

ISSUE 13, 2013

Craccum

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND STUDENT MAGAZINE



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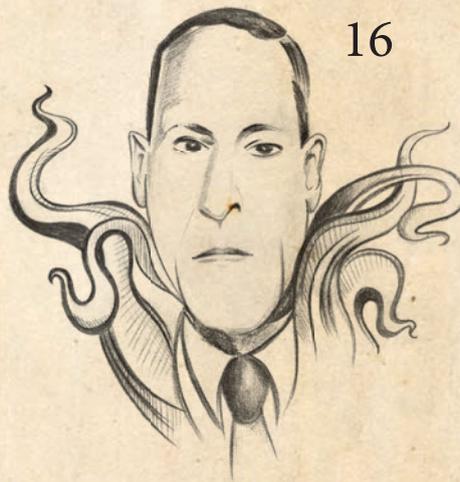
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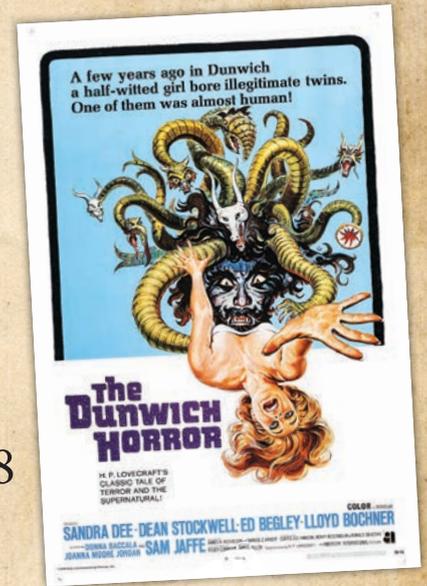
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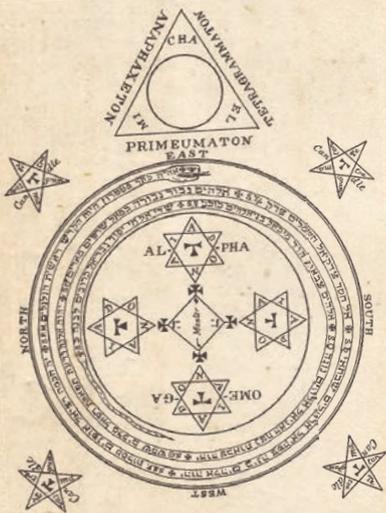


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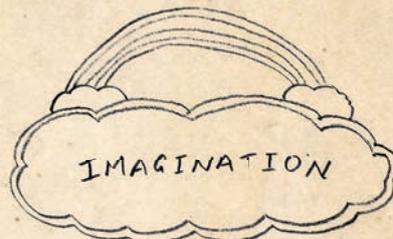
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Aditya's Editorial

A generation of horror and macabre followed the great H.P. Lovecraft, who followed in the hallowed gothic footsteps of Edgar Allen Poe. He thrived examining the nature of insanity, a line in the sand that is infinitely relevant given issues like mental illness and the development of psychiatry.

Poe and Lovecraft led us to the now trodden paths of ghosts, ghouls and garish nightmares that we so often see on our screens and pages.

Lovecraft, in a nutshell, looked at people who discover a dark, revealing truth. This truth is often so twisted and deranged that it drives the narrator to insanity. He meticulously sets the scene with dark gothic buildings and landscapes - all the hallmarks of the genre we now take for granted. In one story the narrator begins to climb a tower in the yard of his mansion. It is pitch black as he climbs higher and higher. Reaching a plateau, he arrives at a completely new world, as if the one below were just a dream. The people of this world are morbidly afraid of a monster, their eyes betraying their uncontrollable fear and revulsion. Gasping, the narrator sees the monster for himself, and out of curiosity reaches out to it. Extending his hand, what should he feel, but a pane of cold, reflective glass. *The whole time the monster was*

me - delivered to perfection.

This is one of the shortest and simplest of his stories. Others possess discoveries of truth far more complex and intricate, each with a scarier moment of revelation. The discovery is shocking because it shoves us from the comfort of certainty in one thing to uncertainty in everything.

It is a daunting slippery slope. It's hard for us to pin down how our minds really work, even for the neurologists around, and because of this it is very easy to be afraid of something going wrong. At the point at which one aspect is questionable, everything falls into question.

A drunken night after which you wake up on the floor of your living room, an eyebrow shaved off, a big mac lying in the shower, and a message from an ex on your phone, all of which you can't explain, makes you question how you could've thought any of those things were a good idea. How did your functioning, logical brain get you there? You are left to construct the night for yourself, and your thoughts along with it. It's baffling.

Another example that plagues me is that annoying period before you get to sleep. You concentrate on nothing at all because you know that's what it takes, but that nothing at all always becomes something, and that something is



always the thing that stops you from getting to sleep. Try as you might to push it to the back of your mind, it ends up being the only thing you are truly focusing on. A bad experience, a scary story, a brutal occurrence - they make your mind uncontrollable for that period of time, and like Lovecraft's truths they rattle your sanity.

It's easy to say that some people don't understand you and can't empathise with you, but at the point at which no one does, are you insane? Are you caught in a self-justifying bubble?

Let that fear carry you through this issue.



Yeah we basically just cut loose a bit on this issue and went wild on a topic that we're all passionate about.

But it's been fun, and hopefully slightly useful. H.P. Lovecraft was quite a disturbed man, by all accounts, and his books aren't that popular, but his influence on our pop culture is genuinely staggering to a ridiculous level. Stephen King raves about the guy, forwarding collection after collection with nothing but praise for Lovecraft for getting him into writing horror, and Stephen King gave us things like *IT*, *The Shining*, and *The Shawsbank Redemption*. He also publicly trashed Stephenie Meyer and has the uncanny ability to just sit down and write hundreds of books in a single sitting.

It's cool to try and track Lovecraft's

Callum's Editorial

influence, only to find that it becomes a nigh impossible task very early on. It shows that there really is some value in showcasing his works, his style and his creations because of the pop cultural significance that he has, often anonymously, garnered purely through creating really interesting things. Sure, as a person he will never be praised, but as a creator he's really up there with such fascinating imaginations as Poe or Mary Shelley. His own personal universe has been expanded and fleshed out so many times over the past century that it becomes hard to not encounter his creatures, but, paradoxically, very hard to actually encounter his original stories.

Also we felt that the zombie issue thing had been done to death and we wanted to get the jump on Halloween, because having a spooky October is way, way too mainstream. August is the new October. Better believe it.

This week has been very disturbing for me because there's been this odd influx of people into the university. Such an odd sounding phrase... people in the university. It's been weird after so many weeks of solitude to be suddenly confronted with the realisation that people do actually go to class to do work and things, as if the entire second half of last semester has been struck from the records with a pen filled with enthusiasm and

guilt over class attendance. "It'll be different this time," I hear from the window, "I'll go to class every day this semester, and I'll study for seventeen hours every day."

"I'll use all my money to buy textbooks instead of subsidised stein alcohol."

"I'll take twenty papers and A+ all of them, such is my dedication!"

Maybe this isn't exactly what's being said at all. Maybe I can't actually hear anything but a low murmur from the *Craccum* office. Maybe I'm just making all of this up. Who knows.

As I type we are in the middle of the Auckland International Film Festival, which I will near bankrupt myself going to and getting coverage of. If you are at all interested in film, I would highly recommend going to see something by someone at one point, because the sheer breadth and depth of the works on offer this year is just astounding. I've got my eye on Kore Eda's latest *Like Father, Like Son*, as well as Michel Gondry's *Mood Indigo*, and the crazy looking *A Field in England* by Ben Wheatley. There are also so many shows to go to and so many books to buy and so many coursebooks to read over and a back catalogue of films, games, movies, books...

It's a tough job, but someone's got to do it. Peace.

PURVEYORS OF DARKNESS
ADITYA VASUDEVAN AND
CALUM REDPATH

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NICK WITHERS

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PAUL BEAR

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SAM BOOKMAN

ARTS EDITOR
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STOREY, HAMISH SAUNDERS,
CRAIG RIDDELL, JAMES
BROWN, GRACE AND REBEC-
CA, VICTOR PRICE, CRAPPY
SPAGHETTI, HÆMIA FOOTE,
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send your letters to editor@craccum.co.nz

Letters should be 250 words or less, and the deadline is midnight Tuesday. We will accept all your stories, love, hate, responses and so on. Craccum reserves the right to edit, abridge or decline letters. We will not accept hate mail directed at individuals (unless those individuals are us, in which case, fire away!). All letters must be sent in with full contact details, but these won't be published. We will use your pseudonyms where provided.

Dear Craccum,
You know what you guys should do? You should write about the royal baby.
I think that it's a great idea. I just can't get enough of all that relevant baby coverage.
WHAT DO YOU THINK THE NAME WILL BE?

xoxo
Cpl. FucktheNzHerald

As a multiracial tag team of a semi-nationalist Scot and a once-colonised Indian, we couldn't be more excited for the naming of the Royal Baby. We think that he will be called 'Fillytinkle' and that, in time, he will be known as King Fillytinkle the Just.

Dear Craccum,
I feel like the majority of the Pokemon of the Week are misleading.
Calumon is a Digimon.
Gyarados isn't powered by coffee.
The list goes on.
Please fix.

Charcoal Lostem

Our resident Pokemon expert once bought the original Pokedex book when he was a child, and inside that Pokedex book there's a space where he wrote his name on a line that gives him the title of 'Pokemon Master'. Trust me when I say that he is qualified for the job, and that all of his research is accurate.

Hey Cracs,
inb4 puzzle page was missing from last issue.
Sudoku is what keeps me going.
J.

Don't worry, we gotcha this week.

Dear Craccum,
How the hell did you know that I spent all of my money buying games from the Steam sale?
HOW DID YOU KNOW
Anderson Co-oper

*Because horoscopes are spooky that way.
And Anderson Co-oper is a fantastic name.*



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- > National Security College 3.30pm
- > Admissions 'How to Apply' 4pm
- > Summer Research Scholarships 4.30pm
- > Public Lecture 'Education Technologies: Navigating the Edge of the World', Professor Marnie Hughes-Warrington, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), ANU 5pm

Reconnect with us at the Alumni reception.

HORRORSCOPES

EACH WEEK WE HAVE A GUEST "HORRORSCOPE" WHO MUST BOTH WRITE THE HORRORSCOPES AND ILLUSTRATE THEM. THIS WEEK IT'S WILBUR DE LA POER. IF YOU WANT A GO CONTACT EDITOR@CRACCUM.CO.NZ



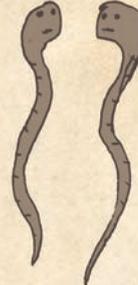
Aries

This week you will find a book made of extremely suspicious leather, carved with strange, ethereal symbols that can't possibly be from this world. I would suggest that you don't open it. Also, don't read any passages from it. Trust me. I've seen some shit.



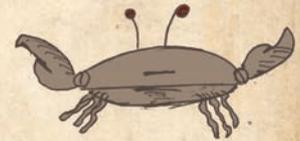
Taurus

You've got some cuh-rayzy celtic family secrets that will be uncovered this week. Whatever you do, please don't follow them up. And if your Scottish great-great-grandfather conveniently left you a big abandoned castle in his will, just sell it. It isn't worth the effort.



Gemini

On Friday you will be haunted by the sound of scampering rats everywhere you go. They aren't actually, y'know, corporeal, however the solution to all of this is to just pet a cat. I'm not even kidding. That fresh cat smell just makes rats of all varieties shit themselves.



Cancer

Three words: Giant. Crab. Demons. Laugh it off now, but you better have your anti-giant-demon-crab protective gear on come Saturday. Or, and this is a possible solution, you could just put money down on this not actually being true.



Leo

You remember that film *Cabin in the Woods*? No? What about the groundbreaking *Cabin Fever*, directed by Eli Roth? Whatever. The holidays are over. Treat all cabin related offers with the utmost suspicion.



Virgo

Oh Virgo, you're a real tricky one this week. If you do science or history then you should be very careful about any research opportunities that come your way this week. Especially if they involve trips to the arctic. Or squid.



Libra

You'll be totally fine this week.



Scorpio

Three words: Giant. Scorpion. Demons. Oh, no, sorry. I think they're crabs. Crabs with stingers, I think? Do you get crabs with stingers? It's sandy, so it could be a desert or a beach? The visions are unclear.



Sagittarius

Don't get a tattoo of nigiri this week. Not because of any horror movie set ups or anything. Just because it's a stupid idea. People might think that you're a representative for Big Sushi.



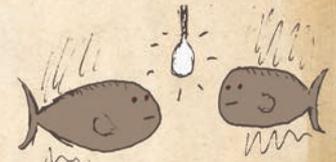
Capricorn

Oh capricious Capricorn, there's a children's board game in your attic that you don't quite remember playing as a kid. Don't play it. It's cursed. But you'll probably be fine. Who has an attic filled with relics from their childhood anyway? All that shit is on Trademe son.



Aquarius

Remember the warnings that the great prophet Brooke Fraser gave to us all. "There's something in the water... there's something in the water..."



Pisces

Something something bewaaare... emmm... the.. thiiiiings. Ooooooh spooooky. Look out for stuff and things.

Oh fuck, actually, scrap that. You have a legit one. Watch out for old gypsy women. If at all possible be super nice to them. Differentiating old gypsy women from regular old women is an acquired skill, so you should just be nice to any old ladies you meet this week just to be super safe.



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[†] Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2012-2013.
[‡] Economist Intelligence Unit, 2012

WINGS FOR EVERY TASTE.



BLUEBERRY, LIME, CRANBERRY.
THE EFFECT OF RED BULL.

Baby Boom Bursts Bubbles Because of Bicentennial Blunder

This week in the 'shit that literally no-one should care about' category, it turns out that someone somewhere had a baby. Details of how exactly they had the baby is currently unknown, but if you want to find out everything else you can glance over pretty much any New Zealand newspaper to get an idea of how much bullshit is being spewed in and around the royal baby topic.

For those interested in news journalism in its purest form, this is the perfect example of an event that, while both magical and extremely painful, is not unique to the Royal Family, yet is being marketed as the second coming of Christ. What should hopefully come out of this media overexposure is another look at the purpose of the British Royal Family in the grand scheme of, well, being useful and running the country and whatnot.

