

THE IMMORALITY OF MAGICAL THINKING

Frustrated by false resolutions given to those suffering, Lucy Hunter delves into a personal struggle. PAGE 20

LOVEMAKING PREACHERS AND SALVATION AT THE CHECKOUT

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TURNING OFF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

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Critic





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By Martin Baker

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Hadleigh Tiddy

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From "The immorality of magical thinking"

Illustration:
Daniel Blackball

COVER:

Illustration:
Daniel Alexander

“

"I've had a couple of calls from people saying that there are nasty evil people taking advantage of students." He said that there have been reports of people "having meetings in the central library selling their pyramid scheme."

SIMON THOMPSON
UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO PROCTOR

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EDITORIAL 08

ON WORDS AND RELIGION.

WHenever I hear someone say "gay" in a way that means "lame" or "stupid," I tense up a bit. Worse still is "faggot," laden as it is with an atrocious history of meaning in relation to gay people. It's a genuine physical reaction that I never would have expected considering these are words that don't strictly inflict themselves upon me personally.

Not so long ago I used the words quite liberally myself. They've become part of the standard youth (and, to an increasing extent, adult) vocabulary. We're indoctrinated to use them from a very young age and few initially think to question it. But as we grow worldlier, it's our responsibility to think about how our actions may affect those around us, even indirectly. For sure, such words probably don't upset absolutely everyone they relate to. However, it's about considering the wider issues at play and quite literally training ourselves out of the behavioural patterns we've inadvertently learned. Thankfully, it's beginning to be more widely recognised that these words are to be consciously avoided, even though the practice of doing so is proving to be disappointingly slow on the up-take.

People frequently joke about the fact that I say "oh my gosh" rather often. That's because there is another group of words that should be treated similarly to "gay" ones: those that are considered blasphemous by people of faith. As with sexuality, you don't have to personally relate to others' religious orientations to understand and respect that some words may cause offence. The two most commonly used, "God" and "Jesus Christ," (and I'm sure that religions other than Christianity suffer it, too) can be genuinely hurtful to people, trivialising the orientation of their spirituality and implying that their beliefs deserve to be synonymised with negative reactions to circumstance. On the most basic level, it's a matter of respecting others. On a slightly higher level, it's about embracing diversity and liberalism.

This isn't a case of conservative reactions to words considered "rude." I'll stop short of advising you to go ahead and say "fuck" or "shit" as much as you fancy, but those that react to such words aren't doing so out of a perceived attack on, or disrespect of, their orientation.



ZANE PUTS HIMSELF IN THE NAUGHTY CHAIR THESE DAYS

"Using outlier examples like this to try and nullify a person's right to religion is akin to accusing an anti-drugs protestor of hypocrisy for taking Panadol."

Furthermore, that's not to say that harm can't be done the other way. I know it can be. It's been nothing short of shocking to read that a Christian couple in Pakistan was sentenced to death on 4 April for committing blasphemy in their text messages. More confounding is that the couple is widely reported as being illiterate. But using outlier examples like this to try and nullify a person's right to religion is akin to accusing an anti-drugs protestor of hypocrisy for taking Panadol.

Many critics of religion would be surprised to find that a huge number of religious people in New Zealand are very liberal and accept scientific theories as the best explanations we have for

most things. They are also good at accepting other belief systems. Militant atheists should take note.

This week is Critic's religion issue. From Lucy Hunter's warnings on the immorality of magical thinking (page 20) to the Reverend Martin Baker's meditations on lovemaking preachers and salvation at the checkout counter (page 24), the issue presents a varied take on spirituality and beliefs.

Embrace difference and have a relaxed Easter break, whatever that means to you.

Zane Pocock
Critic Editor



MOANA POOL BLAME ADDITIONAL MEMBERSHIP COST ON UNI STUDENT ID CARDS NOT ADEQUATE ID TO CONFIRM IDENTIFICATION

THIS YEAR'S MOANA POOL STUDENT Membership Special demanded students fork out an additional \$20 to verify their status as a student. The deal, which boasts a price of \$320 for nine months use of the gym and pool, or \$190 for sole use of pool, requires students to provide proof of identification through both student I.D. and a Status Confirmation Letter.

The Status Confirmation Letter must be ordered, not unlike an official academic transcript, and requires an additional fee of \$20 with a three-day window to process. It was not clear in Moana Pool's original advertised price that these additional costs would be incurred if the membership was sought, leaving students out of pocket and frustrated with Moana Pool Administration regarding the hidden costs.

"It's a frustrating process," claims irritated student Hannah Gosney, "because it's time consuming, and your 'cheap' \$190 pool membership, turns into a \$210 one. It also seems crazy that student ID isn't enough ... because there are no student prices apart from this deal. So if you don't get this 'student' deal, you have to pay the adult price for concession cards/entry."

"When asked if they were aware of the cost and excessive lengths students must go through to obtain the Status Confirmation Letter, a Moana Pool representative stated the cost had been brought to their attention, but it was largely the University's problem."

When asked if they were aware of the cost and excessive lengths students must go through to obtain the Status Confirmation Letter, a Moana Pool representative stated the cost had been brought to their attention, but it was largely the University's problem. "We have been made aware," they said, further quipping that "if you need the explanation you really need to ask the University."

Critic spoke to Chris Stoddard of the University of Otago's Academic Services, who stated there is no formal relationship between Moana Pool and the University. "It seems OUSA may have asked the Pool to look at running a student deal, and the Pool were keen to do so, but only for full-time students."

Moana Pool echoed this sentiment. "The letter has been made to prove that you're a full time student because of less full time students, especially ones that have been doing the one course, using their I.D. cards ... That's why the letter's been asked."

Stoddard said Moana has "essentially independently" established "a full-time student deal, for which they require certain documentation." He added "the University can provide a student with that documentation, but (also independently) charge a fee for that documentation."

When asked why the cost is not advertised within the original price, or if Moana had any plans to make this explicit in the future, the Moana Pool representative pleaded ignorance and again deferred blame to the University.

The Membership offer ended on 28 March. However, Moana Pool encouraged a Community Services Card as an option for those who missed cut-off for the deal. Unfortunately, while there are casual prices for children, adults and elderly, Moana pool currently offers no student prices for a casual swim or casual gym use; something that seems absurd in a city dominated by students.

By Emily Draper | @CriticTeArohi



DICKIE HEATS UP OVER PADDLING POOL OF FIRE

VICE-CHANCELLOR UNIGNITED BY "INTENSELY POPULATED AND FILTHY SLUM"

THE ART OF STUDENT COUCH-BURNING HAS reached new heights, according to the complaints of frustrated Woodhaugh resident Jeff Dickie. While walking his daughter to school through the Woodhaugh Gardens, Dickie was astonished to discover the remnants of a couch fire in the Gardens' empty toddlers' paddling pool that his daughter frequently uses.

Dickie indicated to the *ODT* that "people have clearly been partying up," speaking of the broken glass, crushed cans and discarded clothing scattered through the charred remains.

The fire seems to have been started in the pool, cracking the plaster at the pool's base, which will need to be repaired. The pool was drained of water

at the time of the fire. Maddened by this discovery, Dickie promptly contacted the Vice-Chancellor so she could assess the damage herself, but he was informed she was not able to do so. The DCC subsequently cleared the remains away.

Critic spoke with the Proctor, who said the incident was "particularly brainless." He said Dickie had gone above him and sought to consult the VC regarding the matter, presumably because of his strong feelings. The Proctor said the incident is "almost as bad as breaking bottles in child centre sandpits and leaving sharp cans in the George Street School grounds."

The fire comes in light of new statistics released in March that show student fires are at a

five-year high, with 586 "nuisance" fires in the North Dunedin student area from 2009-2013, according to figures released under the Official Information Act. Last year, the Proctor dealt with 43 students who wilfully set fires, and eight students for fuelling fires.

While Dickie admitted he had no evidence that the fire was set by students, he added that "all of this behaviour absolutely stops when the students go home." Dickie has made numerous public complaints against University students, and was involved in removing upwards of 40 students on St Pat's from his neighbour's property. He has publicly slated North Dunedin as becoming an "intensely populated and filthy slum."

As of yet, no culprits have been identified, but Dickie is demanding more affirmative action, claiming the University needs to address "these important issues of mass poor behaviour." For any students contemplating any future couch incineration in public areas, the Proctor issues a clear warning: "Those sorts of things that endanger kiddies, that's just about going home material."

