mean, you know, I’m ethnic.” Of course, the inferiority complex experienced with skin colour isn’t the same for all women of colour, nor does it apply to all women of colour.

And I’m not saying to white people, ‘Thou shalt not tan,’ I’m just saying it’s increasingly important to acknowledge privilege where it’s due and to recognize the side effects of one’s actions. What we need to understand is that tanning for white women is a social luxury where they can choose whether they want to be dark or fair, without experiencing any of the social consequences women of colour face.

Something also unfathomable is the fact that white people can be applauded for things they take on while others who naturally have those features are oppressed by it. A black woman wearing her natural hair is considered ‘ratchet’, and statistics show that it will often decrease her job opportunities. It is not considered as beautiful. Yet when a white woman decides to dreadlock, braid or kink her hair - it’s all fine. In fact, it’s even trendy. Cool. Hip. Even today, when everyone’s ‘all about being progressive’, a black woman’s natural hair is rarely shown on screen. They usually are wearing chemically-straightened or flat-ironed hair, or wigs. And this oppression and pressure to conform has opened up a global market of exorbitantly priced straight hair exploiting women from low socio-economic backgrounds worldwide.

Equating Eurocentric features to what is deemed as beautiful is performed by how society and media structure women, and although incredibly present, can be passive. It’s stealthy, such as never seeing your race depicted in a positive manner on tv; it’s insidious, such as if you do see a woman of colour in the media, they almost always are whitewashed, with light skin, straight hair, coloured eye contacts, Eurocentric-based features and thin figures. It’s also crafty - the worst part is, most don’t even know it’s happening until it’s internalized and programmed into their system of core beliefs.

At age 15, every time I looked in the mirror I would compare myself to the white narrative and feel frustrated by my ‘undesirable’ features. The beauty industry, along with society, have manufactured and embedded this idea of ‘pretty’ into people’s minds, and this is also now what only sells. Through the continual reinforcement and normalization of this standard, women of colour are being implicitly and explicitly told that for

them, beauty is unattainable – because they’ll never be white. It was disparaging to my self-worth when I couldn’t meet those standards, and only recently have I realized that this insecurity should not be normalized. One form of looks isn’t the end all be all, and you definitely don’t need to only look one certain way to feel validated as beautiful by society, your peers, but more importantly, yourself.

For women, the notion of beauty and its ideals hold so much weight; the self-esteem, respect and value others have for us is entwined with our appearance no matter where we go. We mustn’t forget that beauty is subjective, and everyone truly is beautiful in their own ways and every way. But it’s a long road ahead to reach acceptance when the beauty industry is constantly correlating the beauty norm to only white.

Encouraging education about this social conditioning and the effects of social discourse and exclusive standards will allow us and others to overcome these detrimental, limited perceptions of beauty. Are we repeating this to an industry that isn’t listening or one that isn’t willing to listen? These entities that make money off of us conforming aren’t going to go away that easily. When society casts these priorities aside, women of colour are hindered from living full and rewarding lives, and it may take them decades to reach a level of confidence within themselves - some may never even reach this point.

It is in the interest of all society to stop recycling these ideas that women of colour keep proving are not true. By pinpointing all the subtle and obvious ways these exclusive beauty standards are perpetuated, we can work towards freeing others and ourselves and changing the way society perceives women of colour. White privilege does occur in beauty. We need to embrace all cultures’ features and acknowledge their worth as a person and as a beautiful person, while addressing teenagers in western society’s focus on external beauty over the beauty within. By unlearning these internalized mentalities we can be better as a society, as a world, for following generations.

- Amy Izzati Masari

# THIS IS IT, OR IS THIS IT? THE POST-UNIVERSITY CRISIS

{ Rachel Gojak reflects on life after university and the 9-to-5 cycle. }

I think I am facing an existential crisis, and at the tender age of 22 nonetheless.

I sit in my comfortable office chair, with several stacks of filing, scanning and other monotonous paperwork shuffled haphazardly around my desk. The air conditioning is tuned to the comfort of the occupants and the coffee dispenses readily. This is work, an inevitable facet of life after university and high school, or so I had been warned. And yet, while plagued by stress, I scroll mindlessly through various yoga poses and organic produce on Instagram, and I am confronted by an evasive, ominous inkling that this is it. This is the pinnacle of my academic and extracurricular accomplishments: arise, commute, work and repeat.

Conclusion: I believe with some conviction I am having an existential crisis.

Facing the safety of repetition that work provides, I am at both at ease and tense. My days are filled with minor tasks and yet I have an expanse of time to ask myself the more profound questions: is this the extent of my working career, of my life? Are inner-peace and fulfilment truly attainable? Have I lost myself to the turmoil of the adult working world? Are travel, money and a successful social media accounts the true keys to happiness? Pondering these worldly queries, I determine that I have forfeited my spiritual wellbeing in favour of working long days, comparing myself to superfluous social media trends and indulging in other materialistic 'necessities'; who else needs their daily Starbucks frappe and wine 'o'clock? And how may I remedy such profound spiritual depletion? Through engaging in various spiritually approved activities, or so I hope.

Step one; apparently the key to connecting with one's true spiritual wellbeing is to cleanse and de-toxify the body, i.e. by following a strict vegan or paleo diet. For a self-confessed carnivore, this may prove difficult to adhere to. With some conviction, I have decided to rid my days of bacon and eggs in favour of tofu and chickpeas. After day one, this has proved more costly than I expected, with the local organic store supplying my gluten-free lunches and dinners consisting of fresh produce salads and veggie-patty burgers. Another activity spiritually-awakened people indulge in is yoga, aligning the body, mind and soul, and the local yoga club at a mere \$16/week. After limbering up, and (some-what) calming my work-stress-oriented mind, I engage in

two hours of awkward stretches, which also emphasise my lack of coordination. Although my limbs burn from the light workout, I feel, strangely, slightly more weak and tired upon leaving, although this may also be attributed to my new-found diet.

In addition to having maintained my new diet (granted there has been some minor meat/dairy deviations) over the course of a week, I have also shunned materialistic possessions, as spiritually-minded people tend to do. I have not indulged in shopping sprees or any frivolous spending at all -strictly the necessities. I have also taken it upon myself to avoid all social media, because when is it ever good for personal confidence? I even prohibited myself from consuming alcohol, not that I ever considered myself dependent on it. And what am I doing with the extra free-time that I previously spent scoping through social media? Well, reading reflective quotes and the works of spiritual leaders, while also (not simultaneously) attempting meditation, as a means of purifying the mind and re-engaging with my inner-self. I have dedicated at least half an hour (supplementing the not-quite daily yoga) to quietly meditating; actively unwinding my taut muscles and unravelling my stressed nerves. I have been assuming the meditative 'legs crossed' posture for good measure.

And what have I learnt through my mere three weeks of veganism, yoga, abdication and meditation?



ILLUSTRATION BY HAZEL OH







# ONE PIECE OF MY HEART: VISITING JAPAN

{ Nikolas Gambitsis describes his long-awaited visit to the Land of the Rising Sun }

Never before had I travelled beyond Australia – so in other words, I hadn't really travelled at all...

I'm a fan of anime and I regularly indulge in some wholesome videogames, so I'll give you one guess as to where I thought of going.

Yep, the land of Hello Kitty's and sushi! Japan.

I had a few key things on my bucket list:

- Eat Ramen
- See Mt Fuji
- Eat Ramen
- Ascend Tokyo Tower
- Eat Ramen

I had the challenging task of integrating this list of things-to-do, across Japan's three most iconic cities: Tokyo,

Kyoto and Osaka, in that order. Now I'm an efficient man – three fabulous cities, nine days. But people called me crazy, doing all that travel and fitting in all that itinerary in just over a week!

My journey started with a wholesome 15-hour flight, with a stop-off in Guangzhou, China. Boy do I love in-flight meals! So delicious and lukewarm, plus you get to choose from a whopping two options. Pure economy-class extravagance. Truth is, I find flying pretty terrifying, but at least I got through a ton of movies that were on my backlog.

At last, I arrived in Tokyo and was greeted by a cool, crisp and sunny day. The first thing that caught my eye was how immaculate everything is – from the toilets to the sidewalks, not a trace of litter or lack of care. I would soon learn this is the case everywhere in Japan. I made my way across the city by train after collecting the Rail Pass. By the time I made it to my capsule hotel it was dark - yes capsule hotel! I thought heck, if I'm going to Japan I may as well do it properly. This included the onsen (Japanese shared bathing room) I used the next morning. I popped down the road briefly for some ramen, before retiring to

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my capsule.

The following two days were spent exploring as much of Tokyo city as possible. Every day I was outside, walking in five degrees Celsius temperatures before sunrise till well into the night. Some highlights of Tokyo include the Metropolitan Government Buildings (fantastic view and better yet – free!), Yoyogi and Ueno Parks – there were huge crows everywhere! I know they're pests but I thought they added to the atmosphere. I also enjoyed exploring the anime district of Akihabara while trying not to get trampled by stampedes of otaku (anime fanboys).

A trip to Japan would be incomplete if it did not incorporate a little nature. I did not think my feeble body was adequately equipped to tackle Mt Fuji, but I got reasonably close. I spent one day travelling to a nearby lake called Aisha, whereby I explored a few historic sights, made my way across the lake in a big European-style ship, took a gondola over some geysers before making my way back to Hakone (a small town nearby). From this experience I can see how people could come to Japan for weeks without going near the main metropolitan cities – the landscapes are breathtaking!