In other news, turns out that a rigorously scripted reality television show about people singing on stage has a dodgy voting system. *X-Factor New Zealand*, after this horrific breach of trust, may soon become many people's ex-factor in deciding what kind of nonsense they want to watch on television. A strained joke, I know, but once again the amount of page space in national newspapers being dedicated to an event of such little worth is staggering.

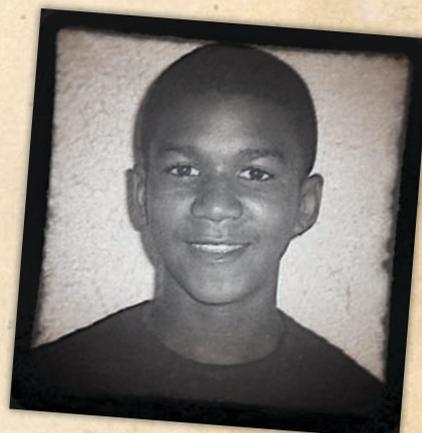


'Race' for Justice

While the acquittal of George Zimmerman of all charges relating to the shooting of seventeen year old Trayvon Martin on July 10th laid to rest the trial over Martin's death, it did not quiet concerns about racial profiling, the attitude of the criminal justice system towards African Americans and the justness of 'Stand-your-ground' laws.

Although Zimmerman's acquittal by six white, female jurors had been widely predicted by commentators, the subsequent comments of 'Juror B37', who immediately signed to write a book about the trial, did not inspire confidence. While Juror B37 decided early on that Zimmerman's 'heart was in the right place' throughout the 'unfortunate incident that happened', she simultaneously felt that 'I don't think anybody knows' what really happened - in any situation. After all, according to B37, the Internet and other news sources are lying to us in most instances. That's why she accesses no media beyond the *Today* show.

Even if the verdict led to no more clarity about what really happened the night Martin was shot, reactions to it throw light on the racial disparity in the United States. A *Washington Post/ABC News* poll found that while 51% of whites approved of the Zimmerman verdict, only 9% of blacks agreed. A staggering 87% of blacks felt the shooting was unjustified, compared with only 33% of whites.



President Obama delivered a surprise speech in reaction to the verdict, a speech that the *Washington Post* predicted may change the way America talks about race. Obama compared himself to Martin, and put out a call for Americans to reconsider the way they viewed race.

Unsurprisingly, many conservatives slammed Obama for speaking out, with a *Fox News* contributor calling President Obama 'Race-Baiter in Chief' and commentators on Twitter criticising Obama for inciting riots and stereotyping white women. From Sean Hannity came perhaps the least charitable interpretation: did the President compare himself to Martin because he, too, 'was part of the Choom Gang and he smoked pot and he did a little blow'?

Perhaps it will take more than one court trial to change racist attitudes in the United States after all.

JESS STOREY

On the Rudd Again: an Australia Update

Kevin Rudd has significantly improved Labor's standing in Australia against Tony Abbott's Coalition, with recent polls placing the current result at 50 - 50 between the Coalition and Labor. Political commentators believe Rudd's gain to be for a number of reasons.

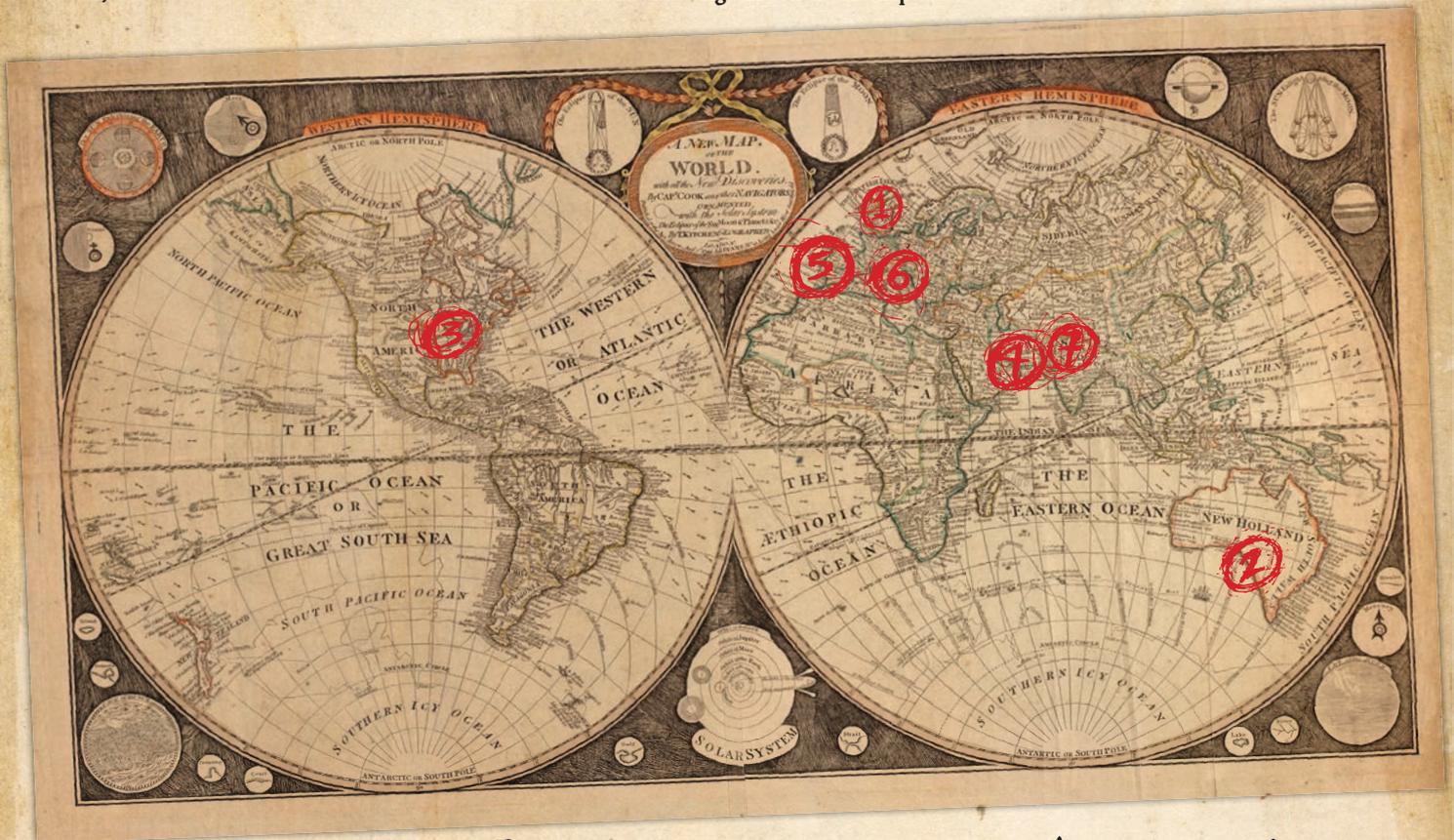
First, Rudd is undoubtedly more personally popular than his predecessor Julia Gillard who was widely despised by large sections of the electorate, particularly in the outer suburbs in Sydney. Second, Kevin Rudd has managed to mitigate several policy areas that were damaging Labor. Rudd announced earlier this month that he would axe Julia Gillard's carbon tax and bring forward an Emission Trading Scheme, similar to what we have in New

Zealand, saving families an average of \$380 a year. Rudd also last week introduced a new asylum policy which will send asylum-seekers arriving by boat to Papua New Guinea for processing. Those found to be refugees will be settled in Papa New Guinea rather than Australia. The policy has been successful for Labor's electoral chances. While it has been poorly received from human rights groups and by the Greens on the left, the nature of Australia's political system means that any new votes gained by the Greens will ultimately be transferred to Labor under Australia's preferential system.

Rudd's immigration policy has had the added benefit of undercutting Abbott on an import-

ant issue and limiting his ability to scare-monger. His attacks in recent days have been erratic, criticising Rudd for not implementing the scheme straight away despite the policy not being able to be implemented without basic health and safety checks, and attacking Rudd's trustworthiness over the policy being implemented despite Rudd already having signed an agreement with the Papua New Guinea government over the deal. It is unclear whether Rudd will be able to maintain the honeymoon he is currently experiencing, but for now he has achieved what Julia Gillard could not and ensured that this election will be an actual contest.

HAMISH SAUNDERS



Around the World

1) London, England - Sara al Amoudi is accused of posing as a Saudi princess to swindle London property developers. She wept in court, wearing a burqa and high heels, arguing that she was never an impoverished prostitute as was alleged. She used her multiple shopping sprees as evidence, one of which included £1m spent purely on perfume - *Daily Mail*

2) Adelaide, Australia - A man was remanded in custody for driving without a steering wheel. Initially pulled up for dangerous driving after blowing two tyres, police discovered that a wrench had been attached where the steering wheel once was to steer the vehicle - *The Telegraph*

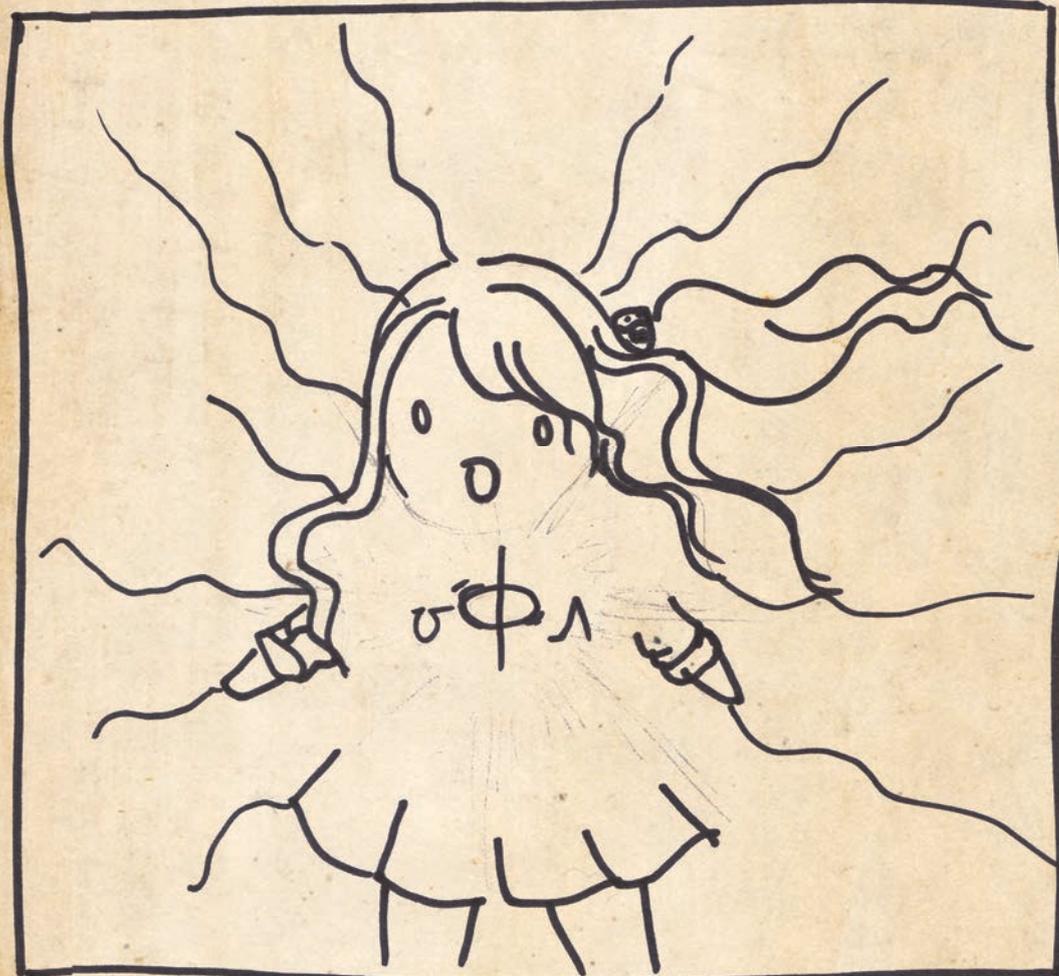
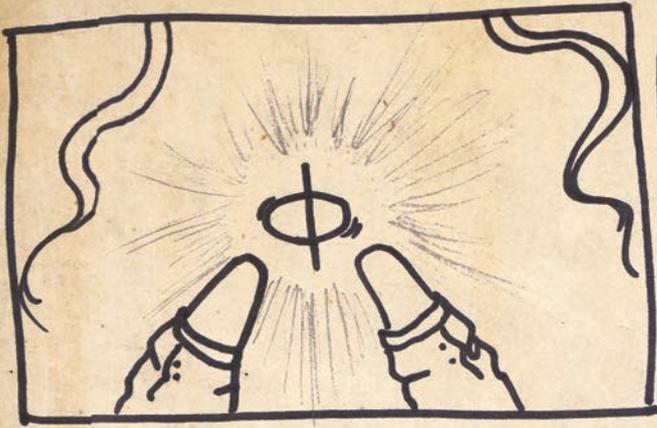
3) Tennessee, USA - Selena Janik, aged three, has just been admitted to Mensa with a higher IQ than US President, Barack Obama and British Prime Minister, David Cameron - *UK Metro*.

4) Dubai, UAE - Dubai's civic authority launched a thirty-day weight loss challenge to coincide with the month of Ramadan. For every kilogram lost by August 16 contestants will receive a gram of gold - *Reuters*.

5) Juzcar, Spain - A hilltop village in Spain is fighting the recession by keeping its buildings painted 'Smurf blue', which were painted so for the promotion of the 2011 Smurf cartoon movie. They calculated that around 210,000 tourists have visited since then - *NBC*.

6) Fontaniva, Italy - A forty-seven year old, Nure Bregu, has been caught on CCTV attacking a slot machine with an axe after losing money. He had told locals that he lost €5,000 - *The Telegraph*.

7) New Dehli, India - Monkeys were deemed a security threat to American Vice President, Joe Biden, on his visit to a Gandhi memorial in India. "What I don't want is a mango to drop on the vice president when he comes here," an Indian security official said - *UPI*.



カソールタソ + =
PB



I have to protect
my friends...