By *Emily Draper* | @CriticTeArohi

PROCTOLOGY

BROKEN GLASS AND SLURPING THE SUDS

THIS WEEK IN PROCTOLOGY HAS REVEALED that a bit of broken glass may be good for University finances, and "slurping the suds" in the Botanic Gardens is not advised. The Proctor has said there has "been an increase" in the amount of bottle breaking going on around campus. While it "might sound nice breaking the bottle," the reality is that you're only breaking the bank. For the month of March alone, people have paid \$2,715 to the Student Emergency Fund. "So if that keeps up that is going to be \$20,000 that students are paying the University for breaking glass."

Aside from the Proctor rolling gloriously in

students' dollars, he was concerned with an increased danger on the walkways throughout campus due to speeding cyclists and skateboarders. "We are looking at increasing our efforts to stopping people riding faster than a walking pace on campus." He took a hard line and recommended you "keep it to a walking pace. If you can't, get off and walk," or alternatively pay a \$30 fine toward his golden parlour in the heavens of the St David lecture theatre.

Despite the weather cooling, the Botanic Gardens are still proving to be an alluring place for students to go and have been "getting a lot of visits," especially the Mediterranean Garden. The

concern is that students "go pee in the bushes, drop glass, graffiti, and break shrubs," and leave it all for "Gardens staff to clean it up."

While cruises around the Mediterranean might lead to many having a butler at their beck and call, the Gardens' staff seem more attuned to pruning than students puking.

A group of 20 international students also took to the gardens "dressed up in hair curlers and dressing gowns and one person as a Buzzy Bee," all at about 9am in the morning. The Proctor warned that the group were "climbing trees, and when called on they fell out." He said in situations like this "someone will get hurt, so please don't use Gardens as a venue for slurping the suds."

By *Claudia Herron* | @CriticTeArohi

COULD YOU BE AN ousa recreation TUTOR?

The OUSA Recreation Centre is **NOW HIRING**. We're on the hunt for Semester 2 recreation tutors. So if you've got the qualifications, skills, or experience required to take classes - we want you!

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1

91 FM

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LAURA HARRIS VICTORIOUS AS OUSA EDUCATION OFFICER

KULLASIT CHUTIPONGPISIT NO SHOW, STILL GETS 96 VOTES

THIS YEAR'S FIRST OUSA BY-ELECTION HAS welcomed newcomer Laura Harris to the Executive in the role of Education Officer after she took out 36.09 per cent of the total votes. Harris was a clear contender for the role after a markedly articulate performance at Tuesday's public forum, despite the exceptionally small turnout to the campaign event.

The forum, chaired by President Ruby Sycamore-Smith was also attended by candidates Henri Faulkner and Matthew Schep, both of whom failed to shine next to Harris' clear priorities and thoughtful answers. Faulkner, who already holds the Recreation Portfolio on the Executive, agreed he needed to "get better at communicating ideas" and "got what I deserved" in terms of losing out to Harris. He did, however, wish her well in the position and was happy she was going to "become a part of our OUSA family." He added that Harris' "leadership and organisational skills are really solid," and will add greatly to the Executive.

Critic spoke with Harris after the results were

announced. She was "exhilarated" by the win and said it had been "a very long four days." She added that her campaigning had gone well. "I had people come up to me that I didn't know, saying they voted for me." While she said a bigger voter turnout would have been nice, she did recognise that it was a by-election.

Matthew Schep accepted defeat and was "happy" that Harris got the role. He said he "could have campaigned a bit better but it was a short time frame," and he would "quite possibly" run again next year. He wished Laura good luck and expressed his willingness to help on any education committees given his interest in the area.

In the heat of the win, Laura still reiterated her priorities and said that she will "strive to represent the voices of students."

"My biggest priority at the moment is the class rep system. We're already starting on a lot of changes, including how it can be restructured, and getting student voices heard."



Of the total 629 votes cast, Harris received 227, Schep came in second with 161 votes and Faulkner received 121 votes. Kullasit Chutipongpisit also ran for the position and managed to get 96 votes, despite not attending the public forum.

By Claudia Herron | @CriticTeArohi

DEFENDING THE KINGDOM

ALL'S WHALE THAT ENDS WHALE?

IN WHAT IS SURELY A LANDMARK DECISION WITH regards to international environmental law, on Monday 31 March 2014, after years of protests and diplomatic disputes, the International Court of Justice ruled that Japan's whaling programme in the Southern Ocean is not for scientific purposes and requested that it cease its operations there "with immediate effect." The decision is binding so Japan cannot appeal and, so far, it seems Japan will honour the ruling, with chief negotiator Koji Tsuruoka stating that Japan respects the rule of law and, as a responsible member of the global community, it will abide by the decision of the court.

This is great news for whales, whose populations are in decline due to human activities.

It is also good for the marine ecosystem and our burgeoning ecotourism industry. Yet the question remains, will this decision by the International Court of Justice actually stop whaling activities from occurring? The ruling halts Japan's current whaling licences under Article VIII of the 1946 International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW), which allows for special permits for nations to "kill, take and treat" whales for purposes of scientific research, subject to restrictions, but it does not stop Japan from devising a new whaling programme that is more scientifically based; a programme that fits within Article VIII and therefore could still involve lethal research methods. There is also nothing stopping Japan from withdrawing from the ICRW altogether, as expressed in Article XI, with no backlash except maybe some murmurs of disappointment from other nations.

But, sadly, such seems to be the reality of much international law. Nations agree to be bound by treaties but also limit their own liability using exclusive jurisdiction over their own territories, creating treaties without any strict regulatory standards or protocols for punishment, essentially creating "soft laws" with no power of enforcement. Without any fear of reprisal there seems little incentive for nations to cooperate and sacrifice self-interest for the common good. If conserving whales (and other endangered species) is truly something that nations desire, then international treaties such as the ICRW must be made to have better protection of vulnerable species, and greater ability to enforce acquiescence, with stricter internal sanctions to penalise non-compliance, before more treasured species are gone forever.

By Christian Hardy | @CriticTeArohi



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UNIVERSITY FREELoadS HOSPITAL TENANCY FOR 30 YEARS PARTIES SEEK TO CURE INFORMAL RELATIONSHIP, AND HERPES.

THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD IS seeking to formalise a lease agreement with the University for the Medical Faculty's use of Dunedin Hospital buildings amidst pressure to upgrade Hospital facilities. According to the ODT, SDHB Chief Executive Carole Heatley indicated in a report to the Board that "there have been numerous historical discussions on this topic [but] ... there is no lease agreement despite past efforts to formalise this relationship."

The University currently uses 20 per cent of the hospital and associated buildings free of charge, owing to the fact that 30 years ago it paid for 20 per cent of the cost of developing the original Hospital ward block. A University spokesperson told *Critic* that the University has a "long-standing and close" relationship with the SDHB. The spokesperson said the two parties

are "currently working through the details of the space agreements," but information wouldn't be available until discussions were completed.

Critic spoke with SDHB Executive Director of Finance, Peter Beirne, about the matter. "The university has always contributed to the outgoings of the buildings it occupies, such as energy, cleaning and engineering services. The intent of a lease is to formalise the relationship which currently exists." While the ODT reported Heatley as saying the board were seeking "market value rents" for the use of the space, Beirne indicated that there is "no intention to charge market rent. The desire to formalise the existing relationship is what is being sought by the parties."

He added that the SDHB has been able to attract "highly skilled clinicians" as a result of its relationship with the Dunedin School of Medicine,

and that the population served by the SDHB has "benefited from University-led research including medical research, as has the population of New Zealand as a whole."

Heatley also told the ODT that significant time had passed since the University's contribution to the Hospital development, but that the relationship between the two institutions needs to be "fair and equal."

One second-year medical student said it seemed "a bit strange" if the Hospital were to start charging rent now. "This is an arrangement that's been happening for a very long time and we've always used this amount of space, so it seems a bit strange for it to be a problem now. You'd think that a hospital which relies on the training of new medical professionals to sustain it would be happy to offer up their facilities for that purpose."

By Nina Harrap | @CriticTeArohi

PIMS - PUZZLING INACCURACY MYSTIFIES STUDENTS UNI RELEASE, RETRACT & RE-RELEASE EXAM TIMETABLE

STUDENTS WERE FURTHER FRUSTRATED BY exam woes after the University withdrew the initial exam timetable released last week. Confusion arose after the initial schedule was released last Monday, retracted on Tuesday, then released again on Thursday.