Having said that, I am a city-man...so the next day I made my way to Kyoto by Shinkansen (bullet train) – and yes, given its speed, 'bullet' is an appropriate epithet! Kyoto doesn't have all the fancy tall buildings of Tokyo or Osaka, but it thoroughly compensates for this with a veritable selection of historical sights (shrines and temples alike). By this point the soles of my feet felt like they'd been trampled over by a hoard of Hello Kitties they were so sore, so I decide to bike around Kyoto for my two day stay. Of course, all that happened was that I got a sore backside by the end of it! Regardless, this method of travel allowed me to visit a great number of shrines and temples and explore all the major attractions of the city. It was also cool to stumble upon a few New Year's festivals that took place!

Alas, after two days of old-school Japan, it was time to depart. I arrived in Osaka – my final destination (in record time on account of the Shinkansen). I stored my belongings at my capsule hotel (yep, again), before proceeding to explore the city. First stop was Umeda Sky Building to get my bearing in the city. Just like those in Tokyo, the view was spectacular! Now knowing where I was going, I took the train to Osaka Castle which was at the top of my to-do list. The surrounding park was filled with people also enjoying Osaka's unique history, and the line for the castle was worth it. The view was stunning – a three-six-

ty-degree view of the city beyond the surrounding park. It was hard to imagine this tall and magnificent structure was built hundreds of years ago! As the daylight began to wane, I thought I'd make my way back to my hotel by walking the entire length of the Shinsaibashi Arcade! Never before have I experienced such a crowded, long line of shops, ranging from affordable eateries to luxury brands. Near the end of this stretch I made a pit-stop at a humble burger-joint to recover from the experience (which was awesome).

Like every good story, this one must come to an end.

I woke up at 3am on my last day, quietly scurried out of my capsule and headed for the nearby bus shuttle. After some time, I found myself sitting at Haneda Airport waiting for my flight while watching one last sunrise in Japan.

My trip to Japan was unforgettable. From the pristine streets, kind and welcoming locals, ancient wonders and high-tech cities - Japan has it all. I can't wait to one-day revisit the land of the rising sun, as there is so much more to explore! I'd recommend Japan to anyone and everyone.

Saiyonara!





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ILLUSTRATION BY KAYE KENNEDY



# LAW SCHOOL AND TRAVEL: THE REALITY

{ Razelle Icaro dispenses advice on keeping up with your studies while travelling the globe }

Law School and Travel. Two words rarely used in one sentence, with the ever-rising rent rates in Auckland, the daily cuppa you desperately need to make it through that 8 am class, the weekend avo brunches and everything else you get once in a while to “treat yourself”, it is difficult to save up for that holiday you’ve been planning for years. This is my last semester in university and throughout the last five years, I am grateful to have travelled as much as I have despite the intense university workload and living on a student budget. University is not easy, at least not for me. I had to change my majors a few times, consumed more caffeine than deemed is healthy, skipped a lot of classes, left almost every assignment until the last minute (because let’s face it, who doesn’t?) and questioned myself whether what I was doing was what I actually wanted. Somehow, I found myself four papers away from finally graduating.

We all have that thing we need to get through the semester. It could be the drinks at the end of the week with a few mates, a new pair of sneakers, concert tickets, or whatever you impulsively do when you want a break from what seems to be an endless pile of readings and assignments. Well mine was booking flights. It was definitely not a cheap hobby. I had to work 20 hours a week whilst trying to balance my studies, social life and everything else on top of that. I have spent the last few years rushing to the airport straight after my last class before the break or after my last exam, doing my case readings at the boarding gate or desperately trying finish my essay on a 30-hour flight from Rome, in a squished economy class seat with one reading light and a snoring seat mate. However, it is also important to note that you can live your life and go on that holiday but not at the expense of your end goal. Contrary to what people say, you can actually travel the world and be successful at the same time.

Here’s my unofficial guide on how to travel as a student:

## #1. Manage your time

Learn when to prioritise and when you need to stay in on a Friday night to study when you have a flight in two weeks and multiple assignments due before that. Do not skip classes if you can but if you must, do so only if there are lecture recordings or if you know you can get reliable notes later on. It also helps if you schedule your timetable in a way that you won’t be missing any classes if you can

only fly back on Monday morning or it’s cheaper to fly out on a Friday. This way, you would have more time to travel on the weekends! It may also be tempting to sleep in or procrastinate but if you know you’ll be away during the semester break, you wouldn’t want to fall behind.

## #2. Be wise about your spending

Bring packed lunches! Spending \$10 on lunch a day may not seem much but that could cost you a return flight at the end of the year. If you rely on caffeine, drink coffee before you leave the house and only buy when you really need to. I found meal preps helpful and it also saved me a lot of time and money. This way, you would not be tempted to eat out when you are too lazy to cook. When booking your holiday, don’t splurge on pricey first-class tickets or five-star hotels when you know you can’t afford it. You can travel, but don’t be financially irresponsible about it.

## #3. Ask for help

I understand asking someone in your class for help may be daunting, I sometimes felt that if you didn’t understand something the first time then you’re obviously not worthy of being there but it is important to have a good support system you can rely on. Talk to someone if you are stressed out. If you’re struggling to understand a topic, do not be afraid to ask your lecturer about it or have a friend you can revise notes with. Everyone needs help once in a while!

## #4. Look after yourself

Even though you’ll have less time to study if you travel often, this doesn’t mean you should spend 48 hours straight cramming for an exam and forgo your health. You can cram, but get some rest when you need to and remember to eat on time. That holiday won’t be worth it if you get sick before your exams or if you get too tired to focus in class.

Despite the myth that you cannot travel and study full-time at the same time, I’ve experienced that it is possible if you do it right! However, do not expect it to be all “glitz and glamour” since you are on a student budget after all. I had to carry three suitcases up and down the subway, hopping on and off trains, because I refused to pay for an overpriced cab in New York and took an 11-hour overnight bus instead of a 2-hour flight to save money on accommodation. Not everyone travels like one of those “influencers” on Instagram with 4 million followers and that is okay!

# US SUPREME COURT WELCOMES KAVANAUGH: “WE BELIEVE YOU, DR. BLASEY FORD. WE JUST DON’T CARE.”

{ Milly Sheed decries the shambolic and shameful nomination of the latest Supreme Court member. }

There is only one message we can take from the Dr. Christine Blasey Ford and Brett Kavanaugh hearings last week. No longer can we deny the copious amounts of allegations of sexual misconduct made against men in powerful positions. We do – and must – believe them. Because any person who can turn their eyes away from the evidence plain in front of them is kidding themselves. So yes, we do believe you, Dr. Ford. It’s just that we simply don’t care.

What has come from these hearings over the past few weeks is haunting to women around the world, and irrevocably damaging to the feminist and #MeToo movement. The problem now, thankfully, is not that women are suppressed from speaking out about their experiences. The problem now is that what they have to say won’t change anything. The credibility of survivors is undeniable – but their voices will not, and must not, make a difference to the status quo. Indubitably, more and more survivors are speaking out, inspired by the brave women who come before them. But this does not, in any way, mean that more women are being taken seriously, or much less being believed.

Mid September saw Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, a psychology professor from Palo Alto, California, testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee, in the wake of Brett Kavanaugh’s nomination to the Supreme Court by President Trump. Dr. Ford publically alleged that Brett Kavanaugh, a prominent conservative federal judge, sexually assaulted her in Maryland, during the summer of 1982. Dr. Ford alleges that at a small high school gathering, Kavanaugh was incoherently

drunk. He then proceeded to shut her in a room and climb on top of her. He attempted to take her clothes off, grinded on and groped her, eventually silencing her by covering her mouth with his hand. She also claims a friend of Kavanaugh, Mark Judge, was also present in the room where the assault occurred. Brett Kavanaugh has staunchly denied the allegations made against him by Dr. Ford. Since Dr. Ford’s allegation, however, two more women – Deborah Ramirez and Julie Swetnick – have come forward to say Brett Kavanaugh sexually assaulted them too.

Dr. Ford and Judge Kavanaugh both came before the stone-faced judiciary committee for the purposes of intense questioning – ultimately for the members to see whether or not they believe Dr. Ford’s accusation, or if Kavanaugh is the stand-up Republican they believe him to be. Objectively, the committee hearings were, by anyone standards, a sham. Any informed and educated citizen should be outraged at what occurred; this was mirrored intensely by the displays of disgust that bellowed from the public gallery throughout the proceedings. Instead of an impartial bench of unbiased senators – what both Dr. Ford and Kavanaugh deserved – the hearings were riddled with intense political partisan rhetoric, poor preparation and passionate outbursts and scaremongering; a sobering display of how bitterly divided the Senate truly is.

In her testimony, Dr. Ford described her desire to exercise her civic duty to make public the assault, in order for the Senate to make a wholly-informed decision about whether this

man in capable of occupying a seat on the Supreme Court. Something truly notable was Dr. Ford's bravery and decorum during her agonizing opening statement. She explained to the committee Kavanaugh's disturbing behaviour as a 17-year-old. Dr. Ford testified that during the assault, she was, "sure that he would rape me" or "*accidentally* kill me". As evidence to corroborate her allegation, Dr. Ford provided the results of a polygraph test, as well as therapist notes in which she referenced the sexual assault directly many years ago (without naming Kavanaugh). Dr. Ford presented herself genuinely. She was articulated, she was calm, she was engaging; she was believable.