Imagining The Unimaginable

The Appeal of H.P. Lovecraft

Cthulhu, the Old Ones and the Necronomicon have become so ingrained within our popular culture that it is hard to escape them, which is a testament to how powerfully H.P. Lovecraft's works and creations have affected people, even now, so many years later. *The Evil Dead*, a cult hit in itself, contains the Necronomicon, as does the game *DOTA 2*. *Scribblenauts*, the Nintendo DS game, has a cute version of Cthulhu you can summon. Drew Goddard and Joss Whedon's *Cabin in the Woods* has The Old Ones of Lovecraft's mythos as the main justification behind the story's premise. Barker's *Hellraiser* series. Thousands of flash games, short stories and artworks. The list is near endless, so we have to ask: why are we so fascinated with H.P. Lovecraft? Why is so much of the media that we consume influenced by a mildly successful 20th century author?

What H.P. Lovecraft managed to do that has captured our collective imagination is that he gave a form and a tangible history to the 'unknown'. He didn't just make allusions to great depths or old gods - he gave them histories and real-world contributions so implausible that it becomes hard to not get caught up in the hysteria of his writing. H.P. Lovecraft didn't so much describe the unknown, rather

What H.P. Lovecraft managed to do that has captured our collective imagination is that he gave a form and a tangible history to the 'unknown'.



To R. H. Barlow, Esq., whose Sculpture
has given immortality to this trivial
Design of his ally, of St. Saviour
Cthulhu H.P. Lovecraft
11 May, 1934

he gave it life. He gave it a language, a scale, and a silhouette that we were allowed to fill in ourselves with small taglines like 'tentacles' and 'unimaginable' to guide us. What he really does is tease our sense of wonder out of the forge of our minds, and temper it with dread. Dread at our own potential as humans, dread at our entirely insignificant place within the universe, dread at all the things we simply do not and cannot know. He created a fantastically broad universe so close to our own that everyone can participate in, and that is, I think, part of what has made him such a lasting figure in popular culture.

At the Mountains of Madness put the idea of an ancient alien civilisation on the table, taking the already rather potent mystique of the barren arctic and giving us the idea that there are hidden things there, preserved for millions of years. The skeletons of civilisations that destroyed themselves, leaving humanity to learn from the slight pieces that they left behind. It's these kinds of ideas that ring faintly of history and of something else entirely more sinister; ideas that allow the reader to really suspend disbelief and embrace the idea of the unknown, and that's where the magic and imagination of Lovecraft's works really shine through. There's this persistent theme of the

unknowable, of the vast millennia of world history that we know next to nothing about, about the trenches and mountain peaks that have weathered so many years and seen so many things. It's interesting in the way that it provides a kind of macroscopic horror, trying to scare the reader through the lack of understanding and through the revelation of the reader's scale in the overall sense of the universe rather than through conflicts between monsters and humans.

Some of this magic erodes rather startlingly the more we learn about the author, however. Fear of the unknown very, very quickly becomes less of a poignant statement on the author's part about the mysteries of the world, and more barely disguised xenophobia. *A Shadow Over Innsmouth* becomes less of a horror story and more of a quiet statement against race mixing and the terror of foreigners and foreign things that we're told are entirely, irredeemably inhuman. Yet Lovecraft isn't so horrifically Randian about the whole thing that we have no choice but to use it as a parable for the author's own political and societal ideals, because the fear is still there, the magic and terror at the self is still there as well as the other. His works shouldn't, I believe, be considered genuine masterworks of fiction; what they are, however, is a fantastic portfolio of world building stories that try to put the reader on the back foot, that very much require the reader to fill in a lot of the gaps in the ideas put forward about scale, about horrific sights. It's almost a case of 'tell a teeny little bit and then show NOTHING', as if the author has a secret about the monster or about the universe that they don't want to show you.

Oddly enough this kind of caveat can be seen used to startlingly bad effect in places like primary school or fanfiction.net. "The thing was so terrifying, it was indescribably horrific that if I were to try and explain it to you, you would shit your pants and your brain would explode, such would be the horror. It had big horns covered with viscera..." etc., but what Lovecraft does is merely drop hints to get the desired curiosity, wonder and terror. When I read that one of the party died of shock upon encountering the monster that has been thus far described as "big", I want to see the monster. I want to, at that

Lovecraft's stories exist as great pieces of horror fiction, not political manifestos or damning social commentary

point, scare myself as opposed to being mildly bored by long winded descriptions.

Lovecraft isn't so much a great author as a great storyteller. His works will never be held in the same regard as Coetzee or Orwell, but that isn't necessarily a bad thing. Lovecraft's stories exist as great pieces of horror fiction, not political manifestos or damning social commentary, and this horror fiction has managed to capture the imaginations of so many people because it is, above all else, compelling writing and compelling storytelling. His grand trick is to leave a lot of the visual content up to the reader, to force us to convince ourselves, to allow us to suspend our own disbelief because we are clearly a part of the process as a whole. Many of his works are written from a rather

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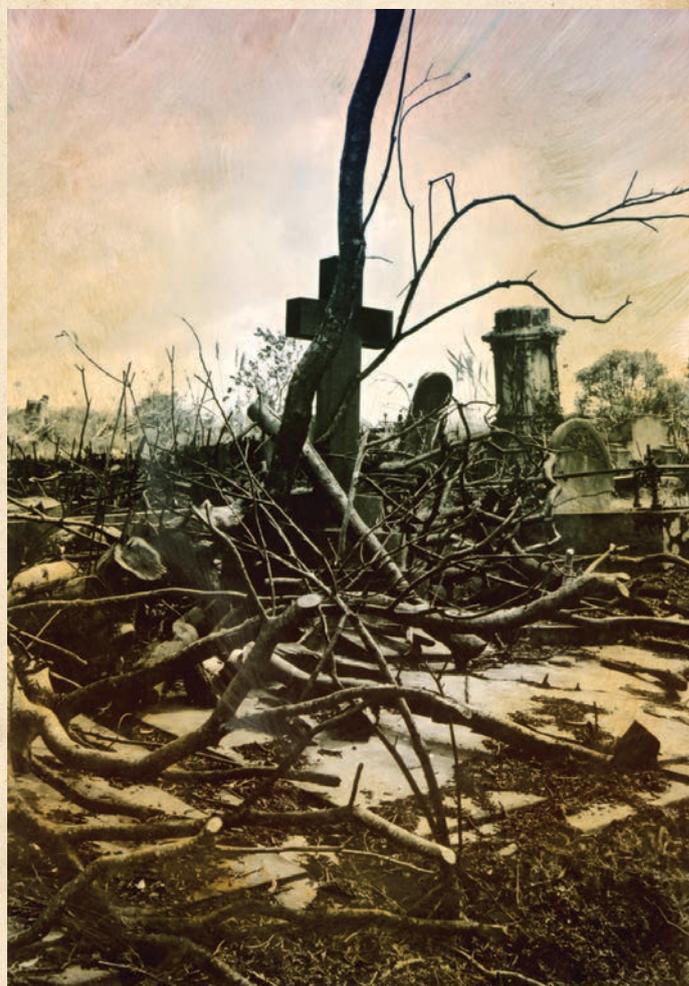
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dry, scientific place; *The Rats in the Walls* is about researching genealogy, *Call of Cthulhu* is pretty much an anthropology field trip but with more monsters, *The Dunwich Horror* is solved by a die-hard group of scientists and historians armed with books and chemicals. It all carries a kind of odd truth to it in the same kind of way that Danielewski's fictional references inside a fictional book about a fictional documentary convinces in the book *House of Leaves*, or in the way that Donnie Darko's time travel in *Donnie Darko* is explained to him through a book that fans of the film have famously obsessed over finding. It's this veneer of authenticity that sells it so well in a way that could almost be described as cheap, because if the main character is a skeptical man of science recording his experiences then we can take it as a given that what is being written down has been what was witnessed, that what was indescribable was literally indescribable. It has the same kind of convincing style as something like George R. Martin's books, because instead of relying on a crafted internal logic like *The Lord of the Rings*, for example, it instead takes fantastical situations and puts them through a 'real world' lens. Which, as evidenced by the amazingly popular *Game of Thrones* tv show, is still a technique that is able to capture our collective pop-culture imagination in a vice like grip.

Lovecraft has managed to be so relevant in such an extraordinary way for such a relatively unpopular author. His novellas and short stories, comparatively sparse compared to people like Dickens or Austin, are only occasionally republished in little collections with interesting covers; cool little horror stories and grand ideas with forewords by the people who were inspired by them, but beyond the middling longevity of his written work lie his creations: The Old Ones, Cthulhu, Yog Sothoth, the Necronomicon. Huge, important betentacled blimps hovering in and around the media we consume, from music videos to games, movies and books. Lovecraft is nowhere near the realms of popular fiction, but what he is is one of the most powerful driving forces behind our popular culture, and that is a pretty damn good mark to have made on the world.

Lovecraft is nowhere near the realms of popular fiction, but what he is is one of the most powerful driving forces behind our popular culture



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♀ THE ESSENTIAL ♀
H.P. Lovecraft

The Rats in the Walls

A creepy little horror story that is worlds away from his regularly irregular Cthulhu mythos, *The Rats in the Walls* is a really good example of Lovecraft's style of writing and his ability to turn human characters into insane monstrosities. This, alongside *The Music of Erich Zann*, is an amazing introduction to the writing of H.P. Lovecraft with significantly less of the weird that so characterises his other works.

The Outsider

Another one of Lovecraft's 'purer' horror stories, *The Outsider* is a Gothic, Poe-esque journey through the eyes of an outsider who yearns for human contact. From there it becomes a kind of tragic, undead character study that very much feels like Frankenstein in the way that the narrator's own monstrosity is revealed to him. Also possibly an autobiographical piece.

The Call of Cthulhu

One of the 'big three' H.P. Lovecraft Cthulhu stories, *Call* is a multi-faceted plot strung together through essays and second-hand accounts as the main character, one Francis Thurston of Boston, tries to piece together the history surrounding a strange statue. Also features Auckland as a location that's mentioned once, so go us!

The Dunwich Horror

Possibly the most popularly referenced of H.P. Lovecraft's stories, apart from perhaps *Call* and *At the Mountains of Madness*, *The Dunwich Horror* is a small, albeit simple, jaunt through scary spooky stuff. The narrative itself provides a pretty standard good/evil conflict, but the way it presents it is just beautiful. Unholy couplings, invisible monsters that can drive men mad when made visible, such is their appearance, heroic scientists armed with magic powder. It really has it all in a fast-paced *Dracula* kind of way.

The Shadow Over Innsmouth/ At the Mountains of Madness

Lovecraft's longer works, *Shadow* and *Mountains* share a spot because it is very hard to really separate the two. Each represents a different achievement in Lovecraft's own particular genre fiction, *Shadow* being an incredible horror tale, and *Mountains* being amazing sci-fi adventure. These novellas are the quintessential Lovecraft experience, bringing equal amounts of terror and wonder as he gives us tiny glimpses into unimaginable worlds filled with crazy beings. *At the Mountains of Madness* may also be being turned into a film by Guillermo Del Toro if the project finally manages to drag itself out of development hell.



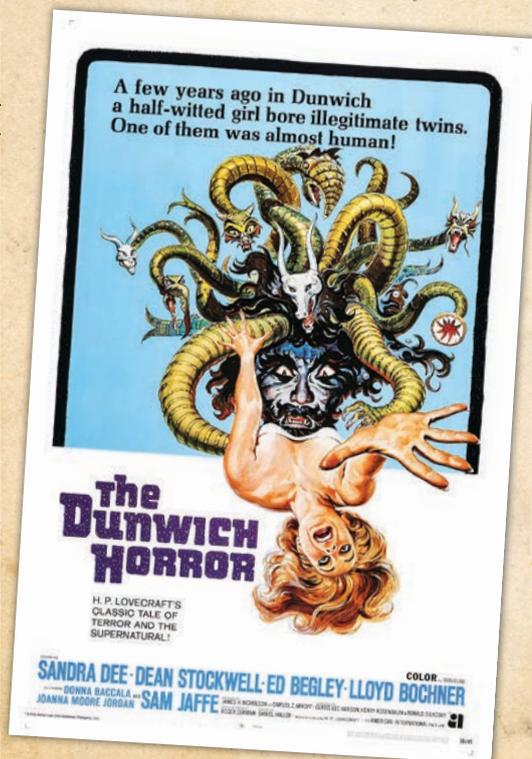
H.P. Lovecraft on Screen

An Overview



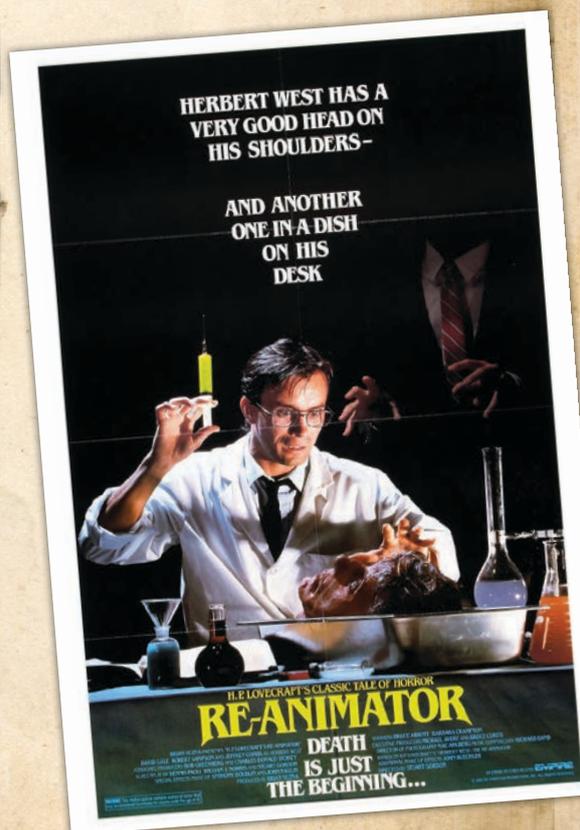
Die Monster Die (1965) - Boris Karloff plays a scientist and patriarch of the Witley family in this loose adaptation of *The Colour Out of Space*. Lovecraft's original story features the farming Gardner family rather than the scientist Witleys which results in *Die Monster Die* being more sci-fi than horror.

The Dunwich Horror (1970) - Dean Stockwell puts on an intense and unhinged performance as Wilbur Whateley in this adaption of the story of the same name. The film also features some great 70s hippie hallucinatory visuals.