A notice, which was emailed to students and posted on Blackboard, stated "Please do not diary any of your examination dates, or book any travel, until a replacement timetable has been produced. A replacement timetable will be published to PIMS by 11 April 2014."

Claire Beuvink, a University of Otago student, told *Critic* "I was about to [book my flights] but then thought I should probably wait until it comes out on PIMS. Lucky I did!" Other students did not treat it so lightly with some finding it "rude" and "annoying." Steph Taylor equated the situation

to that of a sandwich: "the Uni withdrawing the exam timetable is like me making a sandwich, leaving it on the kitchen bench for five minutes and coming back and it's half eaten." *Critic* is unsure of the meaning behind this comparison, but would like a sandwich, please.

Critic spoke to the Director of Academic Services, John Price, who said, "The timetable was retracted as a small number of examinations had been inadvertently omitted." When asked if the retraction concerned a problem with PIMS, Price confirmed that this was not the case but the system is undergoing adjustments. "As the University is rolling out further eVision functionality over the mid-semester break, the current PIMS functionality will become part of eVision."

PIMS will be decommissioned and no longer available from 9pm on Wednesday 16 April 2014.

"Critic is unsure of the meaning behind this comparison, but would like a sandwich, please."

Neither PIMS nor eVision will be available between 16 and 23 April 2014, so the University advises to complete any urgent tasks beforehand. eVision is the new student management system aimed to simplify, streamline and automate student administration processes for staff and students. It has replaced existing paper-based and online application forms with a single online application process. The enhanced eVision system is expected to be available to students by 8am on Wednesday 23 April 2014.

Critic did not hear from any students who had already booked transport before the timetable was withdrawn, but Price noted, "Any students who are affected in this way should contact the Examinations Office."

By Josie Cochrane | @JosieCochrane

HOOPER FIGHTS FAKE WEED "MAKES PICNIC ... NOT BOTHERED" LARGE GATHERINGS FOR NATIONWIDE PROTESTS IN 23 CENTRES

OPPONENTS OF LEGAL HIGHS HAVE GATHERED in protest around Dunedin in the hope of banning the sale of the drugs throughout New Zealand. While protests were held in 23 centres from Whangarei to Invercargill, Dunedin has seen large gatherings in the Octagon as well as personalised acts of protest outside the popular point-of-sale, Cosmic Corner.

Concerned parent Calvin Hooper took part in the Octagon protest last week and could be seen holding a sign that read "Black 4 Sorrow, White 4 Hope, We don't want your legal dope." Hooper was one of approximately 100 people gathered at the protest. Dunedin protest organiser Karen Casey shared why they had gathered in protest saying, "I'm here today to say that the Government of New Zealand have not done enough to protect our children."

Wayne McFayden was among those parents who had experienced the drug's negative effects close to home – McFayden's own son had been struggling with a synthetic cannabis addiction for over a year. The nationwide protests were largely organised through the efforts of concerned mother Julie King, utilising the Facebook page titled "Aotearoa bans the sale and distribution of legal highs in our country" to spur action.

Critic spoke to two 17-year-old girls who said they had been smoking synthetic cannabis

for the last three years. "My family thought it was gonna be better [than cannabis] because they put 'legal' in front of it," stated Ayla Espie. She also spoke at the rally, gaining applause when declaring her 26 hours of sobriety, the longest stint she has had in over a year. Although age restrictions have been placed on the drug, the girls claimed to have no problems finding people willing to make the purchase on their behalf. "You can hit anybody up on a street to get it and they'll buy it for you."

For Espie, the drug's effects on her physical health have been major. "I don't want to be on it any more. I get so sick of it, and when I don't have it, I don't sleep, I don't eat, I don't do anything. My body doesn't function." A close friend of Espie echoed this sentiment, unable to name a single friend in her immediate group that isn't a regular user of the drug.

Complementing the nationwide activity was limousine driver Calvin Hooper's own protests outside Cosmic Corner. Hooper has been seen picketing with an amplified microphone outside Cosmic Corner on George Street for several consecutive days after his adult son had for the second time been admitted to Wakari Hospital following dangerous negative reactions to synthetic cannabis. With music being blasted from the store Hooper told Critic, megaphone still on, that within ten minutes of picketing he had



received 75 signatures.

"Even the cops came over and basically said, 'good on you, well done, just keep it within the law and you'll be fine.'"

"I will continue doing it. I don't care if it's for one week or five years. I will sit outside these shops, I'll make a picnic, it doesn't bother me, I will keep doing it until something changes ... I don't give a shit what the politicians are saying. I want it off the market."

Also at the Octagon protest, MP Clare Curran publicly deplored the legislation passed last year that failed to remove the product from stores; legislation she felt the Government "bungled." A member of the crowd highlighted that Curran had voted in favour of the legislation and asked her where her conscience lay. She acknowledged she thought her vote would help stop the sale of legal highs, but in fact the legislation places blame on city councils and the law needed to be amended.

By Emily Draper | @CriticTeArohi



RELIGION

"SEX IS FUN; RELIGION IS FUNNIER." SOME IN MY theology class took offence. The theology professor who issued the statement was one of my more entertaining ones. It was him who used to call me "mister tippy-tappy."

Apparently some in the class didn't think it appropriate to laugh about either sex or religion. I was astonished. In hindsight, I guess it spoke to the social taboo that still sits around both. Arguably, people are now more sensitive about the latter than the former topic.

Perhaps because more people have greater

experience with sex than religion, it is more comfortable to speak about? In any case, I'm pretty comfortable having a poke at both (as the actress said to the Bishop).

Don't get me wrong, my religion is important to me – although an electorate MP by day, I am still a Presbyterian Minister by night. I just don't think I have all of the answers. I don't think anyone does. And I don't think scientists have all of the answers either. (Actually, in my experience, practising scientists "in particular" are forever saying they don't have all of the answers. Think Einstein.)

But let's not argue evolution versus creationism. It's a red herring in my view. The Bible wasn't written as a scientific textbook. It was written in the language of poem, myth and logbook and became (is) a centrepiece for a community searching for meaning and purpose.

So, in my view, there is something to learn from people of different faiths, and from people

of no faith. After all, they still have the task of understanding (finding meaning in) the world around them.

It is supreme arrogance to claim you have the absolute truth. False humility isn't right either. Either you think your philosophy or faith has something of value to offer others, or you don't. And it is a dull and decaying mind that shuts out questions, challenges and new ways of thinking.

Frankly, I doubt the majority of my fellow MPs would count themselves Christian today. Yet the founders of the Labour Party thought they were creating a form of applied Christianity. In my party, a passion for social justice remains.

Truth is: most people my age and younger have only a passing acquaintance, at best, with formal religion. That doesn't stop them wanting to create a better, more democratic, more sustainable and just world.

Column by David Clark | @DavidClarkNZ



MONARCHY COOK UP PLAN TO DIVERSIFY CROWN ASSETS SIX60 TOO GOOD FOR RE-0-WEEK'S ROYAL REOPENING

THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF CAMBRIDGE'S recent visit to Dunedin has been revealed to be part of a wider push by the Monarchy to diversify their portfolio of investments abroad. A night of travel away from Baby George provided the Duke and Duchess with a bit of rest and relaxation in Dunedin, and an opportunity to assess the viability of the Monarchy's future investment in the Cook, a property that was originally held by the Crown but lost in the 1800s.

It has been revealed the Cook was founded in 1860 by an uncle of Queen Victoria, who had come over by boat and opened the pub only to desert it a few years later in search of gold. The premises were then taken over by commoners, leaving a formal lease unclear as to who actually owned the property. As of late, the Monarchy has been investigating reclaiming Crown land in its colonies.

A source has indicated to *Critic* that the Duke and Duchess met with developers of the Cook site and were taken on a tour of the building early Sunday morning, prior to their appearance at St Paul's Cathedral. The source was able to disclose that Prince William was particularly enthusiastic about the bar, saying it reminded him of his days

at the University of St Andrew's because of the "similar atmosphere," and noted that "Granny would approve."

The pub looks set to be open within a few months, with Re-0-Week earmarked for the royal reopening. New Zealand's own international success story Lorde has been rumoured to be headlining the opening event at the royally refurbished venue after Six60 declined an offer to play, citing that it would be "forgetting your roots to see the Cook run by Poms."