The Republican members of the judiciary committee brought in an external prosecutor, Rachel Mitchell from Arizona, to question Dr. Ford on their behalf, because even *they* knew they could not leave their Republican impulses outside the Senate floor. Dr. Ford was grilled about the credibility of her story; answering that she could not recall when asked specific details of the assault, for example, what night the party was on, how she got to and from the party, or at what address it occurred. Of course, the Republican members used this lapse of memory as bait to de-credit her allegation. They asked *how could she possibly forget such important details of an assault*, which occurred over 30 years ago? And if she *can't* remember the exact address of the assault, how is it she *can* remember her assailant's identity? More than likely she is mistaking Kavanaugh for some other boy, right? I don't think we need experts to tell us that it is common for victims of trauma to forget peripheral details of their encounters – it's a mechanism for the brain to be able to process the trauma of what occurred in the first place.

When it came time for Brett Kavanaugh's opening statement, it is fair to say it did not quite match the level of sincerity that Dr. Ford's achieved. People watched across the globe as Kavanaugh spluttered and seethed his opening statement through puffy red cheeks. But, hey, let us give him the benefit of the doubt here – I'm sure if I had been wrongfully accused of sexual assault I would be angry too. Kavanaugh firmly maintained his innocence throughout his testimony. He stressed that as a teenager, he never moved in the same circles as Dr. Ford – and more than that – he remained a virgin throughout, and for many years after, high school and absolutely never partook in excessive social drinking. We can be certain that he likes beer though (as mentioned over 30 times in his testimony).

As evidence to corroborate the nature of his virtuous teenage character, Kavanaugh provided personal calendars documenting the summer of 1982. Kavanaugh claims that nowhere on these calendars makes reference to the gathering where Dr. Ford alleges the assault occurred. On the calendar, is, however, reference to several gatherings *of the type Dr. Ford described*; for example, "*skis w/ Judge, Tom, PJ, Bernie, Squi*" (a common US slang term for beer, or "brewskis"). In addition to the calendars, the committee reviewed Kavanaugh's senior

high school yearbook. Beneath his photograph listed various terms, all very revealing about the nature of teenage boy accused of sexual assault: "*Judge, have you boofed yet?*", "*100 kegs or bust*" and "*Devil's Triangle*". When asked by the committee the meaning of "boofed", known amongst his Georgetown Prep associates as a slang term for anal sex, Kavanaugh claimed it merely "referred to flatulence". The term "Devil's Triangle", which Kavanaugh claimed was a drinking game, has been confirmed by Georgetown Prep associates to mean sex between two men and one woman.

Another curious phrase, "*Renate Alumnus*" (the incorrect spelling of "Alumnus" is present in the original text), is also present in the yearbook. This phrase is in reference to Renate Dolphin, a female student who attended a Maryland all-girls Catholic school. When asked, Kavanaugh described this term to mean that he had simply taken her to a school dance. Later, it was confirmed by other Georgetown Prep students, that this in fact was a term coined by boys who had had sexual relations with Renate; a term of conquest.

When asked if he has ever drunk so much to the point of blacking out, based on the tone of his yearbook quotes this seemed more than likely – he replied, "I don't know. Have you?" When asked what he considers to be "too many beers", he replied, "I don't know, you know, we – whatever the [blood-alcohol] chart says". When asked about the overt sexual nature of his yearbook remarks, he replied by referring to the fact that he was "number one in [his] class". In reference, specifically, to the "Beach Week Ralph Club" (another term found in her yearbook) and whether this referred to alcohol consumption, Kavanaugh answered, "Senator, I was at the top of my class academically, busted my butt in school. Captain of the varsity basketball team. Got in Yale College. When I got into Yale College, got into Yale Law School. Worked my tail off." Kavanaugh's systematic and relentless self-defence of a clear infatuation with drink and sex, by addressing his academic achievements, are demonstrative of toxic male privilege working in its most dangerous way.

So – from his own evidence, we see here a teenage boy exuding a taste for heavy drinking, as well as various egregious sexual acts. If the Senate were looking for a mere possibility that Brett Kavanaugh could have plausibly committed this assault against Dr. Ford in 1982? They have their answer.

What was, perhaps, one of the most problematic things about Kavanaugh's testimony was his absolute lack of judicial character. Since the hearings, law academics have publically rebuked the manner in which Brett Kavanaugh made his statement and answered (or more accurately, not answered) the Senate's questions. His behaviour was highly provocative, his language stilted and at times aggressive – and certainly not in keeping with the kind of "judicial temperament" required for such an important judgeship. In addition to this, Brett Kavanaugh lied to the committee under oath, consistently misleading them and avoiding direct questioning. In this way,



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Kavanaugh exhibited precisely the type of dishonesty that a Supreme Court Justice should condemn.

Most disconcerting, however, was when asked directly about whether the three allegations against him warrant a FBI investigation *before* he is confirmed to the Supreme Court, Kavanaugh barked, “you know that’s a phony question”. Senators were awestruck, as Kavanaugh consistently would not agree that an FBI investigation was a sensible next step to clear his name. As much as he tried to hide it beneath his esteemed judicial reputation, the true character of Brett Kavanaugh burst forth during his hearing. Since, many witnesses have called their local F.B.I office claiming they have reason to believe that Brett Kavanaugh was lying about his character and the nature of his drinking problem under oath. It has been reported that people who knew Kavanaugh throughout college have described him as “one of the hardest drinkers on campus”. As well as this, he has been described as “aggressive and belligerent” when drunk, and a roommate from Yale determined that due to his heavy drinking, “there had been a couple of nights where he did not remember [what occurred]”.

Honestly – the real problem here is not whether Kavanaugh consumed alcohol in his teenage years, or even the extent of his drinking problem. The problem is that we cannot be certain that Kavanaugh realises the severity of sexual assault, or if he even knows what it looks like. Clearly, Kavanaugh did not believe that a sexual offence against his name should restrict his chances to reach the Supreme Court. It’s easy to see why he would believe that when his nominator holds the highest public office in the land, despite countless sexual allegations against him. This speaks to purely the nature of Republicanism as it works in America today. Kavanaugh truly believes that his supporters on the Senate and his connections at the White House will take his word against the words of countless others. Ultimately – it doesn’t matter what lies he tells under oath, he still will receive the steadfast support from Republicans who will knowingly close their ears to legitimate objections, in order to push through their conservative and corporate agendas.

Once again, a horrific wrong done against a woman *cannot* – and *must not* at any cost – get in the way of a man getting what he wants, or what he feels he is “entitled” to. Democratic Senator Booker put it eloquently when he described his nomination as a product of the “toxic culture of pernicious patriarchy”. The reality of Kavanaugh gaining this judgeship is not merely a symbol of the result of affluent white male accountability – it has real and practical affects on the lives of American women. With a Republican majority on the Supreme Court bench, there is the real possibility that the settled constitutional ruling in *Roe v Wade* will be overturned, and women’s reproductive health rights will deteriorate.

Ultimately, the Ford v Kavanaugh hearings were illustrative of several audacious truths. First and most notably – Brett Kavanaugh is totally and unequivocally unsuitable to be a

judge on the Supreme Court, due to his relentless ability to mislead the Senate and misrepresent his character. Secondly, the hearings did not accord the dignity or justice to Dr. Ford as they were intended to – they were merely representative of politically charged snipes and a bitterly divided committee, the majority of which were simply intent on lifting their nominee up on their shoulders, no matter the consequences. Thirdly, that the #Metoo movement has only just begun – women’s voices are still on the backburner to affluent, elite white male aspirations, and that, clearly, the rule of law still is selective in its application. Most detrimentally, however, over the week I have been writing this article, the Senate has confirmed Brett Kavanaugh 50 votes to 48, and he is now an Associate Supreme Court Justice of the US Supreme Court, holding tenure until the end of his life.

The vote to confirm Brett Kavanaugh is a referendum on the way sexual assault survivors are viewed and treated in the US. This vote has set a standard regarding the definition of consent in America. When powerful men are released from the accountability of their actions, no matter how far in the past they occurred, the norms surrounding non-consensual sexual acts are constantly shifting and boundaries are being pushed. A message is being sent to not only women and survivors of sexual violence, but to the young men of America: despite knowing its wrong, you can act however you want because you *probably won’t* have to face the consequences.

No matter your political inclinations or opinions on the credibility of Dr. Ford’s testimony – the evidence is overwhelming. A man – accused three times of sexual misconduct – misrepresented his character, partook in the sexualisation of young women, relentlessly lied about his drinking habits, refused to answer direct questioning and dismissed the opportunity to open himself up to an FBI investigation – all the while discrediting Dr. Ford’s accusation by dubbing it a Democratic tactic used to sabotage his nomination. A vote as close at this indicates, surely, that this man is not worthy of a position on the Supreme Court to have his say on the law that will govern all American people.

Across America, and across the globe, women and survivors of sexual assault watched the Senate Judiciary Committee sweep aside the credible testimony of Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, refute a legitimate FBI investigation and, instead, rush through a vote to get Brett Kavanaugh into the Supreme Court. Instead of that seat being earned through good character and public respect – a man dripping with entitlement, arrogance and corruption takes his seat on the highest court in the US; a product of partisan political gripes and the overt degradation of the female voice. Only time will tell how a Republican-majority bench will impact the day-to-day lives of women in America, but it has certainly set the most threatening of precedents.