The Resurrected (1981) - This "direct-to-video" version of *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* successfully captures the tone of the original story while updating it to a more contemporary setting. Chris Sarandon (Prince Humperdinck from *The Princess Bride*) convincingly performs the dual role of Charles Dexter Ward and Joseph Curwen. Also features some exceptional (and icky) special effects for such a low budget film. Definitely one of the best adaptations on this list.

Re-Animator (1985) - The hallmark in adaptations of HP Lovecraft's pulpier works. Jeffrey Comb's delightfully batshit and obsessive Herbert West is one of the iconic Lovecraft-related performances. A





horror/comedy directed by Stuart Gordon who would go on to have long relationship with Lovecraft on film (see below). Followed by two inferior but enjoyable sequels directed by *Re-Animator* producer Brian Yuzna. The first, **Bride of Re-Animator (1989)**, is a direct follow on and takes a darker turn. The second one, **Beyond Re-Animator (2003)**, sees Herbert West finally incarcerated for his crimes. Make sure to watch *Beyond Re-Animator's* end credits for some "I-can't-believe-I-just-saw-that" rat vs re-animated penis combat.

From Beyond (1986) - Stuart Gordon's follow up to *Re-Animator* again featuring Jeffrey Combs. This time he plays the more sympathetic Crawford Tillinghast who's run-away pituitary gland breaks free of his skull and gives him a craving for munching on brains. The film expands considerably on the original short story and gives it a kinky bend when the protagonists discover the evil professors S&M room part way through.

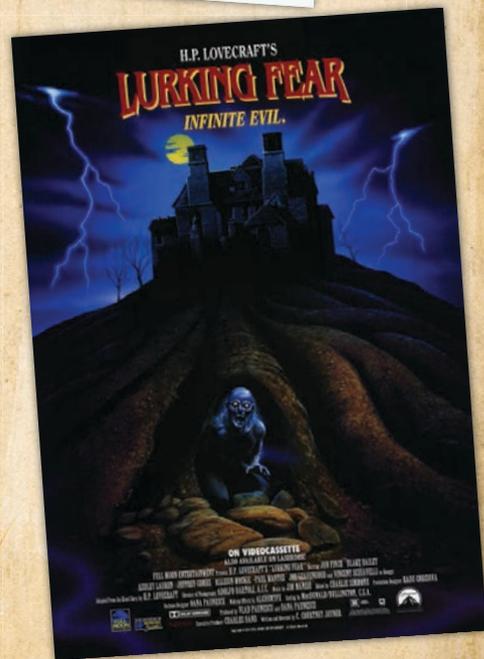
The Curse (1987) - Wil Wheaton stars in this fairly loyal but dull and badly made adaptation of *Colour Out of Space*. Certainly a closer adaptation than *Die Monster Die*, but definitely not a better film for it.

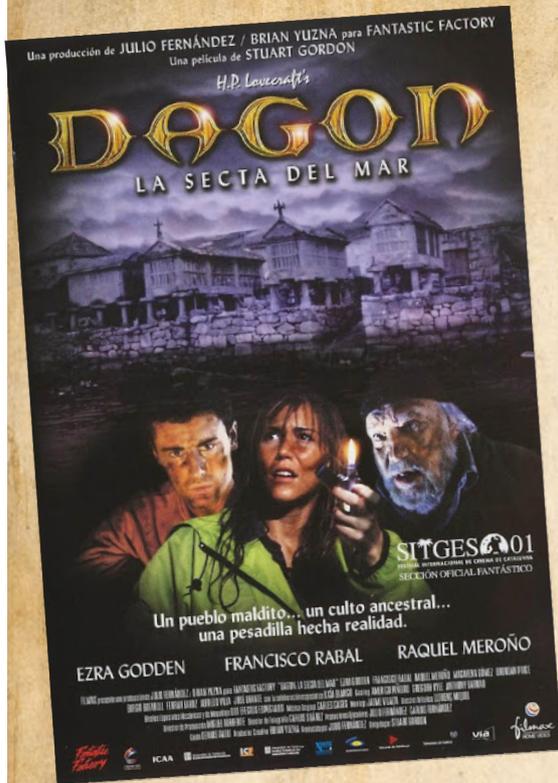
Castle Freak (1995) - Stuart Gordon again, this time with a loose adaption of *The Outsider*. Basically Jeffrey Combs vs a castle-dwelling inbred mutant.



Necronomicon (1993) - HPL meets the portmanteau horror film in this three-story horror. The first story ('The Drowned') is by far the best despite being an adaption of *The Rats in the Walls* majorly lacking in rats. They all go downhill from there, with the third especially bearing little resemblance to its source story (*The Whisperer in the Darkness*). The wrapper story features Jeffrey Combs as H.P. Lovecraft researching the titular book.

Lurking Fear (1994) - Jeffrey Combs vs underground inbred mutants.





Dagon (2001) - Despite the name this isn't an adaptation of Lovecraft's *Dagon*, rather it is Stuart Gordon's serious version of *Shadow Over Innsmouth*. Gordon changes the location to a run-down Mediterranean Spanish village (named Imboca - "In Mouth" - get it?), without significantly altering the original story. While sadly lacking the Combs, this is a great film with a nice loyalty to the source material and some gruesome special effects.

Dreams in the Witch-House (2005) - Gordon returns one last time to the world of Lovecraft, this time with an adaption for the television "Masters of Horror" series. In some ways a follow up to *Dagon* as it again features Ezra Godden in the lead role.

Call of Cthulhu (2005) - This brilliant and loyal adaptation was produced by the H.P. Lovecraft Historical Society in the style of a 1920s silent film, right down to using physical effects wherever possible. The models used for the R'lyeh sequence are very impressive. Watch out for the Auckland cameo.



Cthulhu (2007) - A creepy adaptation of *Shadow Over Innsmouth* that gets the tone down well. *Cthulhu* uses a gay protagonist to emphasize the horror for the character of returning to a small town.

The Whisperer in the Darkness (2011) - The H.P. Lovecraft Historical Society followed up *Call of Cthulhu* with another excellent adaption, this time done in the style of a 1940s black-and-white horror. Hopefully they'll continue the trend and produce the next in the style of a 1960s Roger Corman production (ala *Die Monster Die*).

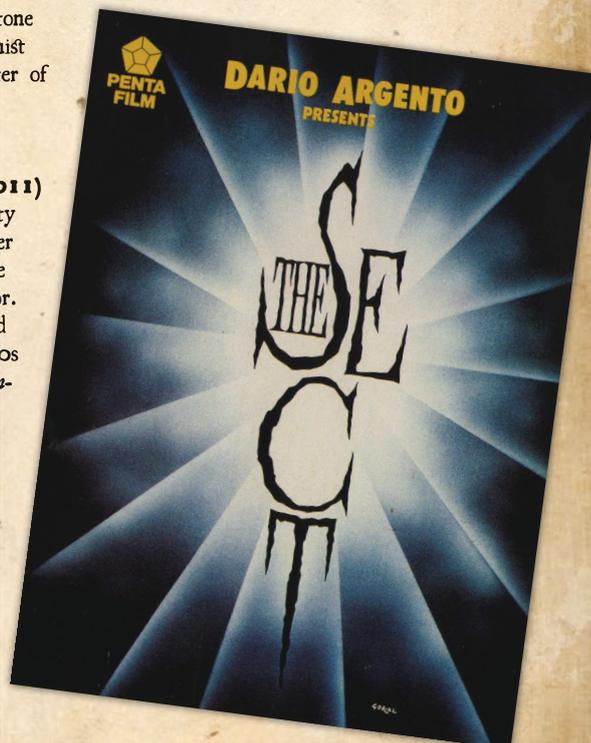
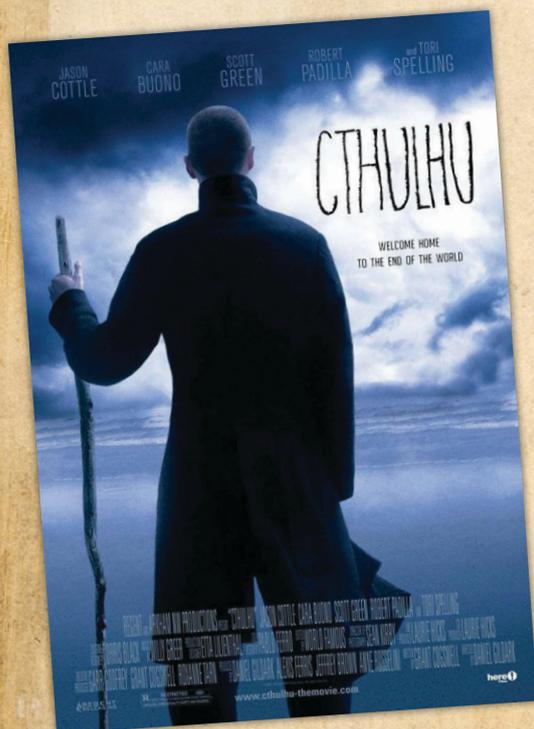
Honorable Mentions (influenced by Lovecraft, rather than being direct adaptations)

Cast a Deadly Spell (1991) - Set in an alternative 1940s world where magic exists with science. Fred Ward plays hard-boiled private detective



H.P. Lovecraft. This film was directed by Kiwi Martin Campbell and features bucket loads of Lovecraft name drops and references. Followed by sequel *Witch Hunt (1994)* where Dennis Hopper replaces Ward as Lovecraft.

La Setta (1991) aka The Devil's Daughter/The Sect - Dario Argento and Michele Soavi's truly excellent Lovecraftian tale of a woman falling prey to satanic cult. The well sequence where the protagonist is impregnated may very well have influenced the similar sequence in *Dagon*. Watch for the face-"wrenching" resurrection sequence among others.



ADJUSTMENT DIFFICULTIES

The time immediately post-high school is a time of huge transition. For many it represents their first time living away from home, or freedom from the rigid structure of schooling. In amongst all of this freedom there is often too little time devoted to the frequent difficulties that crop up. It is truly tragic that this period of freedom of self-discovery is also the most common time for mental illness to manifest. Worse still is how terrible we are at examining ourselves and others for these signs and enabling them to get help.

A major problem with recognizing mental illnesses is the way in which the symptoms and signs are caricatured. Take depression for example, which is frequently reduced to 'feeling sad all the time'. This is terribly unrepresentative. In my opinion major depressive episodes involve multiple symptoms from a cluster best described as 'flat'. Mood may decrease so slowly people don't realize, and one of the most debilitating symptoms is the loss of enjoyment from once pleasurable activities. Despite this, self-medication with increasing drug or alcohol intake may be noted by those around them.



Sleep is frequently disrupted. Some people have reduced concentration, memory, and energy, occasionally alongside feelings of guilt or worthlessness.

Unfortunately depression, anxiety and many other mental illnesses are frequently marked by social withdrawal which make it more difficult for those close to them to put together the signs. Furthermore, recognizing mental illness is simply not enough. We need to act, and to do so we need to overcome the significant stigma surrounding mental illness. Seeking help for mental illness does not mean you're weak - rather the opposite. It takes a large dose of insight and humility to admit to yourself and others that you need outside help.

Fortunately this can be provided. Speak to another friend or a health professional if you have concerns about yourself or a friend. Don't be afraid of this - mental illness is a common experience, so people can sympathize more than we know. The common misconception that doctors only prescribe pills for mental illness is also false. There are many social and psychological interventions that

are frequently combined to provide the best care.

In a more general sense the reality of growing up is far messier than the simplistic model presented to us: full adulthood arriving fully formed following the end of secondary school, and with it adolescence. The way in which secondary school binds us in many ways also protects us; academic failure pales in comparison to the many and varied disappointments that mar adult life. One of the primary psychological functions of early adulthood is developing coping mechanisms for when we are knocked back, and these can stay with us. After a disappointment you can reach out to social supports, exercise, meditate, or pursue a new or old hobby that makes you happy. Do try to avoid the temptation of alcohol or substance use, both of which are coping strategies as obvious as they are ineffectual.

Note: I apologize to all those students studying psychology, whose discipline I frequently mangle despite my best intentions.

CRAIG RIDDELL

DISCLAIMER: IF YOU TAKE ADVICE FROM SOME RANDOM MEDICAL STUDENT IN CRACCUM AND DON'T GET A SECOND OPINION FOR YOUR CONDITION THEN I'D SAY YOU HAVE BIGGER PROBLEMS THAN JUST HEALTH. GET A GP (SIGN UP TO UNIHEALTH IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE), AND VISIT THEM ON A SEMI-REGULAR BASIS.

(NEARLY) DOC CRAIG



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Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn

This week's topic was in part suggested by myself at a Craccum meeting after a long discussion about the Craccum Office's mysterious cupboard (which we theorise holds an Elder God in it), so I'm going to take the opportunity to pat myself on the back. There done.

I'm going to talk about two things connected to the Cthulu Mythos that have interested me. First, the idea of a shared setting and how things ranging from the *Warhammer* games and *Star Wars* novels to Marvel and DC Comics all owe their current state to one key thing pioneered by the Cthulhu mythos. And second, role-playing games and the *Call of Cthulhu* AKA me indulging in my hobbies and forcing all of you to see as well.

The Cthulhu mythos has had many effects on the modern day (most of which you will read about elsewhere in this issue), but one thing hardly anyone has ever noticed, but with a major impact on the things we read and enjoy is the creation of the first shared setting ever created in fiction, where Lovecraft shared it with other writers so that others could also write stories in the same setting and place using his creations and ideas.

The so-called 'Lovecraft Circle' or 'Kalem Club' of friends of his all shared and added ideas into the Cthulhu Mythos. One of that circle and well-know great writers of the time, Robert E. Howard (writer of the Conan series) had the *Necronomicon* appear in one of his works, the short story, as well as tying several short Conan stories into the mythos. After his death, he left it so that others could come in and add yet more stories to the setting, fleshing it out even further and adding to the richness of the Cthulhu mythos.

This idea of a single setting where multiple authors work in it, all their stories calling back to each other and with interconnected ideas/themes has in turn influenced such widely diverse things as comics (there several artists/writers write stories all set in the same setting) to ongoing story franchises such as *Warhammer 40,000* and the *Star*

Wars Expanded Universe. All of them have many stories written by many people, all of which share a common framework, setting and sometimes characters. All things pioneered by Lovecraft and the Kalem Club.