A manager is yet to be appointed, but Prince William indicated that staff would be on a "zero-hour contract," not unlike the staff at Buckingham Palace. *Critic* consulted Wikipedia, which explained that a zero-hour contract creates an "on call" arrangement between employer and employee, and is particularly useful for people such as retirees and students who want occasional earnings and are able to be entirely flexible about when they work. Applications for positions at the Royal Cook will open 21 April and applicants should include a CV and certificate of lineage.

By Claudia Herron | @Claudia_Herron



ALLEN HALL OLD AS FUCK 100 YEARS OF POST-DRAMATIC STRESS

THIS YEAR MARKS A SPECIAL OCCASION FOR the University of Otago. The Allen Hall, part of our current Archway and Clock Tower buildings, is clocking up its centennial year. Exactly 100 years ago on 7 April 1914, the building, named after Chancellor James Allen, was officially opened as Otago's first student union building. In line with the current generation's nostalgic social media endeavours such as #TBT, *Critic* did a little throwback of its own to celebrate such a milestone.

Prior to the construction of Allen Hall, the 600-student population of 1914 had no suitable area to meet and socialise with their peers. With financial support lacking, the students took it upon themselves to raise the funds for what would be the social hub of student life. After a vast range of carnivals, donations from politicians, local bodies, and a donation from Antarctic explorer Ernest Shackleton, the funds were raised for the building to be officially constructed. On the day of the opening, the Governor of New Zealand, Lord Liverpool, wished Otago students "the best of luck, frivolity and joy."

Designed by Edmund Anscombe, the original hall contained a student executive room, separate common rooms for women and men, dressing rooms, bathrooms and a buffet. For nearly half a century, the Allen Hall Building was at the core of social activity for students passing through the University. As the student population grew, reaching 2,666 in 1960, the current Student Union was built. In 1980, Allen Hall became the centre of theatre studies, with plays being showcased on a weekly basis. To mark the centenary, the theatre studies department is hosting a reunion in September for anyone with a connection to the hall. Allen Hall still holds a great deal of history for the University, being officially registered under the Historic Places trust in 1988.

By Laura Munro | @CriticTeArohi

THREE TEAMS, ONE CUP...

TO THE IMPARTIAL BUT SKY-BLUE FOOTBALL desk, I thought I should bring you all up to speed with this year's epic race for the English Premier League title.

Liverpool leads the way with 74 points. At the start of the season, not many experts had given Liverpool much chance as genuine title contenders but they are in pole position with five games to go. They have two huge games coming up against Chelsea and Man City, which will go a long way in deciding who will lift the trophy this year. Liverpool's lethal combination of Luis Suarez and Daniel Sturridge up front has been the most prolific partnership this season, with Suarez setting a new club record, scoring three hat-tricks on his way to 29 Premier League goals so far. With their rivals sure to spend and strengthen before the start of the next season,

and with their own resources to be stretched with the inclusion of a Champions League campaign next year, this could be Liverpool's most realistic chance of winning their first league title since 1990 and the days of the old First Division.

Chelsea is currently second on 72 points. Charismatic manager Jose Mourinho has been back to his best form, playing mind games through the media. Despite having led the Premier League for the last few months, he has consistently stated that: "the table is fake ... We are just the little horse in this race." Despite lacking goals from their strikers, Chelsea has had their talented midfield players plugging the gap. The in-demand winger Eden Hazard has been leading the way with 14 goals and Petr Čech leads the goalkeeping stats with 15 clean sheets, making up for their comparative lack of goals. Their

progression to the Champions League semifinals may prove to be a distraction and the lure of lifting the European cup with Chelsea may force Mourinho to take his eyes off the domestic prize.

Manchester City, having already won the Capital One Cup, remains many pundits' favourite to win the title this year, despite sitting in third place with 70 points. However, City has two games in hand over its two other title rivals and also possesses a superior goal difference. No one knows the importance of goal difference better than City, having won the title in 2012 after that famous last minute goal against QPR. After next week's crucial game at Liverpool, City has a pretty easy run to finish off the season. If they win all of their remaining games they will be champions.

We continue our build-up this week with a look at **Group E**.

By Daniel Lormans | @danbagnz



FRANCE

UEFA – Union of European

Football Associations

Population: 66 million

Currency: Euro

Capital: Paris

Language: In French, they are les Bleus. Don't be surprised if they have blue uniforms.

FIFA World Ranking: 172th

Qualified: Beat Ukraine 3-2 in a playoff.

Fun Fact: A very embarrassing internal meltdown in 2010 that went public led to a 29th place finish at the last World Cup.

History: If winning the World Cup in 1998 on home soil was a high point, then Zidane's infamous headbutt in the 2006 final was definitely a low point in their history.

Key Players: Franck Ribery is the most experienced member in a team full of Arsenal, Newcastle, Real Madrid and PSG first team players.

Prediction: Will make amends for 2010 and make it to the quarterfinals.



SWITZERLAND

UEFA – Union of European

Football Associations

Population: 8 million

Currency: Swiss Franc

Capital: Bern

Language: French, German and Italian are all official languages

FIFA World Ranking: 7th

Qualified: winner of qualifying group

Fun Fact: Only team to have failed to score a penalty in a World Cup penalty shoot out.

History: Remaining undefeated in qualifying for this year's tournament bodes well.

Key Players: Exciting young Bayern Munich star Xherdan Shaqiri, who is another of my FIFA 14 favourites.

Prediction: They have a good chance of sneaking through.



ECUADOR

CONMEBOL – Confederación

Sudamericana de Fútbol

Population: 15 million

Currency: US dollar

Capital: Quito

Language: Spanish nickname, La Tri, also hints at their uniform's bright colours.

FIFA World Ranking: 23rd

Qualified: Fourth place in qualifying group

Fun Fact: Ecuadorian Serie A side Barcelona SC should not be confused with Spanish La Liga side FC Barcelona.

History: Patchy international record but they did beat Australia 4-3 in their last match, which is always nice to hear.

Key Players: Man United winger Antonio Valencia is the national captain of a team made up of lots of promising young local players.

Prediction: Won't be bothered by the climate, so that could prove the difference against one of the bourgeois European teams.



HONDURAS

CONCACAF – Confederation of

North, Central American and

Caribbean Association Football

Population: 8 million

Currency: Lempira

Capital: Tegucigalpa

Language: Los Catrachos, which means "the Hondurans" in Spanish.

FIFA World Ranking: 36th

Qualified: Third place in qualifying group.

Fun Fact: Eliminated without scoring a goal in 2010.

History: Very much a light-weight on the international scene. This is only their third World Cup.

Key Players: Defender Maynor Figueroa who has over 100 caps and plenty of Premier League experience against the world's best.

Prediction: Thank you, come again.

CRITIC TACKLES ELECTION YEAR RISING STARS

AS THE CANDIDATE LISTS COME ROLLING IN from across the spectrum, the possible Government newbies are already vying for the attention of voters across the board. With that in mind, this week's Critic looks at five candidates to watch out for as the campaign rush begins. Hailing from a variety of party backgrounds, they represent the potential future of our parliament. While not all of them are in the media spotlight just yet, I suspect that they'll have their time in the strong New Zealand sun soon.

KELLY ELLIS – LABOUR



If selected, Kelly Ellis will boast an impressive title – the second ever transgender politician in the New Zealand Parliament. She will be running for the Whangarei electorate, which is traditionally

reasonably conservative and very blue; a brave move, perhaps. She is a lawyer and wants to focus on issues of poverty and inequality, especially in the Whangarei area.

More than this, however, is the potential her selection holds for transgender rights across the country. A strong advocate for helping those in prison who face sexual and physical abuse for their choices, Kelly is strong-willed and passionate about her cause. She has also set up TransAdvocates, an organisation dedicated to advancing trans rights. As a country, we legalised gay marriage; Kelly presents us with the opportunity to go beyond that and examine where we stand on transgender issues.

MARAMA DAVIDSON – GREEN



A self-professed champion of social justice, Marama has thrown herself headfirst into the media spotlight since running for the Ikaroa-Rāwhiti by-election and being selected in the preliminary Green Party list. She adds to the Māori pool of candidates, with her heritage an

important part of what she stands for. Her dedication to social issues is extremely impressive, having worked for ten years at the Human Rights Commission and being a founding member of Te Wharepora Hou Māori Women's Collective – all the while being a mother to six children.

Marama's potential can thus far be encapsulated in how she is already very prepared to take a stand on difficult issues. This has so far included attitudes to sex (appearing on TV3's Re-Think) and abortion legislation (in an article for the NZ Herald). Even though we are a largely progressive country, our abortion laws sit at the "archaic" end of the spectrum, specifying that there must be a danger to physical or mental health in order to qualify. Here is a candidate who proudly shares her own experiences and opinions – watch out for them.