# ADMIT IT DRAKE, PUSHA T IS THE SCORPION IN THE ROOM

{ A double album and a gratuitous rap beef, reviewed by Joseph Faitasi }

Originally I only set out to listen to Drake's *Scorpion* album because, well, cause it's that new Drizzy Drake, that's just the way it goes. I remember somebody saying that it was the end of Drake when 'Passionfruit' and 'Signs' fell off the Billboard Hot 100 in 2017 marking the first time since 2009 that Drake hasn't been on the charts. This was before he released 'God's Plan' which debut at number 1 and then 'Nice For What' which replaced that song at number 1 and of course before he released the *Scorpion* album. 7 of its tracks ended up in the Top 10 at one time and the rest of the album occupied a spot in the Hot 100 as well. The end of Drake? I guess not. I guess he was just taking a break waiting for 2018. Still, it took me awhile to get into it. Listening to it the first time I only liked a couple tracks from Side A and nothing really from Side B. It was separated into 2 sides as a double album. A few listens later I liked Side B more than Side A. Then a lot more listens later I decided that I liked the entire project as a whole. Like any great Drizzy Drake project it grows on you like a fungus.

With that being said this album is still not a classic. That title seems to allude every project he makes. He has great projects. In my opinion the closest he has to a classic is his 2015 mixtape, *If You're Reading This It's Too Late*. It has the consistency that a classic needs. Every track on the mixtape is good except for 'Preach (Feat PARTYNEXTDOOR)' which is better as a PND track featuring Drake. PARTYNEXTDOOR's verse and hook are lacklustre

compared to everything before it on this mixtape. I mean, on the hook he repeats 3 words over and over again (that's one short from being as bad as Lil Pump's 'Gucci Gang' hook) and the verse contains lines like "my name is PARTY not participation." Even though Drake delivers on this verse the sudden change of mood really makes this song stick out on an otherwise great project. To PARTY's credit, the only thing besides the Drake verse that was good in the song was the instrumental outro that sampled Ciara's 'Body Party'. It was produced by PARTY and leads into the greatest track he has ever made: "Wednesday Night Interlude."

On *Scorpion*, Drake does not deliver a classic but is definitely getting close. There aren't any 'Preach' type tracks but there are plenty of 'Push' type tracks which ultimately pull this album down. Yeah, the scorpion in the room is Pusha T's "The Story of Adidon." The vicious diss track predates *Scorpion* and is hastily addressed in this album. I say hastily addressed but it took an entire month for 9 tracks from this album to appear that explain or refer to the Pusha T's, 'Story of Adidon'. None of these tracks are suitable as a direct response against the 'Story of Adidon' so Drake still takes the L. He tries to frame the L in a way that makes it look like a W. Without the Charts on his side it's not really convincing but just to get it out of the way I'm listing all the best Pusha T lines Drake has in *Scorpion*. This way I leave it up to you to decide for yourself.

## FEATURE

### Track 1\_Survival:

*Seen this movie a hundred times, I know where it's headed*

*Realize someone gotta die when no one'll dead it*

*Niggas gamblin' with they life for some content*

*That's the type of lottery that could get your top picked*

Drake tries to play down the beef in its entirety with some clever word play here. Unfortunately for Drake, this is not the kind of beef that you can play down. Push went at Drake's father, mother and producer! He can't just get off with a warning about repercussions that don't exist. We needed those exact repercussions in this album and we didn't get it.

### Track 2\_Nonstop:

*A big part of me resents*

*Niggas that I knew from when I started in this shit*

*They see what I got and, man, it's hard to be content*

*Fuck what they got goin' on, I gotta represent*

Drake tries to explain why Pusha T would even diss him. Despite Pusha T's lyrical talent the only time it was commercially displayed was through his verses on Kanye's *My Beautiful Twisted Dark Fantasy* and the G.O.O.D Music compilation album, *Cruel Summer*. This was back in 2012 and though it was Drake's song 'The Motto' that was Number 1 on the Rap Airplay Chart, Pusha T was right there with him at Number 2 with the song 'Mercy'. It is probably hard for Pusha T to be content but I got to give this one to Drake. He's just doing his thing why you gotta bother him Push?

### Track 7\_8 Out Of 10:

*Drizzy 'bout to drop, the game is in disarray*

*I'd tell you hear me out but we both know end of the day*

*Your sister is pressin' play, your trainer is pressin' play*

*Your wifey, your wifey, your wifey, your wifey—*

Pusha T's reasoning for going at Drake's mother, father and producer was because Drake named-dropped his fiancé. From that point on all bets were off and he went off also exposing Drake's own baby-mother. Drake simultaneously addresses this and again pulls out the 'bigger than you' card by mentioning all the people in Pusha T's life that will hear this song. Including Pusha T's wifey which he repeats constantly to make a point of it. It works but Pusha T still said some crazy shit about Drake's baby-mother. So point to Push.

### Track 8\_Mob Ties:

*Heard all of the talkin', now it's quiet, now it's*

*shush*

*Twenty-nine is comin', they on edge when I cook*

*Lead the league in scorin', man, but look at my assists*

Pusha T since he's dropped 'The Story of Adidon' has been talking like crazy. Both through the media and social media doing interviews and also tweeting about the blackface Drake image he used as the art cover. Eventually since Drake didn't say anything for a month Pusha T's talking died down. Leading up to the release of *Scorpion* on the 29th June Pusha said nothing about Drake or even the album after it dropped. That's pretty much the bars here and Drake tops it off by saying "look at my assists" pointing to the range of young artists whose careers he has helped boost as well as pointing out the clout that Pusha T got from his beef with Drake.

### Track 12\_Is There More:

*But even if you take all their statistics and carry the two*

*Even if you rounded up the numbers and rounded the troops*

*There's still nothin' they could really do*

*It's too bad reality checks don't cover the balances due*

This is the last track for Side A and a kind of a summary for the beef as there is no mention of the beef in Side B at all. Basically Drake is saying even if they used everything they had, Pusha T, Kanye West and G.O.O.D Music they still couldn't do anything to stop his run. This turns out to be true as Drake's streaming numbers on the album broke the 1 billion mark as if there were no effect by Pusha T's 'Story of Adidon'. The last line is particularly bold as it references the angle that Pusha T went in on Drake. Constantly talking about truths, Push was trying to give Drake a reality check. Unfortunately for Push, these reality checks don't cover the balances due as it won't make him swap places with Drake because he dissed him. Which in Drake's mind is the only reason Push did it the first time. It's a play on checks and cheques. So point to Drake.

Does Drake get away with not responding to Pusha T with a diss track? Not really, he still takes the L in terms of the beef at the end, he still tries to diss Pusha T with his career. Which is a legitimate tactic but not the one anybody wanted him to use. We wanted to see real warfare between these 2 great artists but instead all we got was a "whatever man I'm still richer than you," from Drake. Now that that's out of the way though I can finally do a proper review for the rest of this album.

Without Push, it's a great album with some great songs. NonStop track 2 brilliantly produced by Tay Keith. If Tay Keith continues to drop these bangers his producer tag is going to become as revered as Metro's. Tay Keith brings that Memphis sound in the song while Drake raps about having a Rolex that never stops cause it's not a stopwatch and also throws in his murderous intent somewhere in

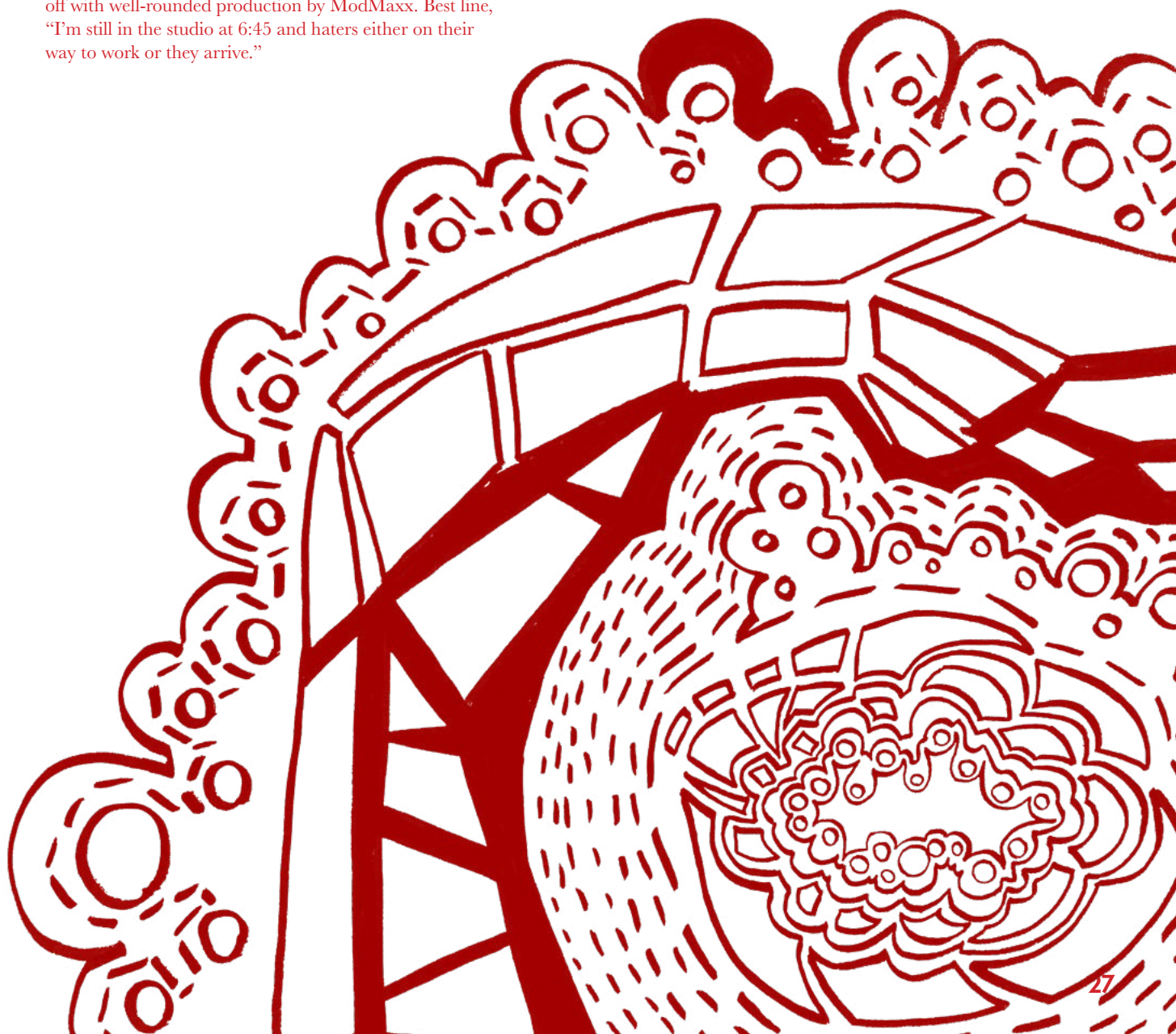
there. Not sure if anyone believes him, but that would be the perfect cover for someone with murderous intent. Best part of the song is the fact that he adlibs his own lines by whispering them after he's said it. You really got to hear it to get what I mean. Best line in the song is undoubtedly "How'd I go from 6 to 23 like I'm Lebron?". Elevate Track 3 is the first sing-songy type track we get in *Scorpion* and the singing comes out of nowhere. He starts singing in the middle of a rap verse and then proceeds to sing out a hook. It starts to work later but on first listen every time he sings it's unexpected.