Now I can use this as a bridge to talk about a popular nerd hobby, roleplaying, most notably the *Call of Cthulhu* Roleplaying game (to justify this).

Roleplaying is the evolution of the thing we do as little kids when we dress up and pretend to be other people doing other things. I had my own alter ego, 'Captain Brown', the fearless explorer who pissed his mother, teacher and various others off with his exploits.

Most of us discard it once we get old enough to realise how stupid it is, but not all. Some continue with it, eventually using systems designed to facilitate roleplaying, but in a serious context. AKA adding a million charts and dice rolls to legitimise pretending to be somebody else somewhere else doing fantastic (or mundane) things.

Roleplaying could be best described as collective storytelling, and cowboys and Indians with rules to regulate it. In other words, players gather round a table (or campfire or whatever floats your boat) and engage in producing a story, by taking on the role of protagonists or characters within the game's world. One of the players takes the role of the Game Master who is not a protagonist but instead serves as the overall narrator, describing the world, events and non-player characters (antagonists, monsters, redshirts...) and their actions.

Roleplaying has many negative connotations, mainly around social recluses living out fictional lives, though most of this is simple misunderstanding about how roleplaying works. Roleplaying games are as old as man, beginning as simple storytelling and play pretend, evolving later through reenactments and 'theatre games,' until 1974 when Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson produced the *Dungeons & Dragons* game and roleplaying changed forever.

Now the main roleplaying game is the

well known (in both sense of the term) *Dungeons and Dragons*, also known as the game of nerds everywhere wanting to be knights/paladins/wizards/whatever, but there are other roleplaying games out there, and one of those is *Call of Cthulhu*, a roleplaying game based on the Cthulhu Mythos, in which the player characters are not knights or mages but rather more or less normal guys who might be able to fire a pistol without killing themselves, trying to find the truth of all existence and occasionally fighting horrors from beyond space and time.

Call of Cthulhu has the 'Sanity Metre', which acts as though sanity is diesel oil and can be measured by shoving a dipstick in your ear to check exactly how sane you are at any particular moment (which if you are trying to measure your sanity with a dipstick, is probably a sure sign that you have indeed snapped.) Seeing otherworldly horrors, reading pages of the *Necronomicon* reduces your sanity, while other things increase it. If you lose all your sanity, you die and have to spend another few hours creating a new character (or bitching about how unfair the GM is.) The most common saying in a *Call of Cthulhu* game is "Roll for SAN loss", closely followed by "You have no sanity left. You are dead; spend the next five hours creating a new character." Seriously, character creation is a torturous process.

It's a hard game to play, but sometimes you can even get lucky and disrupt the plans of the Elder gods, or even, in one case, actually kill an Elder God (Old Man Henderson, the greatest *Call of Cthulhu* character ever.)

Call of Cthulhu is not for beginners, but is something very far removed from the 'normal' RPGs like *D&D*, and is good for masochists who like their characters constantly going insane and dying on them. I quite like it.

An Autistic guy liking RPGs, who would have thought it? But it's a way for ones like me to develop out social skills and draw slightly closer to humanity. I've learned a lot from playing RPGs and I'm not apologetic. Though I do get annoyed when people think that the only RPG is *D&D*.

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STYLE 101

So... it's semester two! Congratulations to those who passed their exams and made it through to the other side. And guess what - it's coooooold. No surprises there. I am extremely jealous of those people that jet-setted off to the islands during the break. Thankfully, Style101 is here with plenty of ideas to keep you warm this week. Our theme? Accessories!

Kicking it off this week is our gorgeous fashionista who I found rockin' a relaxed look during a sunny Monday morning. Her Karen Walker scarf was instantly recognizable and a complete wardrobe essential this winter. Colour-wise, the combinations work really well here as the scarf acts as a mediator between the black and green. The small necklace beneath the scarf is a great way to add a bit of shine to your look without going overboard. All up - an effortless combination.

Scarves

Scarves are a great way to layer up an outfit and also to add a bit of colour - especially if you are wearing dark colours. Black as a colour can be draining for some people, so wearing a coloured scarf is a great way to avoid this happening - especially if you are like me and wear a lot of dark colours!

Gloves

Gloves are a great accessory to keep in your bag - especially during those early morning trips to uni. Leather gloves in brown, black or dark red are recommended as they keep your look clean and elegant.

Jewellery

The general rule with jewellery is to keep it simple and concentrate it to one area. Balance is key. Knowing whether you are a gold or a silver person is helpful too as it pays to stick to one or the other. Some useful tips I have picked up along the way include-

- Long dangly earrings suit people with long necks - and should be worn alone with no necklace.
- If your outfit has a bold pattern or is quite complicated, then let the clothes do the talking and just wear a simple chain.
- No necklace is needed if the neckline of your outfit is beaded or sequined or just generally a point of attention.



The must have earrings this season are large teardrop shaped. As always, Diva has a good selection. Necklaces are becoming even chunkier and are great worn with necklines that come up to shoulder height. We like Veronica B's collection.

Putting an outfit together requires balance. Know what you want to be the main focus and then accompany it with other pieces that will enhance it. Accessories are particularly key in this way. If you are unsure? Keep it simple.
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The Declined

By Victor Price

(Inspired by actual events)

Sometimes, when a yearning soul is forbidden that which it craves most ... it becomes enraged - filled with an undying, demonic wrath....

It was a dark and stormy night. The rain poured heavily on the University of Auckland's Grafton Campus. As the lightning struck, illuminating the campus for a fleeting glimpse, one could see that it was newly-furbished; but though the campus was new, its old practices were evil ... and remain so to this very day. Late in the hour, the staff and students had all gone home; all but two brave souls, a selfless hero and heroine. This is their story.

"4-7-5-8-8-2. Amanda David. Declined?", asked Lucy.

"Declined", confirmed Jake.

"5-2-6-5-6-7-1. Hamish Davidson. Declined?"

"Yep".

"Gee, I really feel sorry for all these applicants. Their GPAs were so close, too", sympathised Lucy.

"Yeah, well, that's life.

C'mon, next one. Everyone went home hours ago", returned the more hardened Jake.

"4-6....", Lucy was interrupted by the phone's sudden ringing. She started back in her chair, startled, then instantly stared at Jake with eyes that read horror and panic.

"Ignore it ... keep reading", warned Jake in an uneasy tone.

"4-6-7....", Lucy hopelessly tried again, as the accursed phone rang and rang, louder and louder it seemed. She started breathing heavily.

"Damn it, get a hold of yourself! Keep reading! Quickly!", Jake warned once more, growing more and more anxious.

The two student-summer-workers had been warned by their supervisor. The strict warning:

"When you start declining the applicants, do not, under any circumstances, answer the phone or any e-mails, is that understood?"

"4-6-7-2-8-5-3! Jessica Drummond!", exclaimed Lucy as another two phones started ringing throughout the large, half-lit Student Centre.

"Yes!", returned Jake, equally frightened.

There were another hundred-and-twenty applicants to decline....

"5-2-3-4....", Lucy stopped short, petrified by the sight of the rear door's handle slowly turning.

At the sound of the door's creaking, Jake stood up in horror and stumbled backwards.

"Ru ... run... They're ... here...", muttered the security guard - his last words...

Jake closed the dead man's eyes. He had briefly examined his body: his wounds appeared to have been caused by tearing ... and scratching ... and biting... Whatever had done this - it wasn't human, or rather, was human no more...

Remembering the door, he swiftly got up and locked it.

"Next one", he quietly said to Lucy, as he returned to his seat and picked-up the list of declined applicants - a bloody list which was now fittingly stained red.

"5-2-3-4-6-5-6. Emma Sweeney.", said Lucy with a pale, expressionless face - as all seven phones were now ringing....

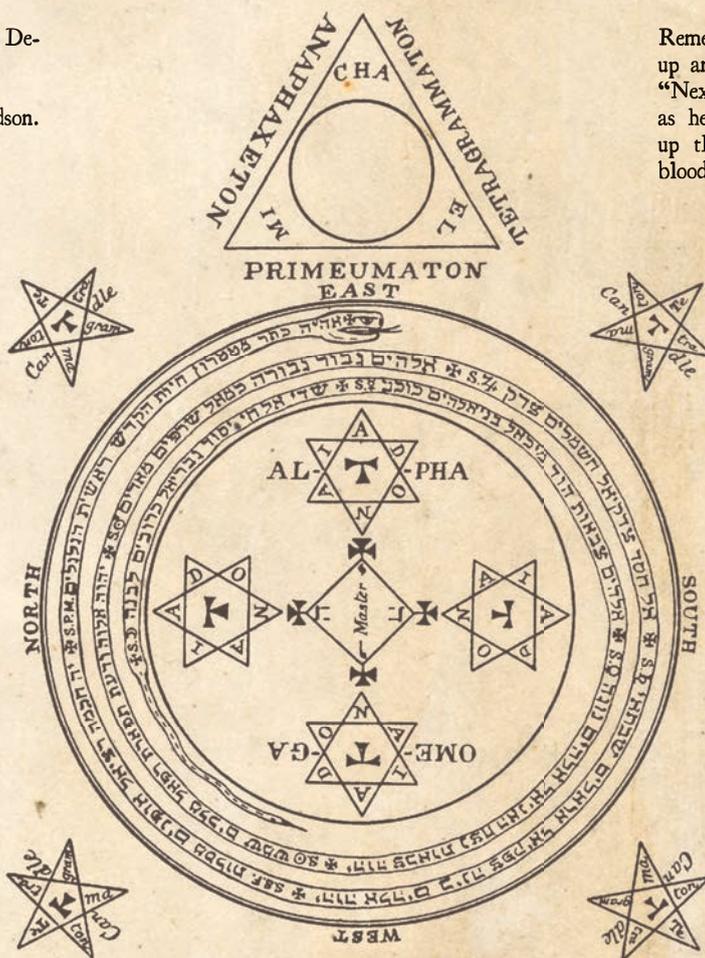
"Declined", confirmed Jake. "And disable that damn new message alert, will ya'?", he added in a unique tone of fear mixed with frustration.

The two colleagues went through the list, whilst the dreadful ringing of the phones relentlessly continued. They were three-quarters through, when suddenly they heard a noise - like something was moving - coming from behind them. They turned around slowly ... it was the security guard...

With blood running from its mouth and down its neck, the ghastly fiend stumbled towards them with outstretched arms - mumbling: "Why ... was ... I ... declined...? Why ... was ... I ... declined...? Why ... was ... I ... declined...?"

Lucy was quick to act: she reached for the box of Christmas decorations and took out the heavy, iron tree-stand; she kicked the zombie in its chest, then, after it fell on the ground, bludgeoned it - repeatedly - until it stopped moving.

"Next one", she said, after washing her



A man of tall stature appeared - with a bloody face and shirt. He limped into the room, fell onto the coffee table, then slid off onto the floor (that lovely table where Thursday-morning-teas were enjoyed was stained red ... and would forever remain so despite its being repeatedly cleaned afterwards...).

Jake slowly approached: he crouched beside him and gently turned him face-up.

face and hands in the office's kitchen.

They resumed the barbaric, horrid process: Lucy calling them out - lives rejected; the forever cursed; The Declined - one-by-one; Jake confirming them; then sweet Lucy declining their application on the student database, SSO (so so over).

Albert Shu, Jacob Taveta, Michael Williams: all dead men walking. As for the women: Sarah Salisbury, Helen Travis, Wendy Utley - their fate was all the same. All were once names of unique spirits, vibrant souls of a bright tomorrow; but the devil got his claws on them, gave them worthless numbers, then dictated their grave destiny at his whim: yes, at his whim, for the GPAs of those who live and those who die are merely decimals apart - life-changing mistakes that are half-answered exam questions. These accursed questions, wicked anomalies, are suspended in fleeting space-time: in some parallel universe, fate was merciful and had decreed the questions being fully answered, thus sparing the poor soul a life of torment and endless regret and guilt of all the 'whys' and 'what ifs' relentlessly conjured by a once-beautiful mind having slowly slipped into insanity with no saviour to redeem it from the eternal, dark abyss.

"We're nearly finished; only one page left.", declared the ecstatic Jake, strengthening their resolve.

"6-5-4-5-8-7-2. Mei-Ling Xu."

"Yes".

"4-5-8 ... what was that!?", Lucy shrieked, after hearing a dreadful thump which came from the front of the Student Centre...

The two got up and, holding hands, slowly crept to the dark reception area. They stopped halfway, as another thump was heard ... then another ... and then many incessant thumps.

It was impossible to tell who was squeezing the other's hand harder, as the two crept further. They stopped again, to switch-on the reception lights. The lights flickered at first. Amidst the flickering, the shadowy figures of what appeared to be many people standing outside the Student Centre were perceived in faint instances. The lights stopped flickering. All was revealed: they were many, but they were not people; they were zombies - beating their bloody hands and heads against the glass wall and slide-door... They were here - The Declined.

"Why ... was ... I ... declined...? Why ... was ... I ... declined...? Why ... was ... I ... declined...?", the myriad zombies relentlessly chanted in a slow, monotonous voice.

They had been sitting at home, holding their breath as they checked and rechecked their medical school application status online.

"Pending... Damn it, how long? I wish they'd tell us already".

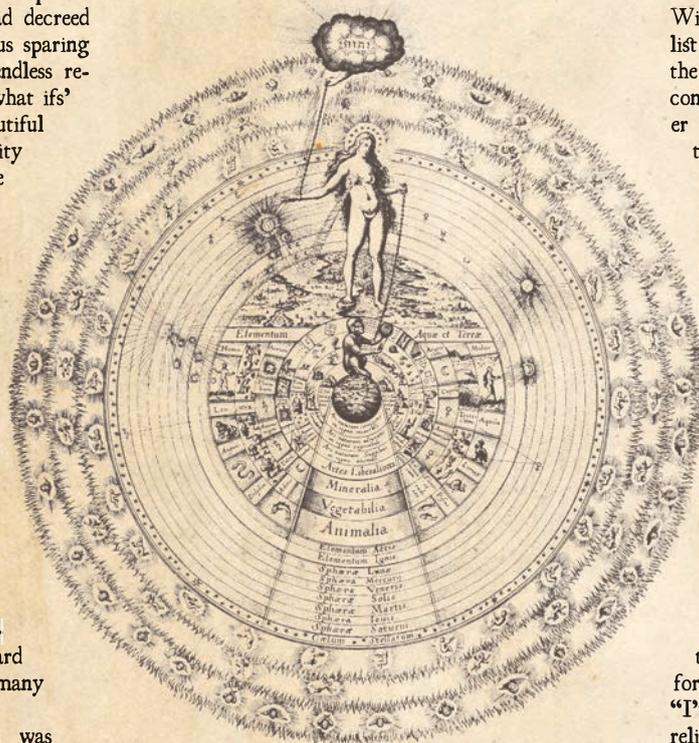
Pending ... pending ... pending... Pending for

an eternity. Time ceases to exist. Nothing else matters - only the application status, which is pending ... and pending ... always pending... Two syllables whispered in synchronise with the anxious heart's beating: lub-dub ... lub-dub ... lub-dub; pen-ding ... pen-ding ... pen-ding.