DAVID SEYMOUR – ACT



David Seymour is running for the Epsom electorate. For those of you who either a) closely follow the activities of Auckland's "elite" as though it were an extremely dull episode of *Gossip Girl* (even Epsom's

Wikipedia page describes it as "exclusive" and "affluent"), or b) take an interest in electoral politics, you'll know Epsom is a bit of an anomaly. For those who don't – it's an ACT seat and has been since Rodney Hide snapped it from National's hands in 2005.

It makes sense, therefore, to put an ex-Auckland Grammar boy up for the job. Seymour previously ran for Auckland Central in 2011, and has worked as a ministerial advisor to John Banks (the ex-mayor of Auckland who currently holds Epsom's crown). David Seymour is surprisingly youthful, and is definitely part of the rejuvenation the ACT Party needs to get anywhere near the five per cent threshold. Much critique of the party image tends to toe the "rich old white men" line; the presence of David Seymour and new ACT leader Jamie Whyte seem to be part of a conscious effort to demonstrate publically that ACT can be in the best interests of young professionals as well. It will be interesting, however, to

see if Epsom will offer Seymour the throne, and his campaign will be one to follow.

DR SHANE RETI – NATIONAL



Shane is one of those National candidates who hasn't walked straight out of Candidates College with a Maggie Thatcher book under his arm and a Simon Lusk selfie. Rather, he has a medical

degree from Auckland University and was awarded a scholarship to study at Deaconess Medical Centre, an affiliate school of Harvard. Unfortunately for Kelly Ellis, he is also running for the Whangarei electorate. This is perhaps the most attention Whangarei has received in years that hasn't involved some outrageous youth activity, racism, or a lawsuit.

With years of medical work under his belt, with a focus on dermatology, Shane has the potential to work with the National Party in improving and refining New Zealand's healthcare system. As Health Minister Tony Ryall is retiring, Shane is prime to step up within the health portfolio sphere. He boasts a strong record of community involvement, having been appointed as director of the Northland Health Board three times. In the economic sphere, he worked previously for New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, in a role that worked on development and planning. He has lived all over the world, a portfolio that could possibly help to turn Whangarei into the next "international city." Good luck with that.

TAMATI COFFEY – LABOUR



Of all the candidates, Tamati is likely the one you've seen or heard of before. A former television superstar, Tamati has appeared on shows such as *What Now*, *Breakfast* (as a weatherman, no less),

Dancing With the Stars (he won), *New Zealand's Got Talent*, and *Seven Sharp*. Known for his big smile and easy-going manner, I'm hopeful his warmth will exude from Parliament TV.

He'll be standing in the Rotorua electorate, and I do wonder if his candidacy is yet another attempt at making the Rotovegas nickname stick.

The seat is currently held by National, so Tamati has a lot of work to do if he wants to steal it for the red team. He has said he wishes to focus on engaging non-voters, and he places a lot of emphasis on community, kids, and gay rights. His Twitter bio says he is "keen on saving NZ from the nats," an admirable and worthy cause – in this writer's opinion, anyway. If Women's Weekly had a "candidate of the year," I'd wager it would be him; he certainly appeals to the celebrity watchers in the Rotorua electorate.



POLITWEETS

Ryan Boswell @boswellryan · 6h
The bromance is blossoming. @simonjbridges and @JohnJCampbell are teaming up for the Randstad Awards tonight in Auckland

Simon Bridges @simonjbridges · 5h
@boswellryan @JohnJCampbell You are so right. More on this later.

#mediabias

John Banks @johnbanksnz · 4m
.....Synthetic drugs.....I am the ONLY MP that said NO to this shit!

If I didn't know better, I'd question whether John was using the synthetic drugs himself.

Clare Curran @clarecurranmp · Apr 4
@Gamer_Live I've never been to a strip club either (bucket list)

What else is on your bucket list?

West Side Tory @tauhenare · 14m
I'm sorry I couldn't do #NativeAffairs tonight. #GAMEOFTHRONESSEASON4

You and me both

Patrick Gower @patrickgowers · 4m
Please keep Simon Bridges away from clinical trials and Nigerian scam artists. The guy will sign anything!

One of many in a series of Bridges Bashing tweets from Patrick

Katie Bradford @katiebradford · 3m
A Labour MP wandering the press gallery just commented the fact Princess Catherine is wearing red is a big political statement. Hmmm

I really want to know which MP

GREATEST HITS

ON TUESDAY, **TAU HENARE**, NATIONAL MP, announced that he will retire at this year's election. This is not the greatest hit; rather it's Tau himself, who has a twenty-year political career that can be characterised by witty retorts and an "I will say whatever I want" mentality. Starting out in NZ First when he won the Northern Māori electorate, he broke off with four other members in 1998 to form the Mauri Pacific Party. That was short lived, however, as Mauri Pacific did not meet the five per cent threshold required to secure a place. From there, Tau joined the National Party, and was re-elected into Parliament in 2005. Tau is choosing now to retire following the revelation that he'll be pushed much further down the National Party list, saying he "deserves better from the National Party." Tau is also well known for a brawl with Trevor Mallard, commenting that he "should have hit him first." The two MPs are fairly chummy now, bantering back and forth on Twitter. Tau's Twitter name is West Side Tory, a conservative take on a beloved musical that has long put him in my Twitter good books.

GREATEST SHITS

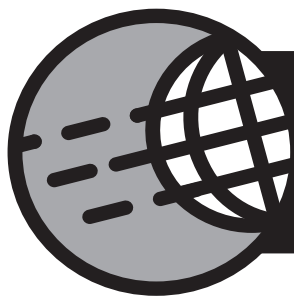
IT WAS REVEALED ON TUESDAY THAT THE Government is allowing the Department of Conservation's biggest forest park to be opened for gas and oil exploration. Victoria Park is one step down from a National Park, which means it is not as protected by regulations. This is bad enough, as NZ should be valuing its natural landscape for more than perpetuating the "drill baby drill" ideology. The Greatest Shit title, however, goes to Simon Bridges. The Energy and Resources Minister signed off on the exploration, but when asked by a reporter "have you heard of the Victoria Forest Park?" he responded, "I haven't, no." Good one, Simon, you don't even know the park you've agreed to allow drilling in. Notable mention: Hekia Parata, once again suggesting she picks her initiatives out of a hat, has announced the merger of two Christchurch schools, Phillipstown and Woolton. This means the former will be shut down. It also means she completely ignored what the local community had to say.

YOUNG POLITICIAN

NA TERATA HIKAIRO - MAORI PARTY

WHAT'S GOOD FOR MĀORI IS GOOD FOR Aotearoa. As a rangatahi representative for the Māori Party, I would like to express the values we have in the Māori Party and why they exist.

Our MPs, the Hon. Tariana Turia, Hon. Pita Sharples and Te Ururoa Flavell, have worked tirelessly to ensure Te Tiriti o Waitangi is part and function to decision-making in Aotearoa. Professor Whatarangi Winiata was very clear at the inception of the Māori Party that, in order to make change, we must continue to be in a decision making role in government, than to be in opposition where we would be nothing but a missed opportunity and untapped potential. For generations, Māori were born in opposition to decision-makers and we think it is time to turn the tides to make people aware that what's good for Māori is good for Aotearoa. All ethnicities are welcome to join our whānau – get involved here maoriparty.org



NEWS IN BRIEFS

BY CLAUDIA HERRON | @CLAUDIA_HERRON

WORLD WATCH

UNITED KINGDOM | A change in law in Britain now makes it legal for people to test themselves for HIV at home. Although the kits are not yet available in the UK, they will be available over the counter and have previously been introduced in the US in 2012. The move is hoped to help the UK's 25,000 undiagnosed HIV-positive people.

UNITED STATES | General Motors has been fined by US authorities after failing to provide information about faulty ignition switches linked to 13 deaths. GM are being fined \$7,000 a day, until they provide the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration the third of its 107 questions that GM have not answered. GM has recalled 2.6 million cars because of the defect.

PHILIPPINES | A law requiring government health centres to distribute free condoms and contraceptive pills has been approved by the Supreme Court in the Philippines, but defies years of pressure from the Catholic Church who denounced the bill as evil and a threat to life. The Philippines is about 80 per cent Catholic, and has one of the highest birth rates in Asia, with a population near 100 million.