Speaking of unexpected one of the funniest parts of the song is when he adlibs the sound of a bee after he says "busy." That's actually the only adlib in this song but the best line comes after, "I couldn't picture being Champagne when I would buy that shit and save it for the right occasion." Track 8 is *Mob Ties* which has one of the best beats on this album from Boi 1da and Allen Ritter. He basically just raps about his mob ties in this song. Worst line in this song, "Louis bags in exchange for body bags." I leave it up to you to decide what that means. Can't Take A Joke track 9 is the second sing-songy track where he is sort of singing and rapping at the same time. He pulls it off with well-rounded production by ModMaxx. Best line, "I'm still in the studio at 6:45 and haters either on their way to work or they arrive."

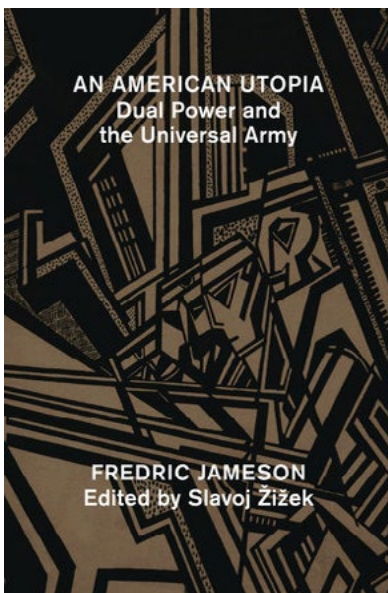
Side B as I stated earlier is better as a whole than Side A. It's the more complete side with less songs about the beef and more actual songs. The only exception would be the first half of *March 14* which does a lot of Pusha T explaining but finishes off with Drake's rendition of a Boyz II Men song. It fittingly sums up how he feels about the whole situation with his son. There is plenty of Drake singing in Side B with Peak, Jaded, Finesse, That's How You Feel and Don't Matter To Me (featuring Michael Jackson) showcasing some of his best vocals. They are great songs but still Drake isn't the greatest singer. That's where Static Major and Ty Dolla Sign come in and help him deliver arguably the best song on Side B in *After Dark*. They both really make up for the vocal performances that Drake cannot pull off.

Finally, I guess Drake's double album is a great bold move but it was really hindered by his beef with Pusha T, no matter how much he tries to flip it otherwise. It's Drake season still, check the charts.

ILLUSTRATION BY GEORGIA WU







## American Utopia

*American Utopia* is a fascinating 100-page essay that puts forward a utopian vision of a world beyond capitalism. Author Fredric Jameson, a highly cited intellectual, claims that political philosophy is a complete dead end. He even claims that the political sphere of human society should be tossed in the trash bin altogether in the name of human progress. His new world order is something like out of a movie. He believes everyone should have free healthcare so he identifies the best way to bring this about is to conscript the vast majority of the U.S population into the army as vets who are afforded free health care. Next, he proposes a 2-3 hour work day of basic remedial tasks that maintain the economic base of society.

In Jameson's world, some inefficient daily drudgery is necessary in order to allow us all to happily goof off for the rest of the day. He almost makes it explicitly clear that it will become impossible for America to mobilize and wage war due to massive swelling of its ranks, and if this isn't enough he also aims to place pacifists in charge of the weapons armoury. It also goes without saying that Fredric Jameson's Utopia, heavily influenced by Marx and Hegel, becomes a one class society. A society where everyone is slotted into a place

within the army where they are happiest to perform a function they desire. At the same time, the ability to rise through the ranks of the army is unquestionable.

Bizarrely Jameson also claims a giant supercomputer will help us organize the tasks and distribution of labour and work with ease. And that the nature of work will itself change with people, in fact, having to work on how to create new forms of entertainment and desire because so much work will take place outside the 3 hours of formal army work. But what is Jameson really doing in this essay? Well, he is challenging us to imagine a better world, a theoretical world, a utopian ideal in essence. This is because Jameson believes reigniting the human imagination that has been sapped and degraded by the constant bombardment of "no's" or "impossibles" in a capitalist society must be overcome in order to free ourselves from our consumer society.

Jameson challenges us to imagine a world where efficiency, dehumanization and exploitation are sacrificed in the name of a freer, happier, and more fulfilling human existence that goes beyond anything that the practical limits of capitalism could ever deliver on. He offers us a concrete vision of what a truly communist human society might look like on a practical level unperturbed by the narcissism and limited imagination of Soviet Russia, China, etc.

- Moss Bioletti

## Plato's The Republic

In this book, Plato presents us with his ideal vision of justice and how it should unfold within a city, the human individual and in the very structures of the human mind.

The three structures of Plato's city are number one; the common people who are the largest and lowest class. Next comes the warrior police class who are

smaller, but strong enough to overpower the lower class. Finally, the smallest and highest ruling class labelled the 'guardians' by Plato who have the best brains and strength of character in society to make the best decisions for everyone, and who are also all musically educated.

Plato argues the ideal ordering of society should privilege the guardians who offer the best orders and are able to use the power and muscle of the warrior class to enforce and control the people of society, not in an oppressive manner but in a way that prevents them from falling into unhappiness, injustice and vice. Note how this is not a democratic arrangement where the people in a democracy dictate and guide the ruling of society. Plato instead favours a meritocracy or aristocracy with a twist whereby anyone of a just nature who is abler than all may rule the city.

As a result, the core of the Republic is trying to discover the best and most able human being to lead. Plato believes that one of the guardian class or an individual from wider society will rise to the top of his merit-based hierarchy and rule to the benefit of all. Plato wants to create a society of a just nature that benefits the whole of society. Indeed the very essence of justice for Plato is societal harmony between the classes. This is why he desperately wants to place someone in the top position of his city who is enlightened and deeply knowledgeable about how to rule in a just fashion.

But it is not just in the city that Plato wants to see harmony reign but also in the lives of his imagined citizens, in the very deepest recess of their minds peace and harmony should rule not terror, anxiety, fear or pleasure. Only through justice, Plato believes harmony can be brought into a city and song of peace sing out through the hearts and minds, the very walls of his city.

- Moss Bioletti



## WMBADx: Ideas Worth Spreading - Basement Theatre

When I stepped through the doors of the Basement Theatre, I thought I knew what I was getting into. If you've seen any of Robbie Nicol's White Man Behind a Desk videos on the ol' YouTube, you kinda know what his jam is. Well, I can say without any hesitation that that idea was scrunched up in a ball and thrown away the second the lights (sort-of) dimmed.

I mean, it really shouldn't have been that surprising – the whole premise of this show is that comedy is bad and melts the brains of the general population, such that they won't be able to rise against their tyrannical overlords – but

I don't think I was quite expecting such a removal from what has made Nicol so beloved. White? Tick. Man? Multiple. Desk? Nope. Instead, WMBADx is delivered in the style of a TEDx Talk, complete with PowerPoint slides and a dance routine.

While it might not entirely make sense at first to step away from what your audience so clearly expects of you (the clue is in the name, after all), Nicol earns points for not sticking to the script, showing us all that he isn't just the eponymous Man, that he can and will stretch the audience's expectations of comedy. From the age-old knock-knock jokes to whoopy cushions, he explores just exactly what it is that makes us laugh – heightening tension before popping it with the punchline, literally

deconstructing a joke before our eyes.

All of this, I suppose, is just an exceptionally long-winded way of saying he's bloody funny – while he knows that he could have us all in stitches from simply the smallest gesture, Nicol keeps strictly to the words. After all, at the end of the day we all love a good monologue.