Then one night, that abrupt, horrid word: 'Declined'.... The heart skips a beat, or two; and though it continues beating - life is surely no more....

"DECLINED!? DECLINED!? WHY!?"

The rage, the sheer rage: fingernails torn off against the mouse and keyboard, the monitor punched in, the tower thrown right across the bedroom's length with demonic strength; hell has no fury like a med applicant



declined.

Possessed by uncontrollable, unyielding wrath, they run - in the dead of night; doesn't matter how far - to the medical school: to correct what was wrong, to deliver justice, to exact vengeance ... to kill - nay, to consume; to devour - those responsible.

The entire atrium was crawling with them; they were even standing on the iconic green stairway. As the violent thumping continued, Lucy and Jake looked on in horror, praying that the glass wall - the only barrier between themselves and those accursed flesh-eaters - would endure. Prayers are not always answered: the blood-smeared wall started slowly cracking....

"C'mon, we have a job to finish", said Jake, as he stuck out his right arm in front of her and moved back.

They returned to their seats and resumed their dark work.

"4-5-8-2-3-2-1. Lei Xiang.", said Lucy, focusing only on the computer screen and blocking out everything else. "Yeah.", confirmed Jake, looking only at the list - trying to ignore the horridly violent death that eagerly awaited them outside.

As the zombies continued their relentless onslaught, so did the two courageous colleagues. There were only three applicants left to decline, when suddenly a loud smash was heard.... The glass wall was broken; it had failed them. There was room enough for one zombie to stagger in at a time.

"I'll hold them off! Keep reading!", exclaimed Jake, as he picked up a chair from the coffee table and ran to the reception area.

With one hand holding the accursed list and the other swinging wildly at the zombie stuck in the opening, he confirmed another two names - another two zombies that would be joining them soon enough.

"5-5-6-2-3-1-8. Billy Zhu".

"Yep, declined! That's all of 'em!", confirmed Jake, as he threw away that damned list then swung the chair with all his might.

He then ran back to where Lucy was sitting.

"Forget the timesheet, sweet-heart, let's go", he joked - yes, amidst all the horror - as he grabbed her by the arm and headed for the rear door. "Where's your access card!? Damn it, find it!", he shouted, as the equally-hysterical Lucy frantically fondled through her infinite handbag looking for that tiny, well-hidden card.

"I've got it!", she declared with utmost relief, as she placed it on the reader then opened the door (only afterwards did they remember that the door didn't lock from the inside...).

They were out, they were finally out, but it wasn't over just yet: they had to sneak past the zombies and make it to the car park - alive and in one piece ... literally. They treaded quietly down the hallway and peeped around the corner: to the left was the atrium and the zombies; to the right was the exit to the car park.

"What do we do now?", whispered Lucy.

"I'll distract 'em; you go, save yourself...", offered the heroic Jake.

"No! Don't! We'll go together!", vehemently defied Lucy, futilely trying to control her wild sobs.

"It's alright. Just go...", he said, while softly releasing her tight grip from his right arm. He then kissed her - a gentle caress on the lips. "Don't look back. Go. I'll see you in another life...", he bid farewell.

He turned left...

"Hey! Zombies! I declined your stupid application! Come and get me!", the bold hero's enticement echoed throughout the atrium. The zombies turned around and chased him down the hallway.

All the while, Lucy dashed to the car park: to save her own life; it's what he wanted. She was spotted: they followed close behind... Standing alone by her car in the dark, she fondled for her keys in her myriad pockets. When they were finally found, she accidentally dropped them. They were getting closer and closer.

"Damn it, where are they!?", she cried out frantically, as she got on all fours and felt out the floor. Their groans and muttering were becoming louder and louder as they fast approached. She found the keys, but now, which was the right one? Her trembling hands struggled trying them out. She could

almost feel them breathing down her neck. Yes! The door finally opened.

Sitting in her car - with the doors locked - she could see the zombies running towards her.

She turned it on and revved-up the engine...

"Die, you damn zombies, die!", Lucy shouted, as she accelerated into the ghastly horde of walking declined.

Crashing onto her windscreen and bashing on her side doors, she ran over many of them, as she left the car park and that accursed university. It was all in her rear-view mirror now, but it'd stay with her - in her nightmares - forever.

As she zoomed down Park Road, she suddenly slammed the brakes: it's Jake, sprinting for dear life down the street; he's still alive!

"Jake! Get in!", she yelled through the driver's window, then stared at the rear-view mirror to check if the zom-

bies were close-by.

He stumbled in.

"Thanks ... you're a lifesaver...", he said between wild pants.

She didn't reply: the joyous relief that they're still alive had gripped her; she sobbed uncontrollably as they zoomed down the road.

"Lucy...?"

"... Yes?", she finally managed to speak, sniffing and wiping the tears from her cheeks.

"... We did it...", he said tiredly.

"Yes, we did...".

They drive and drive - a strange, silent drive down the empty, lamp-lit motorway.

"Lucy...?", he says very quietly.

"Yes?".

"Why was I declined...?", it mumbles....

- The End -

WE NEED A
NEW ARTS
EDITOR

COLUMNISTS



NEWS
INTERNS

HELP! WE NEED CONTRIBUTORS!

E-mail any thoughts, articles, artworks and ideas to
editor@craccum.co.nz!

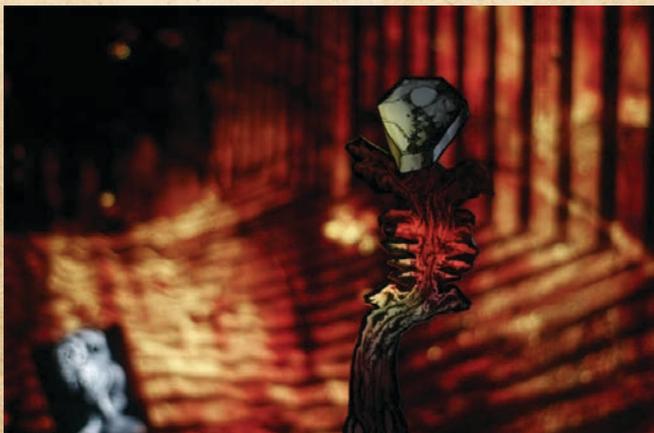
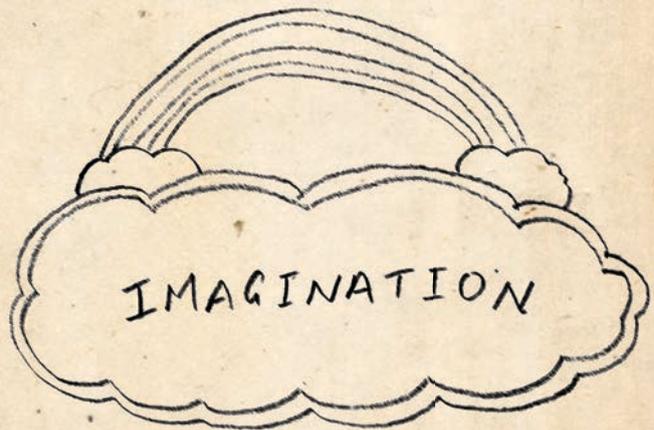
The Great Craccum Fuckaround Page

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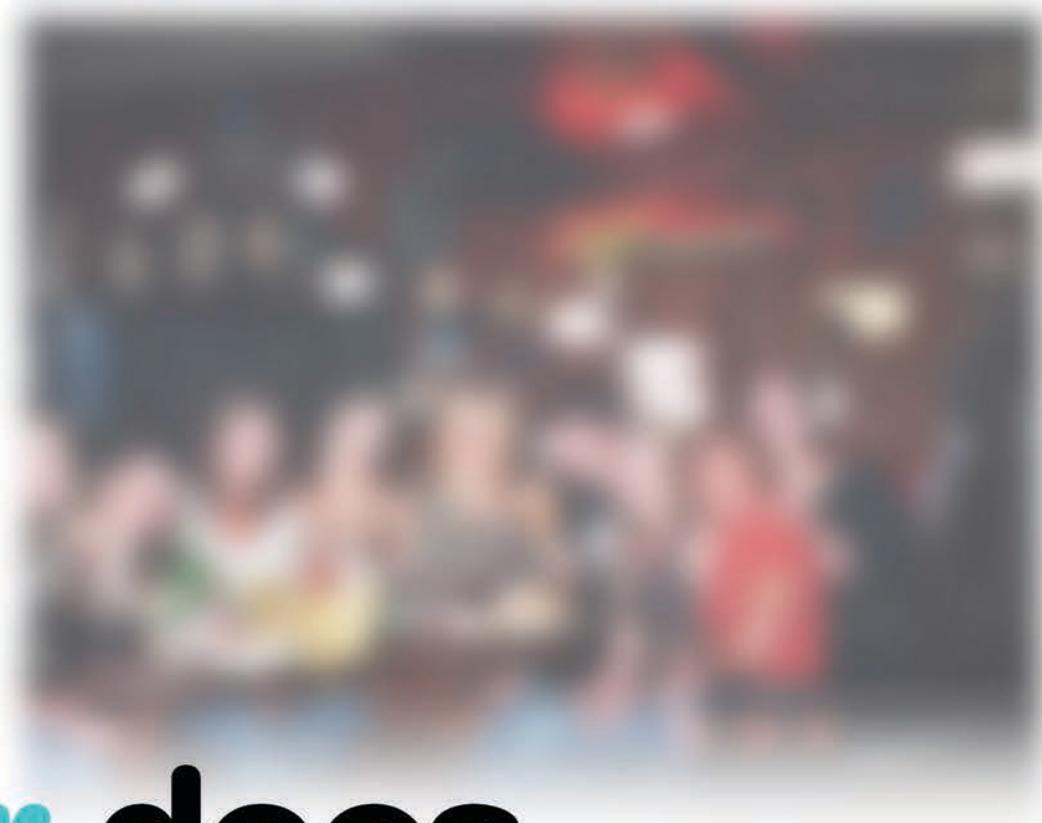
FUCKAROUND QUIZ

1. What is the name of the great beast Cthulhu's ancestral home?
2. What does the H.P stand for in H.P Lovecraft?
3. How many H.P Lovecraft adaptations has acclaimed director Guillermo Del Toro directed?
4. At what age did H.P Lovecraft die? And what year?
5. Who was credited within Lovecraft's stories as having penned the famous *Necronomicon*?



DIY ETHEREAL
MONSTER

**Do you
remember how
much you had
to drink last
night?**



Twitter does...

Think you or someone you know
might have a problem with drinking?

survey.alac.org.nz

For More information



VICE-PRESIDENTS CAMP COLUMN

Taura Mō Ngā Take Taura - Students for Student Affairs.

Before the end of the first semester, AUSA took all its delegates to Coromandel for a three day camp.

AUSA Delegates is a volunteer network run by students for students. It was created this year and we have already seen some amazing things coming from these passionate young people. The delegates brought their fresh ideas, which proved invaluable to the camp and their dedication to their students association was prominent throughout the camp.

The main purpose of the camp was to allow our volunteers to get to know each other, but also to provide them with a bit of training.

One of the key problems AUSA always had was that it did not have good continuity between the executive throughout the years. We felt it was important to equip these future leaders of our university with some institutional knowledge before we depart. Some of the workshops included how the university works, team-bonding exercises and leadership training.

Moreover, these delegates have been super helpful with the planning and carrying out of AUSA events throughout the year, including welfare events and the AUSA Ball. The camp also gave the delegates a chance to unwind before another big semester.

Rosalin Mckenzie, who is the newest full-time staff member of our AUSA whānau joined us on camp. Ros takes care of class reps coordination, club advocacy and the delegates programme. Ros has a background working for Otago Students Association and we are very excited to have her onboard with AUSA.

Check out these cool pics from camp. Thanks to all those who made it happen and the delegates who attended!

Ngā mihi,
Cate Bell & Max Lin
Vice-Presidents, AUSA

WROS

Hey all! We hope your first week back at uni was fantastic! Just a few little house-keeping things for this semester! Firstly we have a new microwave!! So thank you so much for bearing through those long lines at 12pm hopefully with two microwaves again this wait will be lessened. Secondly just a message to those who use Womenspace – please respect the space. It is a privilege not a right to have a space such as Womenspace so please make it a safe and comfortable space for all users by cleaning up after yourselves as much as possible because it is not fair to leave that job for anyone else who might come along after.

In other news KATE MAGAZINE is coming! Kate is an annual magazine published by the WRO's which focuses on women's issues. So if you are keen to get involved in any way (writing articles, news, being a proofer, submitting artwork, or anything else you can think of) please get in contact with us either through our email women@ausa.org.nz or through our Facebook page (just search AUSA Women's Rights Officer), or alternatively pop in and see us in our office hours or on Thursdays at the Thursdays in Black stall in the quad. We hope to hear from you all soon!

In solidarity,
Your WRO's Katie and Allanah <3
women
WOMEN@AUSA.ORG.NZ



Notice is hereby given for Nominations of 2014 AUSA EXECUTIVE PORTFOLIO POSITIONS

Clubs and Societies Officer, Cultural Affairs Officer, Environmental Affairs Officer, Grafton Representative (Must be a Grafton Student), International Affairs Officer, International Students' Officer, Media Officer, National Affairs Officer, Queer Rights Officer, Sports Officer, Student Forum Chair, Tamaki Representative (Must be a Tamaki Student), Welfare Officer, Women's Rights Officer (Must be a Woman), Craccum Editor
Nominations open on Monday, 22 July 2013. Nomination forms are available from AUSA Reception, 4 Alfred Street. Nominations close at 3.00 pm on Friday, 9 August 2013. They must be handed in to AUSA Reception only.