EGYPT | Human rights campaigners have condemned an Egyptian Court in an on-going crackdown on personal freedoms after four men were sentenced to up to eight years in prison for committing homosexual acts. While Egyptian law doesn't explicitly ban homosexual acts, prosecutors have used legislation banning debauchery to try homosexuals.

GRAPEVINE

"I've always had faith. I knew that this day would come some day. I'm going to go eat dinner with my mother and my family, and I'm going to live the rest of my life."

Jonathan Fleming, a New York man who has been exonerated after spending 25 years in prison for murder, despite being convicted when he had in fact been on holiday in Disney World at the time of the murder with the documents to prove it.

"Together we all win, but separate, we all lose. This isn't just a question of law, but of sentiment ... I can't imagine Spain without Catalonia, or Catalonia out of Europe."

Spanish PM Mariano Rajoy, following seven hours of debate in which 299 MPs voted against the motion, and 47 voted in favour, that Catalan authorities should be allowed to hold a referendum on independence. The referendum is largely due to the resurgence of Catalan nationalism in the face of Spain's economic crisis.

"The only other similar incident I know from the last few years is when a pig farmer arrived at Wellington with some blood on his jeans. We weren't going to let the soiled clothing into the country unless it was treated."

Andrew Spelman, a spokesman for the Ministry for Primary Industries, after a passenger arrived at Wellington Airport with blood-splattered clothes only to declare the blood was from a cow he had killed in Namibia to be fed to a lion. The passenger elected to have the clothing thrown out, except a pair of shoes, which were treated.

"His involvement on that day was fully supervised. It was games of softball rather than one-on-one coaching. As a board, there's also a little bit of a social duty to balance the risk of re-offending with ... making sure Kevin is treated the same as every other individual ... From our perspective he's been given a chance under certain conditions and it's up to him."

Shaun Singleton, a board member of the Auckland Social Association, after it was revealed convicted sexual groomer Kevin McMillan has been appointed to referee and supervise girls' football and softball games.



critic.co.nz/albumstreetview

A selection of classic album covers inserted into Google Street View.

critic.co.nz/cornfire

How to breath fire using corn starch. It's non-toxic, so don't worry.

critic.co.nz/amazondash

Amazon Dash basically shops for you. Critic will only be impressed if it can make McDonald's finally do deliveries.

critic.co.nz/googlenaps

Google Naps – for when you just really need to find somewhere for a lie-down.

critic.co.nz/lettermandrums

David Letterman seems to have a very strange obsession with the ownership of drum kits.

critic.co.nz/bushgoogleimage

It turns out that George Bush's child-like paintings of world leaders are taken straight from Google Images.



THE ROYAL DAILY TIMES



THE ODT IS YOUR ONE STOP SHOP FOR NEWS OF THE ROYAL VISIT! ALL THE DROOLING AND irrational obsession you could possibly hope for over the duration of their stay is to be found in the ODT's special "royal tour" feature! Funny how so far none of the articles have mentioned how the visit is projected to cost New Zealand taxpayers \$1.2 million but, hey, what Kate looks like every second of the day is so much more interesting!

Dear Kate,

A bit of condescending dribble to start the feature off! Featuring gems like: "Was there a dressing room on that plane? A hair salon? 'Coz, girl, you looked good when you got off that aircraft ..." and "We were pleased you didn't look too skinny ..."

And here's Prince William being schooled in the art of "dropping it like it's hot."



Big event just child's play

Even the royals aren't safe from the ODT's puns. This article cracks a good 'un about the high-profile play date with Prince George.

Laughs all round when Prime Minister John Key tells Prince William about his big ... plans for the royal visit.



Sentenced over threat to kill

In other news, I think we've found a candidate for New Zealand's worst criminal! A 26-year-old man has been convicted after displaying threatening behaviour towards an old girlfriend, including "intentionally damaging her rhododendron plant." He then escalated things by posting a status about killing said ex-girlfriend on his Facebook profile. Ravaging bushes and revealing his murderous plot on Facebook ... ahh, there's nothing funnier than a dumb criminal!

By Kristen Stewart and Allison Hess | @CriticTeArohi

FACTS & FIGURES

90% of pork chops and ground beef contain fecal bacteria.

The Dalmatian is the only breed of dog that gets gout.

The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 2 outperformed *Pulp Fiction* at the box office by a nearly four-to-one ratio, and *Fight Club* by over eight-to-one.

Oysters can change gender depending on which is best for mating.

4,488,512

the total number of pages in the English Wikipedia site at the time of publication.

8 out of 9 women

who develop breast cancer do not have an affected mother, sister, or daughter.

Social Media > Porn

Social Media has finally overtaken porn as the number one activity on the web.

Potoooooo

or Pot-8-0s – was a thoroughbred racehorse in the 18th Century. Originally called Potatoes, the strange name came about when a somewhat illiterate stable worker was asked to write the name on a feed bin.



COUGHS, COLDS AND CLOSTRIDIUM COLITIS.

HI EVERYBODY,

Winter is coming. The white walkers are approaching, the Lannisters are sending their regards, and everybody you've grown attached to is being killed in the most gut wrenching of ways. Fuck you, George R. R. Martin. As winter approaches, not only do we see an increase in the number of manly tears shed over *Game of Thrones* (R.I.P. Renly), we also see an increase in the number of colds on campus.

Colds aren't actually caused by cold weather; they're caused by viruses. You can

stand at the South Pole in your best town clothes (see-through tights and a dress that barely covers your cervix) and you won't develop a cold unless you've got one of those viruses. The cold weather does, however, make you more likely to catch those bugs.

Cooler temperatures make it more difficult for your nose and airways to clear mucous causing moist, runny noses that shed and spray infected snot droplets everywhere. The low temperatures also makes us more likely to stay indoors with the windows and doors closed to keep the cold out and the stagnant, dank, snotty-dropletty air in. So, all those times you were told to "come inside or you'll catch a cold," you should have done the opposite and caught hypothermia instead.

With huge numbers of sick people around, GPs get huge numbers of requests for antibiotics. Antibiotics are brilliant if you need them, but they don't have any effect on viruses and they're definitely not risk-free.

Antibiotics work by disrupting certain bacteria—only enzymes that are vital to keep bacteria alive and replicating. Here's where it gets tricky, however, because we carry a lot of bacteria that are essential for good health. For every human

cell in your body, you have at least ten bacterial cells. Every time you take a shit, around 60 per cent of the poo is bacteria. Without the right types of bacteria in your body, you're at a greater risk of everything from heart attacks, to cancer, to violently soiling yourself on a daily basis.

Unlike people from Christchurch, antibiotics don't discriminate. They are mindless chemicals that target bacterial enzymes. If a "good" bacteria uses that enzyme, it will be wiped out too. People

"Colds aren't actually caused by cold weather; they're caused by viruses ... and you won't develop a cold unless you've got one of those viruses. The cold weather does, however, make you more likely to catch those bugs."

taking antibiotics will often get a bit of diarrhoea caused by losing some of the good gut bacteria that protect the gut. There's a particularly worrying form of antibiotic-associated diarrhoea that is caused by a particularly nasty bug

called *Clostridium Difficile*. *C. Diff.* isn't affected by many of our first line antibiotics and absolutely thrives the moment those good bacteria are killed off. 14,000 Americans die every year from it, so we're not just talking about a bit of the trots.

If that's not worrying enough, there's also the issue of antibiotic resistance. Pretty soon, antibiotics will be useless to us. Bacteria are clever: any bug that comes in contact with any bug that has come into contact with an antibiotic will develop resistance to it. Super bugs currently exist that are completely immune to antibiotics, which is fucking scary. If you never want to have sex again, Google super gonorrhoea.

Antibiotics are brilliant and can be life saving when you need them. But they have risks, particularly when taken inappropriately. When you see a doc and they say that you don't need antibiotics, it's because they think they either won't work or won't make enough of a difference to your recovery to justify the risks. And when you are given antibiotics, make sure to follow the instructions correctly as the courses we prescribe are designed to minimise the risks of resistance and side effects.

By Dr Nick | @CriticTeArohi



NON-MONOSEXUALITY 101

GREETINGS, FELLOW HUMANS:

Today we set out to explain a relatively simple concept: not everyone is more attracted to one sex/gender than another.