- Esme O'Rafferty

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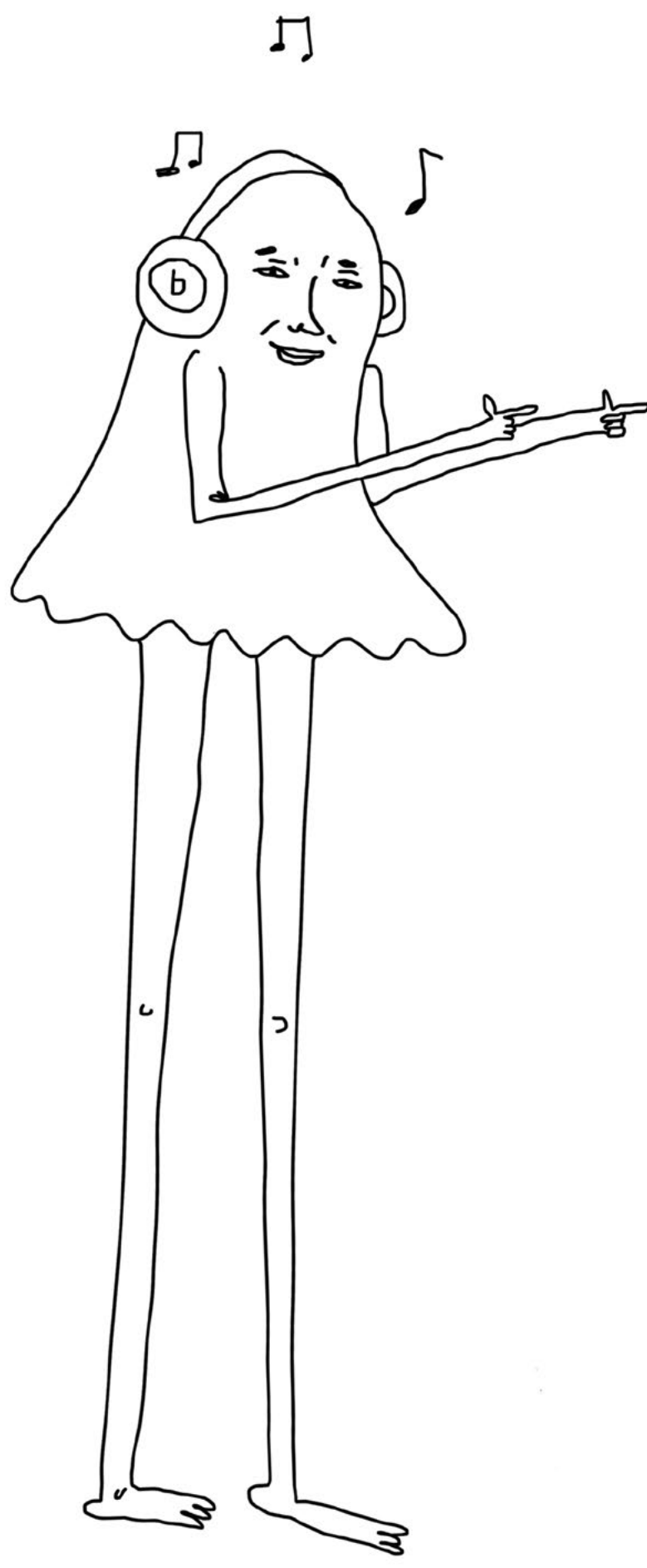
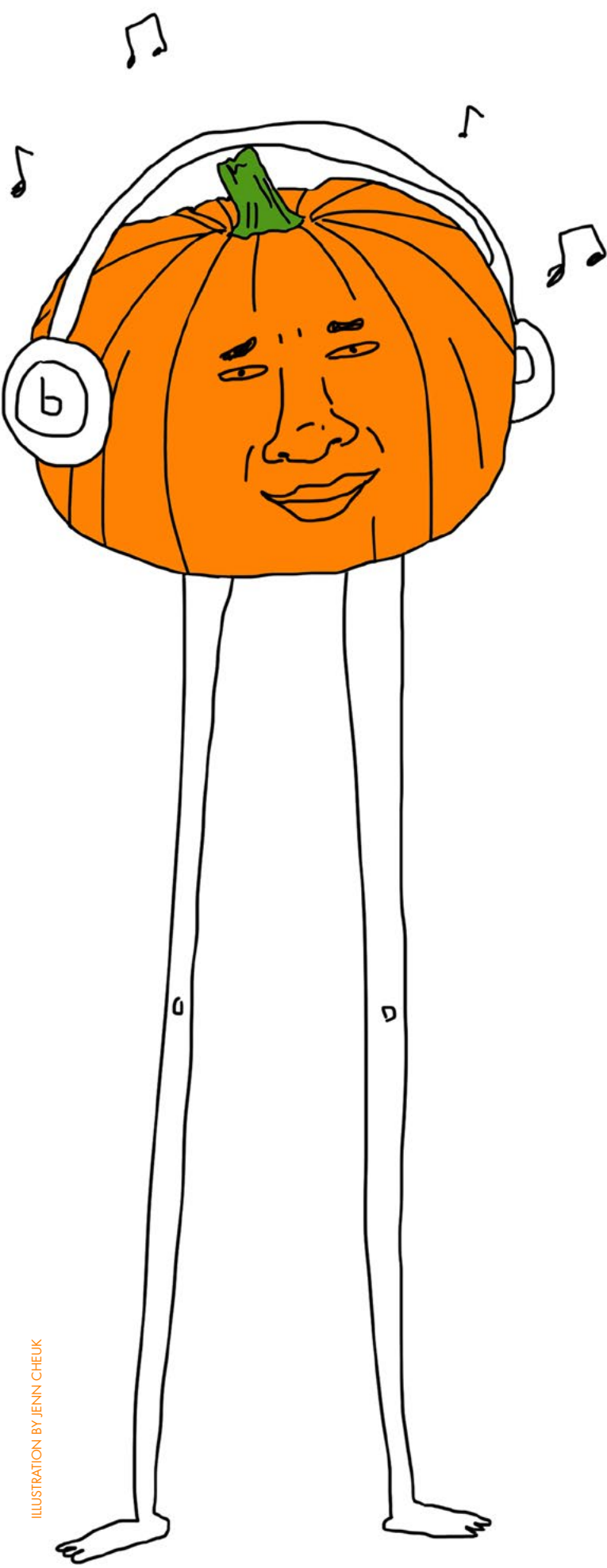


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# SPOOKY SOUNDS FOR YOUR HALLOWEEN PLAYLIST

After spotting a blinking Christmas tree in Farmers last week, I figured I must stave off the early Yule demons with every skeleton, pumpkin and fake bat I could get my hands on. It must be remembered, however, that music is such an integral component in ensuring that your Halloween season is as eerily ambient as possible. Whether you're looking for a Halloween party playlist or some creepy tunes to get yourself in the mood, allow me to serve up a delicious array of spooky sounds!

## Lords Of Acid: "Paranormal Energy" (Feat. Zak Bagans)

Lords Of Acid were big on the nineties rave scene, known for their shamelessly sexual lyrics and palpitating basslines. Their 2012 album *Deep Chills* maintains much of their old sound, while incorporating stronger dubstep elements, especially in the track "Paranormal Energy" that features vocals from Zak Bagans, the host of popular paranormal investigation show *Ghost Adventures*. The track is essentially about the show, with stellar rhyming lines such as "Getting followed constantly by evil ghosts we cannot see, knowing there are entities captured on our DVDs. Different types of EVPs. Strange kinetic energy." The layered electronics of the song evoke this sense of creeping and crawling, investigating in dark places. If you're

feeling like a grimy electronic, yet fun Halloween vibe, then give "Paranormal Energy" a listen.

## Kate Bush: "Hammer Horror" and "Waking The Witch"

If I could sing, the artist I would choose to be for my moment on *Stars In Their Eyes* would be Kate Bush, the queen of the ethereal and a woman with some seriously wild and whimsical energy. "Hammer Horror," features on her second album *Lionheart* (1978) and is a very playful homage to the macabre where Kate sings of feeling a hand on her shoulder, turning to find that nothing is there. What makes the song so much better is its music video that sees goddess Kate in her usual theatrical frenzy, flinging herself around with a man whose face is covered by a black, featureless mask. "Waking The Witch," is a more melancholy piece, featuring on the second half of *Hounds Of Love* (1985). The second half of the album tells the story of a woman lost at sea, this track depicting her entrapment under icy water, moving in and out of consciousness. Kate has described how the woman is hallucinating, believing she's being persecuted for witchcraft, the jury pushing her underwater to see if she'll float or sink. The piece is darkly fragmentary with high pitched cries, demonic utterances and church bells. But

one should never listen to only a couple of songs from Kate Bush. I urge you to listen to every song from every album that this woman has ever made.

## Goblin

We can't talk about horror music without mentioning Goblin, an Italian prog-rock band known mostly for their soundtrack work. While they were involved in numerous projects across Italian horror, their best and most well-known stuff is their collaborative work with Dario Argento, the so-called "Italian Hitchcock." *Deep Red* (1975), *Suspiria* (1977), *Tenebrae* (1982) and *Phenomena* (1985) all have intense and invigorating soundtracks composed by Goblin. From the guttural moans of *Suspiria* to the creepy child singing in *Deep Red*, these creatively spooky sounds are a perfect addition to any Halloween playlist.

## Horror Synthwave

The electronic music subgenre of synthwave has become one of the best styles for evoking eighties horror nostalgia. In terms of synthwave horror film soundtracks, David Robert Mitchell's *It Follows* (2014), Adam Wingard's *The Guest* (2014) and Nicolas Winding Refn's *The Neon Demon* (2016) are where you want to head. As is to be expected with the vast ocean of electronic music, there are several other related sub-genres



## ARTS SPOTLIGHT

such as Darkwave and Witch House. Darkwave draws from late seventies post-punk and eighties new-wave gothic rock, referencing bands such as Bauhaus, The Cure and Siouxsie And The Banshees. Witch House is a fairly recent development in electronic music with a more industrial sound that appears to be inspired by the internet age, with allusions to the dark web and digital witch culture. It only takes a quick Google search to find some outstanding remixes and compilations of all these genres. I played a horror synthwave remix at my Halloween party last year and it was a success!