In accordance with the Auckland University Students' Association Constitution, nomination is open to currently enrolled students of the University of Auckland only and must be members of AUSA. Accordingly, all nominees must present proof of current enrolment, and any other required information, to the Returning Officer no later than the close of nominations, or their nomination will be ruled invalid.

AUSA Returning Officer



Notice is hereby given of an AUSA WINTER GENERAL MEETING

to be held

WEDNESDAY, 28 AUGUST 2013
or (if the meeting was inquorate)

THURSDAY, 29 AUGUST 2013
at 1.00 pm Student Union Quad

Deadline for constitutional changes:
Noon, Tuesday, 13 August 2013.

Deadline for other agenda items:
Noon, Tuesday, 20 August 2013.

Association Secretary



FRA THULHU



IA! IA! CTHULHU FHTAGN!

THE PRESIDENT

STUDENT CITIZENS OF AUCKLAND UNITE

Kia ora koutou katoa,

Housing

Affordable homes for students is quickly becoming a topical issue. With local elections at the end of the year, and the 2014 elections around the corner, politicians might have to front up to students or a large bloc will be voting with their feet. The Otago University Students' Association (OUSA) have launched a massive campaign to push the issue of housing into the limelight with a large degree of success. Auckland still has the highest rent prices in the country forcing students studying here to accept less than acceptable housing conditions. With such an oversubscription of housing there isn't flexibility for people seeking houses to rent.

The Auckland City Council Unitary plan will shape Auckland over the next 25 years and addressing housing inefficiencies will be necessary to make Auckland more sustainable. Big government have had mixed results to the housing crisis in Auckland. The Greens and Labour have been the first out of the gate to create proactive policy. With Labour announcing a kiwibuild scheme to build 10,000 new homes a year over the next 10 years, and the Greens developing a progressive policy extending ownership to social houses and introducing a housing warrant of fitness.

Meanwhile the National Party have developed their Housing Accords and Special Housing Areas Bill due to be reported back on July 31. The current government has shifted from a state housing system to a social housing system, but this is not enough to satisfy the projected need of 13,000 houses a year.

The amount of housing available for lower to middle income earners is painfully limited, between state houses, council flats, and communities houses there is a total of 85,000 houses nation wide available for students, pensioners and beneficiaries.

The Housing Minister has given direction that he would like to increase the share of community housing from 6.2% to 20%. With the government scaling back on Housing NZ and the current/new housing to be administered by community groups including local iwi. The transfer of 12,000 homes from Housing NZ to community groups was rationalised by Smith because he thought that iwi did a "better job housing the needy".

A Social Housing Reform Bill is also working its way through Parliament at the moment with the intention to "create a framework for multiple-provider social housing market". If this comes into effect it will be seen as a win for community groups because rent would be based on an income related subsidy to those registered to housing New

Zealand.

If possible to extend such benefits to students the financial burden of living in Auckland could be dramatically reduced. Without a huge focus on reducing equality the housing crisis won't be addressed.

This new found interest in housing gives me solace that perhaps soon things will get better.

Hoodies

We have some new AUSA Hoodie on sale from reception for \$60 if you wanted to snap them up. I totes love wearing my snug jumper on the oh so cold mornings.

President Lunch

If your pockets are light of coin drop your name off to reception and if I draw your name out at the end of the week I'll treat you to a lunch date

Always yours,

Daniel Haines
President

PRESIDENT@AUSA.ORG.NZ | 021 567 696 |
@DANIEL_HAINES | THE VILLA OPPOSITE THE
GENERAL LIBRARY

MEDIA MATTERS

Hi Everyone! Welcome back for what should be a pretty special semester 2! I hope you all had some form of holiday or another and are feeling refreshed for the upcoming weeks. I also hope that you all had successes regarding your results. If you didn't get what you were hoping for, don't panic! A new semester always brings new opportunities and another chance to get it right and improve on what you didn't do so well the previous semester.

If you need help with anything, seek out help! It's best to do this as quickly as possible to give you the best chance to get ahead. Remember, if you are struggling financially or have any issues with your education, our Welfare Officer Jessica Storey and our EVP Max Lin are here to assist you with whatever problem you may have.

First off a big shout out to everyone who organised Re O-week. It was a big challenge and you guys bossed it, so well done. Another big shout out to NTM for organising Maori Day that was on the 24th. Again the NTM crew put in a massive effort to get it organised so I hope everyone had a great time.

Coming up on the 1st August, The Women's Rights Officers and Rose Archer are hosting a panel discussion on preventing violence against women in New Zealand. Panellists include Deborah Hager (Senior Tutor in Health Science at Auckland Uni), Alison Towns (Director at Mt Albert Psychological Services Ltd) and Ruth Busch (Associate Professor in Law at Waikato University).

Cupcakes will be sold for a donation to Women's Refuge after the event and during lunchtime that day as part of the WRO's Thursdays in Black Campaign that runs weekly on campus.

By the time this goes out, there would have been nationwide protest marches against the GCSB and Related Legislation Amendment Bill and the Telecommunications Interception Capability and Security Bill (TCIS for short). The TCIS bill replaces the TCI Act 2004 which forced communication providers to provide "lawful intercept" capabilities so the Police, SIS and GCSB could access communications once they got a warrant. The Government have added the word security, which now grants the GCSB sweeping powers to control the design, deployment and operation of data and communications networks run by providers in New Zealand. The government claim that this will protect NZ's infrastructure and allow spy agencies to monitor traffic when needed.

As someone who is studying INFOSYS 322 (Data Communications and the Internet), handing over the final control of network design and operation to the GCSB for "security reasons" is troubling to me and seems incredibly open to misinterpretation by the GCSB. This bill is a massive attack on civil liberties that will not only affect students and the New Zealand people, but it could also have an adverse effect on our economy. The bill will allow the GCSB to prevent the resale of any services that do not provide lawful

intercept capability, which mean we cannot protect what we do or say online from the NZ government or foreign governments.

Now some of you will say "if you haven't done anything wrong, why worry?" this may be true, but the bill allows provisions to convict people based on evidence that remains secret. How can one defend themselves if they don't know the evidence presented against them? How they can they know that this evidence hasn't been manufactured? The answer is that they won't know, which will be a discredit to the justice system. It is amazing that the GCSB has been granted these powers, considering that is surrounded by scandal. These range from the appointment of its director, the saga over Kim Dotcom and even accusations that they have been illegally spying on New Zealanders.

Thomas Jefferson once said that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance. This is a time where as New Zealanders, we need to say to the government that this bill is intrusive and is contrary to the right to freedom of expression and unreasonable search under the law in this country.

I would urge all of you to research these bills and what it could mean for you. This is a dangerous path that the government is taking and if we don't take a stand for our privacy and freedom on the internet, then our civil liberties may have taken a final blow from which it may not recover.

All the best with the new semester,

Will Velida
Media Officer
MEDIAOFFICER@AUSA.ORG.NZ

SONIC.EXE An Exercise in Viral Shite

Creepypasta as a sub-sub-genre of fanfiction has quite prestigious and storied roots, which sounds like I'm being a facetious asshole, but it really does. The phenomena of Slenderman is really the genesis of this trend - urban legends spread by constant repetition, each one adding to the myth in some way until it becomes truly real, despite the original Slenderman (an impossibly tall figure with no face) being directly from a Something Awful competition to add supernatural beings into regular photographs. Slenderman really grew in popularity and power, spawning a phenomenally successful game, tributes, artwork, short stories etc.

It really showed the power that the internet has to turn a tiny little thing into a massive world wide phenomenon - a story with just enough roots in traditional monsters to be somewhat believable, mild correlation turning something from ludicrous to creepy. The advent of Slenderman is really not an insignificant event in terms of charting internet trends, legends and rumours, a feat made all the more impressive by the fact that it was something that was overtly made up that people came to somewhat half-believe in.

However, in the wake of such a success story we find ourself wading in the scummy shallows of it's imitators on creepypasta.wikia, a site filled with people attempting to create the new internet urban legend by using somewhat relatable things only creepified. Woowoooo!



How scary!

One of the more popular ones is a TOTALLY TRUE IT REALLY HAPPENED story about a hacked Sonic CD.

Hacked...or haunted.

Sonic.exe starts off with our protagonist receiving a disc that contains the file 'sonic.exe' and a letter from his friend "Kyle" telling him to destroy it immediately, lest the spooky scary things kill him. Our protagonist, instead of, say, doing anything that makes sense, boots up the game because he is a "BIG Sonic fan". Things go downhill from there.

Turns out the game is fucked up, and that SEGA 1991 has been changed to SEGA 666, because if there is one thing that horror has taught us its that the truly incidental details that have almost zero bearing on the story are the ones that are the most important to point out to the audience, just in case they don't

seem to get that the thing is evil.

Our protagonist plays as Tails first, then Knuckles, and then Robotnik through a series of twistified classic Sonic levels that all end in the sprites showing a very surprisingly wide range of emotions before being hunted down and killed by a demonic-ass Sonic. Who, for the record, has a laugh that "sounded an awful lot like that Kefka guy from Final Fantasy".

I should mention at this point that 'demonic' means the same kind of 'demonic' as *Street Fighter's* Akuma. So just 'slightly recoloured'.

Then the protagonist gets to the end of the game, is confronted by a magically realistic picture of Sonic, and then gets savaged by a blood-covered Sonic plushie. Not even kidding. This isn't so much 'inspired' as it is 'insipid', combining elements from *Tron* and *Child's Play* to create something that is neither

satisfying nor scary, with plodding descriptions and a genuinely stupid protagonist who is clearly there as a vehicle for the 'creepy' to enter the reader's no-doubt pounding heart.

However, and this has to be said, the video version inspired by the story is actually pretty good. I mean for Creepypasta standards as opposed to, like, actual standards. The visual elements of *Sonic.exe* suddenly work because they are, indeed, visual - and being told about the screen going static for seven seconds is a lot less unsettling than static for seven seconds. It's actually pretty cool at points when it conveys the whole story without resorting to regurgitating the source material.

Sonic.exe the Creepypasta gets 666 out of 66666666, and *Sonic.exe* the video gets a fair four out of ten for effort in salvaging a ship that should've sunk long ago.

CRAPPY SPAGHETTI

POKEMON OF THE WEEK REDUX WEEK FIVE-OVER-ZERO

MISSINGNO

One of the tallest and by far the heaviest of the Pokémon, Missingno is somewhat of an anomaly in the Pokémon universe, and has enjoyed legendary status in Pokémon circles, with trainers risking their insanity in order to obtain the elusive Pokémon. It can be found when one travels up and down the eastern coast of Cinnabar Island, and, when caught, can cause a rift in the space time continuum which can only be fixed by blowing it up with a nuclear bomb.

Pokétip: Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Missingno R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn





DYE - FANTASY

Jeremie Perin
Music Video Review

DyE's video *Fantasy* is, first of all, excellent.

It is amazing - a well animated piece that comes off as a kind of twisted version of *Avatar: The Last Airbender* meets *A Scanner Darkly*, washed out colours and active movements detailing this cool, quiet world. The music is great as well, a very well produced piece of quiet electronic wonder that works well because of how it compliments the video. After seeing the video it becomes hard to separate the two, becoming intertwined with each other 'Imperial March' style. On it's own the song isn't that evocative of anything other than quite calm electronica, but with the video it just evolves to be so much more.

The video begins with four young adults, probably late high-school or early college, breaking into a swimming pool for a night of swimming, beer, and possibly a little bit more than that, showing a pre-existing relationship between one boy-girl couple and an awkward circumstantial one with the second boy-girl couple, the focus being on the second girl with the black hair. It's clearly an uncomfortable situation for her that ends up becoming

a lot more uncomfortable with the inclusion of the monstrous: upon diving into the swimming pool, something pulsates around her stomach region as the first couple are rather intimately making out near the steps.

Then the first couple turn into grotesque monsters ruled by sexual imagery, killing the boy in a singularly disturbing moment that manages to be awkward and ruled equally by *Alien*-esque phallic monsters and a rather off-kilter monstrous-feminine depiction. So the second girl, surrounded by monsters, dives into the pool again to escape, whereupon she is confronted by an unimaginable beast of grotesque proportions that is so shocking that her eyes literally explode and we are left panning up it's tentacle-y silhouette. Which, honestly comes off as quite a twist.

It just... works. So well.

Fantasy deals with two major things for its main character, the unnamed second girl; sexuality, and the fear of the unknown - and it intertwines these two themes so well that it becomes genuinely hard to think about the music without the video and the video without the music. It just doesn't happen, which is a crazy achievement for a music video.

The idea of sexuality is explored immediately with the young-ish cast and their escapades; one couple sexually charged, one couple new and



unsure, both in the same, washed-out swimming pool. It's cool to have this very familiar dialogue between the experienced and the inexperienced in a setting at home in American college comedies becoming so fucked up. Sexuality becomes the 'unknown' in *Fantasy*, and the 'unknown' becomes absolutely terrifying in a very Lovecraftian way, with big, perverse looking monsters tormenting the second couple with their disgusting appearances.

It becomes amazing because it uses Lovecraft's imagery to express a very distinct idea, even going as far as to use the reflection of the second girl to draw her further into this unknown madness. She goes to a reflection of herself seeking sanctuary, but what she gets is more torment from this huge thing that the video almost suggests is a part of her.

Which makes sense because of the whole 'sexual imagery' thing.

The *Fantasy* video is an interesting video both by itself and in

the context of our very heavily sexualised pop music industry because it chooses to deal with sex and sexuality in a way that is really true to the idea of the tradition of horror. We watch things like *Alien* and read *Dracula* and they choose to try and scare us with sex, and *Fantasy* is no different in using sex as a catalyst for the second girl's fear of this unknown thing, of this unknown experience - coupled all the time with this quiet, innocent song. It is an amazing example of how music videos can really be pieces of art as opposed to wanton adverts for a band, or cheap dance routines, or egotistical gratification-fests. Really good, really creepy stuff. *SEOUL MUSIC*

N.B - Jeremie Perin also did the super lewd video for *Trucker's Delight* by Flairs, which is way less arty and contains way more weird naked pixel butts and pervy truckers with penis superpowers. It won a bunch of things.