Let's think of people as food. You like pizza, right? Maybe you don't, but you're not going to get up in my grill if I do. Some people also like chocolate. Some people prefer one or the other, some both, some neither – some even like chocolate on their pizza. Some prefer different foods altogether, and others don't mind what they're eating provided it's tasty. As long as everyone's enjoying themselves and no-one's getting sick, it's all good.

Now replace types of food with gender identities and/or physical sex, and appreciation with sexual attraction. There you have it: the sexuality spectrum, in a nutshell. In this glance of the *Queer Eye*, we're zeroing in on non-monosexual orientations.

The term "monosexual" describes any person who is sexually attracted to only one physical sex or gender identity – gay, straight, etc. "Non-monosexual" describes anyone who is sexually attracted to two or more sexes or genders.

There are three broad types of non-monosexual:

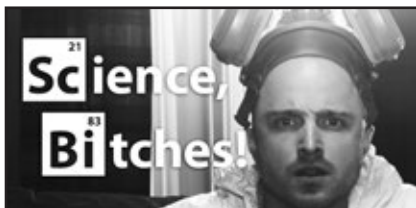
1) Bisexuals: people who prefer two sexes or genders, whatever they may be. These are usually male and female, but can include genderqueer, androgynous and intersex.

2) Pansexuals: people who don't see gender identity or physical sex as a barrier to attraction, and usually don't mind throwing all gender identities and anatomies into the mix. Genderqueer? Great. Transdude? All good. Cisgendered (Not trans)? Damn skippy!

3) Unlabelled people who don't like to box themselves into one sexual orientation.

Some find that they are more frequently attracted to one gender than another, whilst others are equally attracted to two or more. Neither situation makes a non-monosexual person's orientation any less valid – provided they are attracted to more than one at least some of the time, they can claim whichever works for them.

By Orion | queer@critic.co.nz



INVISIBLE SCIENCE

INVISIBILITY WOULD BE AN AWESOME SUPERPOWER.

Are you socially avoidant? Just throw on your handy invisibility cloak and you're good to go! And maybe you don't want to hide. Maybe you just want to conceal your peanut butter so your flatmates will stop stealing it. What does science have to say about invisibility? A lot, as usual!

To understand how to not see something, you first need to understand a bit about how you see it. Light is radiation, produced by lots of different chemical reactions and when hydrogen atoms slam together in the sun (which is called nuclear fusion). When light reaches an object, there are three things that can happen: it can be reflected, absorbed or simply pass on through. We see things when reflected light enters our eyes.

But there is more to light than what meets the eye. The light humans can see – the reds,

blues and greens that make up our world – constitute only a small part of what is called the electromagnetic spectrum. This spectrum ranges from the long wavelengths of radio waves, to microwaves, infrared radiation, visible light, ultraviolet light, x-rays and finally the short wavelengths of gamma rays.

So how do you make an object invisible? Well, you just need to "bend" light around it! That way the object won't reflect any light and you won't be able to see it. To achieve feats like this, scientists have created "metamaterials." Metamaterials are materials that have been specifically engineered to have amazing properties, such as being able to deflect electromagnetic radiation around objects. This is given the cool name of "metamaterial cloaking."

Microwaves are waves of radiation with applications in cell phones, wireless Internet and radar systems. To make something invisible to microwaves would make it undetectable by radar. Using metamaterials, scientists have been able to steer microwaves around small objects. As we can't see microwaves, this doesn't make the object invisible to us. But since microwaves, like visible light, are part of the electromagnetic spectrum, it is a step in the right direction. The

challenge is to extend the technique to larger objects, and also the higher frequencies of visible light, which requires the metamaterial to be made out of smaller components.

Does this mean science can't yet make anything disappear from view? Nope! Chinese scientists recently built a kind of invisibility cloak out of nothing other than a type of glass. The cloak looks like a simple glass container but has the ability to direct light around it in such a way that light reflected from directly behind the cloak reaches our eyes as if it passed straight through it. The scientists used this to render a cat invisible. When the cat jumped inside the cloak you could see through the cloak to a wall without seeing the enclosed cat. However, it is again early days. Disadvantages include the weight and fixed shape of the prism (as opposed to the soft, flexible cloaks favoured in science fiction). You wouldn't exactly want to throw this on your cat. Another thing is that its effectiveness depends on the position of the viewer, with the cat not being invisible from all angles. This is quite a serious drawback if you want to put your invisibility cloak to practical use.

By Laura Illston | @ScienceBitches_

Plan ahead –

PIMS and your eVision portal will not be available over mid-semester break



eVision will be upgraded over mid-semester break and will be unavailable from **9pm Wednesday 16 April** until **8am Wednesday 23 April**.

PIMS will be decommissioned at **9pm Wednesday 16 April**.

After the upgrade eVision will include the information on timetables and exams that you would normally find in PIMs. You will also find more information like your fees, results, and options for picking papers.

Some items will be unavailable for slightly longer:

- change of course forms will be unavailable from **Saturday 5 April** until **Sunday 27 April**
- requests for academic transcripts will be accepted but will not be processed from **Tuesday 15 April** until **Monday 28 April**

For further information, contact the University Information Centre.

0800 80 80 98
university@otago.ac.nz

askotago
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STUDENTS TARGETED BY ENERGETIC BEVERAGE CULT TO EARN MILLIONS “PYRAMID SCHEMES DON’T HAVE OFFICES. WE HAVE A HEAD OFFICE AND LOTS OF OFFICES.”

“IF YOU COULD NOT FAIL, HOW BIG WOULD YOU dream?” These are the words presented on Vemma’s website to entice young people to join the Vemma brand and sell Verve energy drink products. Vemma is an “ultra-premium, liquid formula that provides the vitamins, minerals and nutrients for greater health and wellness.” Verve, the carbonated version of the Vemma formula, claims to be a healthy alternative to typical energy drinks and was created “to provide a powerful nutritional formula unlike any other.” Dr Oz even endorses it.

Testimonials for the product have claimed it cures everything from autism and depression, right through to MRSA. A brand partner who spoke to *Critic* said it had even assisted with their mother’s miraculous recovery from chemotherapy.

Benson K. Boreyko is the founder and CEO of Vemma, the nine-year old company running off a “social network marketing plan.” The company has had continued growth in the US through university students and now aims to attract New Zealand students to become affiliates of the product. Vemma’s policy explains, “A Vemma Brand Partner is an independent contractor, and like any other independent business person, his or her success or failure depends on his or her personal efforts. The Company provides an opportunity for Brand Partners and Customers to enrich the quality of their lives.”

Brad Downs, CEO of YPR Oz and Vemma Brand Partner, said that once students come on board, “money is no longer an obstacle.” Downs is one of many brand partners abroad that is trying to attract young students to start their own Vemma “business” under his guidance. “My affiliates in Auckland are like family to me now.” He says that the opportunities for Dunedin students are “endless ... Red Bull gives you wings. Verve gives you money and cars.”

“Critic spoke to a student who attended a recruitment meeting at the University of Otago, but he quickly realised what type of scheme he was getting himself into. ‘I’d like to make sure a bad weed like that doesn’t get down here [to Otago].’ He says that those involved appear ‘almost cult-like.’”

Critic spoke to a student who attended a recruitment meeting at the University of Otago, but he quickly realised what type of scheme he was getting himself into. “I’d like to make sure a bad weed like that doesn’t get down here [to Otago].” He says that those involved appear “almost cult-like.”

So how does the affiliate make money? Once you purchase the product, Vemma suggests you

give the product away to prospective customers to encourage them to order the product online via your personal e-store. You then encourage your customers to become affiliates and to bring other people on board, therefore growing your “enrollership volume” (the total volume that originates from your activity of enrolling an affiliate, and their personally enrolled affiliates as well).

To receive the full compensation benefits (a commission off everyone else’s purchases below you) as an affiliate, you need to be on the auto-delivery plan of 120pts. This equates to NZ\$211 per month spent on the energy drinks, inclusive of shipping. To qualify for the “Premier bonus” which enables you to earn up to \$800 extra a month towards a car worth a minimum of \$30,000, you must order the silver affiliate pack (\$782) within 60 days of joining.

Vemma say you do not need to spend money to become an affiliate, although it is strongly advised. It soon becomes clear that, while you may not need to spend the money yourself, the only way of remaining an affiliate and of making any money is through recruiting at least three other people who will spend the \$211 themselves each month, and often these end up being close friends or family.

Critic spoke to a number of affiliates just starting their business in Auckland, who strongly

encouraged we joined as part of their team. They would not disclose how much they had made, if any, but pointed out that it had been "a slow start" and they were "still learning and expecting to make money soon."