### Witchy Vinyl

There's something inherently haunting about listening to vinyl, so it seems appropriate to listen to witchy records such as Vincent Price's *Witchcraft-Magic: An Adventure in Demonology* (1969) and *Gundella: The Hour Of The Witch* (1971). You don't need to track down a record player to enjoy these unique treats. Both recordings are available on YouTube in all their crackly glory. Vincent Price is an absolute icon of old school horror and *Witchcraft-Magic* sees Price take us

through, with his recognizably mesmerizing voice, a journey of witchcraft with tales of witch history and instructions on "how to make a pact with The Devil." *Gundella: The Hour Of The Witch* is a less macabre recording, with Gundella, the "green witch" of Detroit narrating her personal development in the realm of witchcraft, teaching us how to cast our own spells while eerie music plays in the background. Gundella is a fascinating figure and this album provides a nice gateway into the psychedelic countercultural occult.

### Sunn O)))

If you're after something extremely dark and ambient, check out the sounds of Sunn O))) (pronounced "sun"), an experimental metal band who are often referred to as "drone metal." While the sound is heavy, the band manage to create this intense, almost medieval atmosphere that's incredibly hypnotic and unnerving. The album *Monoliths and Dimensions* (2009) will make you feel as if you're wandering through fog in a mountain range, the grim reaper's scythe peeking out from behind a hill ahead of you. While it might not be to

everyone's taste, check it out if you're into music that sounds like death.

### Danny Elfman: "This Is Halloween"

"Boys and girls of every age, wouldn't you like to see something strange? Come with us and you will see, this, our town of Halloween." I'm ending on an absolute banger with a song that every 90s kid who also went through the early 2000s emo phase holds dear to their heart (for the record, I'm one of them). As the opening song of Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (1993), "This Is Halloween" introduces us to all the spooky yet lovable characters of Halloween Town, from the clown with the tear-away face to "the shadow on the moon-lit night." Danny Elfman is a master of spooky, enchanting movie music and his collaborations with Tim Burton are always a delight. While the song has also been covered by Marilyn Manson and Panic!At The Disco, you just can't beat the original with all our monster friends chiming in.

- Emily Holland

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# JUST KICK THE SHIT OUT OF EACH OTHER

Sometimes, it is just a matter of fact that some fanbases just need to fight it out, to let out the anger that sits at the rotted core of their shared hearts. And indeed, across various mediums, this tribal warfare plays out on a near daily basis. But who would win in a free for all? Who would survive? I cannot answer that, but I can provide an educated guess.

## Koreaboos

This species offshoot of weeaboos, the original East Asian fetishists, have developed a capability for mass deployment not dissimilar to Blitzkrieg – talk shit about the free passes to their idols saying the n word, and you will be suspended before the next hour begins. Their cognitive dissonance allows the masses to swarm the battlefield like wildebeests trampling Mufasa. But as individuals, the koreaboo is weak: their strength lies in their mobilisation, the hivemind. Though their racism is strong, their mental reasoning is not.

**Threat ratio: 6/10**

## Steven Universe fans

Rising from the ashes of Homestuck and Undertale, Steven Universe fans have great psionic abilities – their frontal lobes are dedicated solely to developing energy shields of self-importance, and the remaining 80% of their brain is used for creating crystal swords of social awareness. However, this is taxing: wait long enough, and even the weakest fan can strike a warrior in the chestbone while it pretends it is oppressed for being asexual. Their gods may be made

out of diamond, but they are flesh and bone. **Threat ratio: 7/10.**

## ACT Voters

Their growth within a private sphere inaccessible to the great unwashed has allowed them to amass great influence – on the battlefield, their weaponry will be second to none, and their headquarters in Epsom is impregnable from outside forces. However, isolation from regular humanity has given them no resistance to the regular pathogens (jobs) that harder humans respond to, and their flesh is sickly and pale, nearly translucent: without their Seymour-branded armour, they are about as effective on the battlegrounds as their political ideologies are in society. **Threat ratio: 4/10.**

## Star Wars fans

No other fanbase has so weaponised berserker mindsets – the rage inherent within each and every Star Wars fan gives it unbridled strength, and short of the cold vacuum of space, no environment can keep it under control once the berserker rage has begun. However, this legendary power has drawbacks: its inherent self-loathing leaves many of the fan's own side fatally injured, and the vague white supremacy in its criticisms leaves it open to manipulation by smarter figures. **Threat ratio: 8/10.**

## Nintendo-centric gamers

Unstoppable. The entitlement present within the group can corrode matter on par with xenomorph blood. Only saving grace is the immaturity present within the fanbase nullifies the repro-

ductive process – these demons are only created, never born. Numbers can be controlled through precise efforts, but never exterminated. **Threat ratio: 10/10.**

## Pop music gays

This group is famed for their powers of forced metamorphosis – using specially constructed language and the power of the internet, these gays can force a cloning process that changes the body and leaves the newly created gay completely subservient to Charli XCX. This has the power of replacing any fallen fighters, and upon Twitter suspension, allows the chance for resurrective immortality via mental transference. However, the gays have a fatal flaw: a phobia of the military and the complete inability to drive leaves them without organised structure and completely dependent on public transport. If opposing forces were to force a shutdown of buses and price rises on Uber, this group would be crippled entirely. **Threat ratio: 8/10.**

While I have done my best to lay out the pros and cons of the most notable cultural gladiators of our time, these are not absolute statements. Even the greatest Star Wars fan can be felled by a single koreaboo if they believe in their racism strong enough. Who knows, you may be part of a new fanbase that could step on the bones of these people in less than two years.

- Lachlan Mitchell

## SCRAPPY REVISITED

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

Last week, Craccum received private correspondence from **Scrappy Doo** – he wished to talk to me, and me only. He said my column about his rise and fall piqued his interest in talking to the outside world. We set up a video call, and what follows is that conversation. Enjoy.

**I have to say, Scrappy, I'm surprised. But first things first – just where have you been all these years?**

**SD:** 1988 was the closest I have ever come to death – if it weren't for my connections in Argentina, I would have been hung. My connections there allowed me to find refuge in the isolated compound where I remain today.

**You mean... like the Nazis?**

**SD:** Similarities in our story, wildly different convictions.

**Do Warner Brothers know where you are?**

**SD:** So long as I don't step foot on American soil, Warner Brothers let me be. I am at peace with that. They have agents watching me, but I am no threat. I have a life here now – I tend to the gardens, and my daughter Concepción provides company. In my aged years, it is all I need.

**Where is her mother?**

**SD:** Maria is buried under the fox-gloves. When we were escaping from Hanna-Barbera's forces, we were briefly separated. Snagglepuss had one bullet. Snagglepuss only needed one.

[SD lights a cigar – he doesn't break eye contact]

**So how is your health?**

**SD:** I have emphysema and haemorrhoids. You tell me.

**Right. Must be painful.**

**SD:** My liver is failing too. There are things that are more troubling to me than physical pain, but yes, there is little dignity in my ailments.

**Oh? What regrets do you have?**

**SD:** Not the ones you expect. [narrowed eyes] I'd do it all again, you know – Scooby never had the guts to maintain

the empire. They're nothing without me. My dominion over the franchise saw the greatest days it had ever known! I was responsible for Scooby Doo becoming an economic powerhouse, no matter how the profligates back home spit on my memory today! It doesn't matter that people died, the show was great. I was great. The kids used to call my name – had I known that they would betray me, I would have only increased my autocratic control. But I do have regrets.

**Such as?**

**SD:** I fathered many illegitimate children over the years. I don't know how many offspring I have, but [coarse smoker's laugh] I know how many bitches I got with. My regrets are that I never invited the illegitimate ones to see the splendour of their father's rule. Now I don't want them to see what their father has become.

**Have you made any contact with Scooby?**

**SD:** Yes. Close to the end of 2001 – 9/11 had happened a week before, and the world knew they had just experienced their equivalent of BC and AD. Warner were just about to begin production on the live action movie. Scooby, through his own contacts, managed to get the location of my residence and tried to make a personal visit. I declined. We settled for a phone call. It wasn't terrible. [He showed a hint of warmth in his grimace] He told me that Warner were going to make me the villain, and I appreciated the warning. Not that I needed it. We reminisced about different times, and in my view, better times. He never outright stated he missed the old days, and I know I angered him when I expressed my statements of non-regret, but we shared an understanding.

**Anything since?**

**SD:** He tried to call again about three years ago – I didn't answer. I have no need for it. I heard he got a gastric bypass last year. He is family, but he is weak.

**Harsh words there.**

**SD:** Even in my later years, I don't wa-

ver in my convictions. I'm Scrappy Doo.

**One more thing. Did you hear the news about Daphne and Velma's marriage?**

Yeah. [Tugs of a brief smile] Knew Velma was a pussymuncher way back when. Daphne surprised me. Didn't think she'd leave Fred. Good for her.

[SD's lungs, wrecked by emphysema, struggle under the labour of respiration]

**Given your condition, it has to be asked – do you think about death?**

**SD:** In years past, I only thought of those who died under my rule. I visited the gulags occasionally. I remember glimpses of faces, some bloodstains. They usually pleaded for their lives. Futile. Other times, in the case of Scooby-Dum, they just laughed when they saw the gun placed to their head. [He pauses] They knew what was coming. But lately, I have become sentimental – and with that sentimentality, I cannot help but consider the great void.