SHUFFLE DIARIES MAP OF YOUR HEAD

(2002)
Muse

In my head, Muse are notoriously epic. Everything they do is loud and multi-layered and there's a lot to listen to. Except, in this song it's down to the basics of a little guitar, some shakey-shakers and Matt Bellamy's simply lovely voice.

I remember when Muse first made themselves known to New Zealand-town, I was sitting in my parents living room in Year 10 or 11 and we watching the music charts on TV, back when people did that. And these guys came on with a song from their *Absolution* album. And mum made all of us hush. And we sat. In wrapt awe we sat

and we all listened for about four minutes to this entirely unknown sound. It was Ballemmy and co. and from there mum (and therefore the family) were in music-love. The next day my older brother went and bought the album and the song "Butterflies and Hurricanes" remains my favourite of all that existed in the Muse repertoire.

Muse has certainly altered over the years I think. Their most recent album has had mixed reviews with some people loving its more electronic, faux-orchestral sound, and others thinking it strays too far from their original epic wonderful. I'm undecided. There's no denying the groups incredible talents. They're interesting and I appreciate that they bring different elements to each album but at the same time, their feature on the *Twilight* movie, whichever

one it was, destroyed my soul a little. I remember thinking 'oh, there goes another band down the Now-they'll-be-famous-and-douchebaggy track.' And their sound seemed to jump to a different realm from there. But it's still golden stuff really.

I suspect that this is a band that will be forever famous whether they continue making music for as long as ye olde Rolling Stones or not. They've got staying power because of sheer musical mastery.

As a closing note, returning to the *Twilight* mention, I have

suspicions that Matt Bellamy was brought into the Vampiric realm because of how much he resembles the head Volturi, played by Michael Sheen p.s. I had to type "Twilight baddy" into google to get his official title.



]You guess who is who... I can't even tell.

HAEMIA FOOTE

PACIFIC RIM (2013)

I'm going to be upfront here: the rest of this review will be mostly nit-picking. If you want a TL;DR review, then here it is: watch it in IMAX 3D. It's awesome. 4.5 Jaegers out of 5.



"In order to fight monsters, we created monsters of our own." Going into *Pacific Rim*, these were the words that struck me the most. Sure, I guess the whole 'John-you-are-the-Demons' thing has been done before, but even so, cautionary tales about hubris give a lot of leeway for interesting narrative storytelling. Just look at something like *Planet of the Apes*, or the *Monster Hunter* games. In fact, the kaiju genre is essentially founded on cautionary tales about the hubris of humanity: the ur example of kaiju films (*Gojira*, 1954, in case you weren't already aware of *Godzilla* – in which case where have you been for the past forever?) was an allegory for the destruction wreaked by the detonation of atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and ended on the note of 'we defeated the monster, but at what cost?'. But even if philosophical angst is not your cup of tea, the trailer was still pitch-perfect. There was the Golden Gate being crushed by a massive claw. There was a badass asian woman in a metal suit piloting giant mecha. There was a black dude cancelling the apocalypse. Fucking CANCELLING that shit like it was *Arrested Development*. Everything pointed towards a story set in a racially diverse, post-apocalyptic world.

With giant robots. My friend even turned to me and asked, "Where the white people at?" Hideo Kojima (creator of the *Metal Gear Solid* series) gave it a glowing review on Twitter.



It was all very encouraging.

What we ended up getting was an asinine white guy protagonist™. Now, this isn't some politically-fuelled rant that I am making. I'm not mad because the main character was male, or white, even though it would have been really cool to see something other than your generic action hero in a generic kaiju film.

No, I'm mad because he sucked.

See, our protagonist, Raleigh Becket, starts off the movie slightly too cocky for his own good, but then becomes battle-weary due to tragic backstory (which makes up the opening twenty minutes or so of the film). It sounds decent enough on paper, if a little generic, but what happens in the film is that Becket's battle-weariness never amounts to anything other than 'he was battle-weary, so he was reluctant to go back to piloting the Jaegers', and then once he gets back into the giant robot, all of this re-

luctance (that we see for roughly ten minutes) completely dispensed with. It's all just kind of uninspired. Compounding this is the fact that Charlie Hunnam (as Becket) has about as much screen presence as a sack of potatoes (albeit one with really great abs). Idris Elba (as mentor-cum-commander Stacker Pentecost) is such an awesome name. *Way better than that Cypher Raige bullshit* commands far more screen presence and general gravitas in a film that otherwise didn't do a whole lot of characterisation. Even with the overall lack of characterisation, however, pretty much all of the other actors give reasonably strong performances. Rinko Kikuchi really sells deuteragonist Mako Mori's stoic-yet-close-to-bursting emotionality, as well as her physical strength (not an easy



feat when one is as small as Kikuchi is). Charlie Day's Newton gives the film a much needed levity and an anchor for the audience amidst dire, battle-worn soldiers. The list goes on. The strong performances from the rest of the cast only serve to remind us that Becket was just not a compelling hero, and the film really suffers because we are forced into

his point of reference.

But perhaps I've been spoiled. I couldn't help but compare *Pacific Rim* to *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, and that show is pretty much top-notch characterisation on a giant-robots-fighting-giant-monsters backdrop, so *Pacific Rim* was always going to come out unfavourably on that count.

And, to his credit, Hideo Kojima was right. *Pacific Rim* is a really well put together otaku film, reminiscent of shows such as *Power Rangers* and *Gundam*, neither of which deal with melancholic introspection. *Pacific Rim* is also just really fucking fun: director Guillermo del Toro really has a knack for bringing the spectacular to life in all senses of the word: the robots, the kaiju, and the set pieces are all so over-the-top, yet at the same time disturbingly real, that it all

works together to really bring home the (literal) enormity of the situation. Furthermore, the film is such a viscerally thrilling experience that it's actually extremely difficult to fault it on its shallow characterisation and storytelling because GIANT ROBOTS PUNCHING GIANT MONSTERS IN THE

FACE, FUCK YEAH! Despite all of the grievances I have with Raleigh Becket, *Pacific Rim* is a legitimately great movie; one of the best B-Movies I have seen with an AAA budget, and something everyone should experience at least once in their lives. I'm not joking. Go watch this film. And do it in IMAX 3D. 4.5 Jaegers out of 5

PAUL BEAR

GUMMO (1997)

Harmony Korine is routinely ill represented. He's painted as that kid who used to eat glue sticks in primary school to get attention. Korine is not that kid. However, Korine would probably cast that kid as a lead in one of his movies. In fact, in 1997 Korine routinely did that. He auditioned unusual looking kids he found on the streets to play key protagonists in his directorial debut *Gummo*. The misfit youth that Korine cast was used to explore the setting that was post-earthquake Xenia, Ohio. In particular the activities that teenagers engaged in to fill the void after such a traumatic

experience.

Despite *Gummo* being slammed by the critics, my response to the film was overwhelmingly positive. I found the film's unorthodox treatment of the 'coming of age' storyline very refreshing. Korine's film offered respite from more traditional youth-centric films like *Perks of being a Wallflower* currently dominating the genre.

In fact, the film could even be viewed as Korine giving the middle finger to John Hughes and every convention of the teenage genre he established. It is a complete anomaly. Korine does not take the viewer into account in the slightest. He abandons any idea of a narrative or

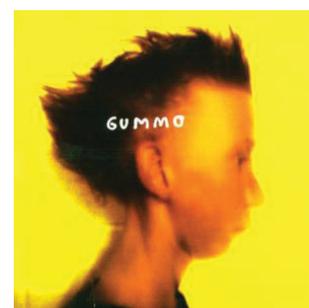
character arcs and instead writes just to tell a story.

Korine's unique M.O could be why Janet Maslin called *Gummo* 'the worst film of the year' in 1997. However, while I found truth in Maslin's belief that *Gummo* was indulgent in many of its uncut shots and unique artistic direction- bacon was taped to a bathroom wall in one scene... I do believe that *Gummo* does not deserve this label. It is a film that is misunderstood.

Gummo is an exploration of a microcosm of youth culture and if you watched the film expecting the sequel to the *Breakfast Club* than yes, you will be disappointed. However, if you take the initiative as a viewer

to abandon the traditional viewing mindset and watch the movie as if you would a zoo exhibit- your attitude to the film will undoubtedly change. It's about keeping an open mind as one does to caged animals. If you enter with an attitude of fascination, the experience will undoubtedly be fulfilling.

GEORGIA RIPPIN



AMNESIA: THE DARK DESCENT

Frictional Games

There has already been plenty of page space dedicated to *Amnesia: The Dark Descent* since its massively popular release in 2010, including a review in this very publication, so for the H.P. Lovecraft issue, instead of focussing on its general merits as a game in a more review-y sense, I thought it would be a better idea to look at what makes it an excellent example of the horror genre, and why this genre works so well in an interactive medium.

Amnesia places the player in a dark and dingy castle somewhere in Prussia and tells them in a delightfully British manner that they need to kill Alexander for reasons not adequately explained. Things spiral out of control rather quickly as unknown assailants attack and torment you alongside grisly reminders of things that Daniel, the player character, has done in an effort to save himself from this ethereal, madness-inducing 'Shadow'. It's fantastic Lovecraftian stuff that ticks all the boxes in the subgenre at a rather alarming rate: Faintly British? Check. Copious amounts of spooky? Check. Unseeable entities from a forgotten realm so grotesque that the very sight is enough to drive a person entirely insane? Check.

It really has it all.

But what turns it into an amazing example of Lovecraftian horror doesn't lie so much in its atmosphere or the crazy nasty monsters, but rather in the player's inability to do anything. You can throw chairs around and solve puzzles; but in terms of self defense your only option is to run. The player is helpless against these supernatural forces, so helpless, in fact, that overexposure to them will cause Daniel to curl up in a ball and wait for death, which is quite a chilling experience in com-



parison to other horror games like *Silent Hill* or *Resident Evil*, which strip away your resources but never leave you truly defenseless. It really gives the character an uncommon sense of human vulnerability alien to zombie slaying protagonists like Leon Kennedy, and this curious humanity is constantly referenced and accentuated with little gameplay quirks like having to push and pull open doors rather than simply open them with a button prompt. This sounds simple, but it is surprising how much the dynamic of the game changes.

It becomes relatable, which in turn makes it scarier, much like Delapore trying to restore his family home in *The Rats in the Walls* it takes little human stories and foibles and twists them into something grotesque. At one moment you can chuckle at being caught out pulling at a push door in *Amnesia*, at another it can be the single most frightening moment you've ever experienced in a videogame. This isn't a scary game because you've got no ammo or because your enemies are manifestations of guilt/zombies/vampiric nasties - this is a scary game because it puts you into a position

of vulnerability without any real means of survival.

Another thing the game has going for it in terms of the whole spooky scary factor is the medium itself. In a horror film you are pushed along at a fixed pace. You can shout "Don't go into the castle" at the screen as much as you like and the curiously diverse cast of characters will still go into the castle whether you want them to or not, carried forward by the tight runtime of ninety minutes. In *Amnesia*, and in horror videogames in general, part of the scary appeal lies in the simple idea that it is the player's will that drives the game rather than the developers intent, which isn't true, but it is a very effective illusion. You have to make the decision to move forward, you have to go through the door and pick up the no doubt terribly cursed object. In movies the horror has a set point, a single moment where it happens that, if your hands are quick enough, you can effectively avoid. Or if you are one of those terrible people you can suggest a horror movie night and then spend the entire time in another room, or in the same room with your eyes closed - entirely escaping the possibility of

being scared because the movie will progress without you. In videogames the scary elements have to be initiated by the player, they have to be triggered and played through so that you can progress to the next stage where there will be even more scary things to deal with etc. until the very final level, when the game ends and the scary things stop. "Don't go into the castle!" doesn't work with videogames, because you have to partially believe that it is your choice to go into the castle, even if there is only one route that you are being driven down. The most you can say is "I don't want to go into the castle" and just stop playing there, which kinda defeats the purpose of playing the videogame in the first place.

Amnesia is an amazing example of a Lovecraftian horror game and an excellent example of what videogames can do to scare you that movies cannot, and you should pick it up from Steam/GoG for under \$10. Frictional and *Dear Esther* developers, The Chinese Room, are making the sequel, *Amnesia: A Machine for Pigs*, which should come out sometime this year.

ALEXANDER BRENNENBURG

Next Weeks Issue:

UNTHEMED

Send your stuff to editor@craccum.co.nz



Fuckaround Quiz Answers - 1. What is the name of the great beast Cthulhu's ancestral home? *A: R'lyeh* 2. What does the H.P stand for in H.P Lovecraft? *A: Howard Phillips* 3. How many H.P Lovecraft adaptations has acclaimed director Guillermo Del Toro directed? *A: None. He will be forever stuck in development hell as studios crash around his At the Mountains of Madness project.* 4. At what age did H.P Lovecraft die? And what year? *A: H.P Lovecraft died aged a surprisingly young 46 on March 15th, 1937* 5. Who was credited within Lovecraft's stories as having penned the famous *Necronomicon*? *A: Abdul Alhazred*

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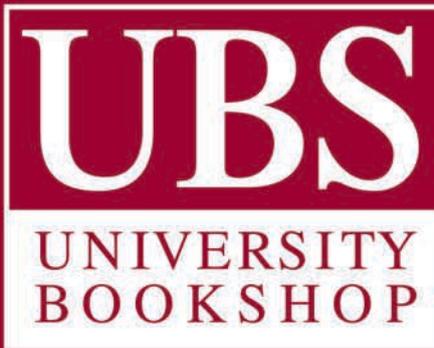
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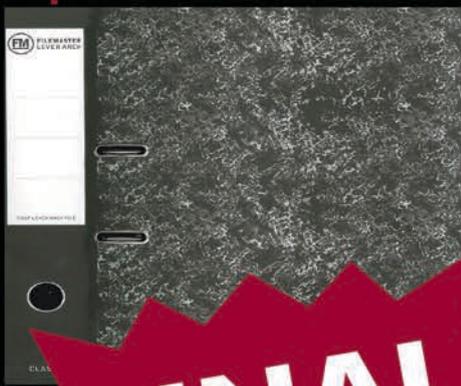


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