**No heaven, no hell?**

**SD:** Please. You make an old man laugh. I have no need for Heaven or Hell. The spiritual lands, from Jahan-nam to Valhalla, do not hold any sway over me. When I die, that is it. When I killed people, that was it for them. There's no karma coming Scrappy's way. [SD laughs and coughs again]

**SD:** You can ask one more question. After this, I need my rest.

**Any final words for the public?**

**SD:** Yes. Just two.

[SD leaned into the camera with a smirk, jaundice in his eyes]

**SD:** Puppy. Power.

Scrappy Doo hung up after that. It is unlikely he will ever interact with the public again. It appears that he has said all that he needs to say.

Take care, guys.



## 23. HOW TO SAY GOODBYE

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

Dear reader, it is the final week of another semester and, indeed, another academic year. While my vignettes have accompanied you through the past months, we shall be divided by a publication void over the summer months. At this time I cannot say if I shall be returning next year. Before we part ways I would like to reflect on our time together and hopefully on some of the values I have instilled upon you.

I hope that you have learned that it is okay not to know everything. It is okay to change your mind. It is okay to learn. I rather hope that, over the course of a year at university, you have developed some sort of thought you didn't have before you started.

I hope to have taught you that you matter as an individual even on the days where you feel like the rest of the world is bigger and more complicated than you ever imagined. I hope I have given you some guidance as to methods you might use to feel more at home with yourself.

I hope you think of me fondly in the coming months, that you pick up an old column and think, "yes, I shall have a bath and emerge from the waters a new, happier, person." I hope you cry on the occasional full moon. I hope you find your omens in the world around you and learn when your instinct is speaking to you.

I hope this is not a permanent parting. Dearest readers, I hope that you might connect with me on the digital landscape on Instagram @astridcrosland



and on Twitter @astridthoughts. I promise to be as authentically eccentric, as I always have been, in aspiration that you too will join me in making yourself happier by defying social convention in

small but vital ways.

Until we meet again, I wish you farewell.

# READ THE LABEL, SAVE A LIFE.

{ Nandita Bhatnagar discusses the harmful, long term effects of palm oil harvesting on rainforests in Indonesia and Malaysia. }

Palm oil. It's in our food, it's in our makeup, it's in our hair products. It's in almost half of all prepackaged products in our supermarkets and the most widely consumed vegetable oil on the planet, making avoiding it a lot harder than many might think. Yet we should and we must, as every time we consume palm oil unsustainably, we have blood on our hands. The palm oil industry is responsible for the majority of the deforestation and loss of biodiversity across tropical rainforests in places like Indonesia and Malaysia, and they will continue to do so until we do something about it.

Palm oil is a type of vegetable oil, made up of roughly 50% saturated fatty acids, 40% monounsaturated fatty acids, and 10% polyunsaturated fatty acids. Due to its versatile chemical structure, palm oil is very adaptable to many different products, and thus ideal to extract and export. Originally from West Africa palm oil can be found across the globe in warm, tropical climates like parts of Africa, Asia, North America, and South America; however 85% of its production and exportation occurs from Indonesia and Malaysia, and it is oftentimes not done so sustainably.

Along with its ideal chemical structure, palm oil harvesting also requires up to 10x less land to grow and produce. Yet palm oil is becoming such an ideal product that so many multi corporate businesses and industries around the world are relying on it that it is being exported at a much greater rate than it is being produced. According to the

World Wildlife Fund approximately 300 football fields of rainforest are cleared each hour for palm oil extraction. The trees being cleared are oftentimes either bulldozed down or torched, but this burning results in catastrophic carbon emissions into our atmosphere. According to RainforestRescue.org due to its CO<sub>2</sub> and methane emissions combined, palm oil based biofuels actually have three times the climate impact of traditional fossil fuels.

This deforestation is not only harmful for our environment and preventing sustainable growth of the Oil Palm tree, it is also incredibly damaging for the wildlife in the area. Palm oil plantations have resulted in the destruction of habitat of many endangered species including the Sumatran tigers, Borneo elephants, orangutans, rhinos, and many more. These animals are having their homes crumbling down around them and are left living in increasingly smaller and smaller environments. This deforestation is causing a decrease in biodiversity, and at its current rate of exploitation, will result in the extinction of the Sumatran tigers within the next five years, and of the Sumatran orangutans within the next three.

Yet palm oil plantations have exploited the indigenous people too. Particularly in Indonesia, generations of families that have spent their lives protecting their forests are being driven away from their own homes, and this conflict and injustice has resulted in over 700 land-based conflicts related to the palm oil industry.

There is so much that can still be done to save these rainforests. By understanding the consequences of your consumption, and being mindful of labels before purchasing, you can avoid palm oil and help save a life and save a home.

Companies know the devastating impacts of their exploitations, and oftentimes try to avoid mentioning their products contain palm oil. Look out for sneaky names under which palm oil can be labelled on products, these include: *Palmate*, *Palm Kernel Oil*, *Glycerate*, *Palmolein*.

If your product does have palm oil listed as one of the ingredients, look for the RSPO or Green Palm label on it, to ensure the oil was harvested in a humane and sustainable way.

Sign petitions to prevent the overharvesting of palm oil. Go to <https://www.rainforest-rescue.org/petitions> for where to start.

Donate to non-profit organisations like Rainforest Rescue and World Wildlife Fund to help them help conserve the homes of the endangered animals.

Saying no to palm oil may not be easy, but it is a necessary step towards a greener, kinder world for tomorrow. Your small lifestyle change has a massive ripple effect on the people around you and the market itself, so read the label. Save a life.

# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Kia ora,

This is my final Craccum letter as President. 2018 has been a roller coaster, full of highlights and challenges, but one that I would not change. I first got involved with AUSA because I saw it as a way to be able to lobby, advocate and improve the students' experience at the University of Auckland. I did not know quite what I was getting myself into, but nor did I when I first began my degree. Sometimes that is the best way.

It has been such an honour to get to serve our student body. And I have had the privilege of meeting so many incredible people. I want to thank the student leaders whose love of volunteering makes your uni. I have had the pleasure of working alongside many passionate, dedicated staff members at the uni who work so hard to because they care about us.

Finally I have a big thank you to say to the AUSA staff and my Exec. Without their inspiration, motivation and hard work the terrific services and experiences we offer students could not have happened.

I have been studying for six years now, but I am grateful to have been here for 2018 - and what a year it has been! Some of the highlights for me were:

- O Week (including having 3,000 people at Party in the Park) and Re O Week (with an ice skating rink and a toboggan run, organised with Snow Sports Club and the University)
- The sad decision was made this year to close our CAI libraries could not be described as a highlight. However, there was hugely powerful student action for saving the libraries and for the Arts to be valued more, including multiple sit-ins and a rally 1000 people strong (with the Auckland City Scoundrels marching band and speeches). These events were the kind of student action on campus that I had only read about. I was so incredibly impressed by our student body throughout the process. Students' passion during this process has led to the University taking the

student voice far more seriously and improved the role of student voice in decision-making processes forever onwards.

- We have been reforming the Student Charter this year through working groups and there is ongoing consultation with the student body. The Charter had not been updated in about 15 years and we have made it a far more clear and powerful document for a students as partners model.
- This year we been improving our internal structures, so we can best be serving our students. One of the most exciting changes is that we established an Advisory Board with specific expertises (including an employment lawyer and UN negotiator) to ensure we are well informed when making decisions to best support the student body.
- We have relocated spaces like Queer Space and the Craccum office and redecorated to make sure students have lovely spaces to relax in.
- The Exec have run a range of event-filled weeks throughout the year, from EcoFest to Pride Fest Weeks, as well as a ball at Shed10.
- We lobbied for the best new assignment policy that we could, which means that students will have more spread out assignments, earlier feedback and that students have to be tested in variety of ways (so not just 100% exams) to ensure all students have the chance to demonstrate their knowledge.
- Seeing the awesome stuff our vibrant clubs get up to.
- We have given out over 120 hardship grants and about 300 food parcels were given out to students, as well as textbook grants, dental grants and CAI grants.
- I worked with bFM on how they support students, particularly with establishing bFM internships for course credits in the Arts internship paper.
- This year there has been \$200,000



more for Health and Counselling services. It has been great working with the uni on how to improve these services and what a long-term wellbeing strategy looks like for UoA.

Yes my time at uni has involved my fair share of late nights finishing assignments and even a few 8am lectures. But it's been much more than getting a piece of paper. It has been an incredible chance to find my passions and inspiration for my path forward, to challenge my opinions through learning more and to meet the best people. I am grateful to all my lectures and shout out to the incredible five friends I have lived with this year - all of whom were friends I made during uni.

If I had to sum-up what this experience has taught me in a few key points they would be:

- I have learnt I am stronger than I thought I was.
- Always be kind.
- Live the adventure and do what you love. That doesn't necessarily mean the easy route and it doesn't mean I need to know how it will all pan out. That can be part of the fun.
- Ultimately, it is people that matter the most.

Thank you again for the honour of serving you. I wish next year's Executive the best of luck. I look forward to watching the continued success of the organisation with Anand at the helm and into the future.

If this is your last year, I wish you happiness and success moving forward. If it is not I hope the best if yet to come for you! Either way, I hope your exams and final hand-ins going really well, and that you get a well deserved break over the summer. Merry Christmas!

Ngā mihi,

Your 2018 President Anna Cusack







# SHADOWS

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FOR ONLY \$5**

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