Vemma's own terms and conditions state that "all Affiliates agree that they will not disparage Vemma, other Affiliates, Vemma products, services, Compensation Plan or Vemma employees or officers. 'Disparage' means making statements, whether true or false [that] discredit Vemma products, services, or Compensation Plan."

Vemma has been accused in the US of operating as a pyramid scheme and the company has been compared to Amway and Herbalife, both of which have had their own legal proceedings over their company structure. In NZ, pyramid schemes are illegal and result in fines of up to \$60,000 for those promoting the scheme and up to \$200,000 for the company, as well as paying back any money received from the scheme.

The Commerce Commission explains, "Pyramid schemes make their money from getting people to join up to the selling scheme instead of by selling goods or services. These schemes will usually pretend to be selling opportunities. You pay money to join up and are encouraged to get more people to join up." Vemma claims they are not a pyramid scheme, as a tangible product is involved and they are not directly paying affiliates for recruiting more people. The problem, however, is that money is not made from retailing the product. Vemma's terms and conditions explicitly state that affiliates cannot sell the product to stores but they may privately sell it at private entities and trade stalls.

Instead, you are paid based on product purchased by your customers and affiliates in the enrolment line (your enrolled affiliates and their enrolled affiliates are part of an "enrolment line"). The majority of the product being sold is purchased by these new customers or recruits who have not yet signed up as affiliates. The company's end users and distributors are basically one in the same. *Critic* spoke to the Australian Head Office and asked how money can be made without recruiting people, to whom we were told, "You can't. You earn money by recruiting people." This was later corrected by another staff member who said that making money under the scheme was not limited to recruiting people, but the reality of



"I've had a couple of calls from people saying that there are nasty evil people taking advantage of students."

He said that there have been reports of people "having meetings in the central library selling their pyramid scheme."

SIMON THOMPSON
UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO PROCTOR

where the financial benefits actually flow from is still a murky area and often illogically explained by proponents of Vemma.

The OUSA Student Support centre has been notified of Vemma affiliates attempting to recruit new customers to the energy drink campaign. The University of Otago Proctor, Simon Thompson, also told *Critic* that he has heard of similar reports. "I've had a couple of calls from people saying that there are nasty evil people taking advantage of students." He said that there have been reports of people "having meetings in the central library selling their pyramid scheme."

So what's the problem with a pyramid scheme? The Commerce Commission explains that, quite simply, "it is not a sustainable business." There will always be people at the bottom and eventually those at the bottom stay there, losing money when there is no one else to be recruited. A Vemma Member Services representative tried to explain why Vemma was not a pyramid scheme to *Critic*. "Pyramid schemes don't have offices. We have a head office and lots of offices."

Critic spoke to Simon Milne, Solicitor at Farry and Co. lawyers, who explained that it is difficult

to tell apart any pyramid scheme from affiliate schemes when, for both, the people at the top make most of the money and, presumably, those at the bottom will not. "It is about sales of the product, however, that is dependent on getting more people on board selling underneath you." He said Vemma "points more towards a pyramid scheme than a multi-level marketing scheme" but that "it is hard to answer whether it is illegal or not at this stage."

He points out that it has only recently come into NZ and that once the company is brought in to the public eye, "I imagine the Commerce Commission and the Consumer Watchdog will be all over this." *Critic* is currently awaiting the results of an Official Information Act Request as to whether the Commerce Commission has received any complaints yet. Milne said that as with any of these types of schemes, "any student getting involved would need to exercise a huge amount of caution." He said, "Students should know there's very little chance of making any money at all."

Vemma claim there is no risk to purchasing their product as they offer a "30 day 100 per cent money-back guarantee." A closer look at the terms and conditions also indicates that the guarantee is very limited. "The Customer or Brand Partner can open a case of Verve and try one can and if he/she is not satisfied, return the other 23 unopened, resalable cans for a full refund." Customers cannot have more than three cans and expect a refund.

Vemma Royal Ambassador and Elite Leader Peter Francis is the number one affiliate in Australia and claims to be earning over AU\$1 million per year. He has been involved as an affiliate for nine years and claims he stuck with the product as it helped him manage his diabetes. He says, "if you're willing to put the work in, then you can make the money. I take this very seriously." He says that Vemma is a legitimate scheme that is just using a different method "instead of paying hundreds of millions of dollars in advertising like Red Bull." When asked if he had considered the legal implications of the company and how Vemma compared to Amway, he said "So what? Amway are still going."

As for the taste, reviews have raved from "pretty good" to "it tastes bad, yo. Like catpiss."

By Josie Cochrane | @JosieCochrane



The immorality of magical thinking

Frustrated by how frequently those suffering will be told to “think positive” and pray, or be blamed for having bad karma, Lucy Hunter delves into the struggles of Zoe, a young woman living with a chronic auto-immune disease.

ZOE WAS 15 WHEN SHE WAS DIAGNOSED with Granulomatosis Poliangiitis (GPA, formerly known as Wegener's Granulomatosis, changed name because of Wegener's Nazi past). GPA is a chronic auto-immune disease which affects one in every 100,000 people. It commonly attacks the kidneys, lungs, and nasal passages. Untreated it can cause facial disfigurement, blindness, amputation, organ failure, and death. Zoe's body was shutting down.

Medication and treatment are extremely dangerous and debilitating. Zoe says her treatment was, initially, “Really difficult on the body. It's essentially like chemo, which is sort of taking you as close to the point of death as possible without actually killing you.” As her body wasn't responding as expected to steroids and immune suppressants, Zoe eventually had to have intravenous chemotherapy. She has now finished, but had more treatments than she can remember over the course of about nine months. She describes what it was like: “I couldn't walk after each treatment. I had to get

a wheelchair down to the car. I'm not an overly emotional person, I don't cry often, but there have been times when, with chemotherapy, you just start picking up and you get slammed back down so many times. It's hard to keep going, alright, let's go another round, let's keep doing this. You wonder if it's even worth it anymore.” Zoe missed nearly her entire seventh form year because of her treatment. Now 18 and starting university, she describes her usual health as “below average,” but says, “it gets much worse than that.” She had to decide whether or not to freeze her eggs at the age of 15. She suffers daily frustration at her limited physical freedom. She has to strictly limit her intake of alcohol and time spent socialising. She can't get any piercings or tattoos, have a job while studying, or move into a flat. Her mum always has to know where she is. Her daily medication makes her feel awful. A class, short walk or coffee date can exhaust her for the rest of the day. Though it is currently in remission, she will have the disease for the rest of her life. What could Zoe possibly have done to deserve this, and what reason could be good enough to make it worthwhile?

The world is wonderful. It is also screwed up in lots of ways, and people have different ways of coping with it. When someone is having a crisis in their life that they are struggling to deal with, it is ridiculously common to hear people give them advice like “what goes around comes around,” “everything happens for a reason,” “the universe is trying to teach you something,” “I will pray for you,” or “God works in mysterious ways.” They can even be told that it is their bad karma coming back to them, and they should be happy to get it out of the way so that good karma can return. This is usually said with an air of certainty, wisdom, and calm, as though the matter is closed. And, of course, people tell themselves these things all the time. These ideas are loosely called “magical thinking,” the idea that your thoughts can change the world around you. They assume that there is a guiding intelligence at the heart of the universe that is there to help you personally. I think there are assumptions that go with this kind of thinking that are not only illogical, but immoral and potentially harmful.

Think of people even worse off than Zoe. Think of torture victims. Think of babies who are born, live a few miserable years, and then are murdered through abuse or neglect. Think of people who die cruelly and pointlessly. Think of Josef Fritzl's daughter Elizabeth locked in his basement for 24 years. What possible reason can there be that is good enough to justify these things? To make them better people? To make you appreciate your own cushy life? And then you break up with your partner or get fired and you “wisely” say how everything happens for a reason, that our trials make us stronger? If someone dies needlessly, how can it work out ok for them? What kind of plan is that? How can being tortured make you a better person? Maybe some people come out of unspeakable horror and find peace, wisdom, or direction in life. Many others come out with permanent disabilities and PTSD. You can't justify atrocities. Even if everything turned out okay in the end, the means are too awful to be justified in any way. If this was someone's plan, that someone is callous and cruel. And if the idea of it is horrible to humans, then why not to an all-powerful, all-loving, all-knowing God or life-force?

Don't get me wrong – I think that psychological health is an extremely important part of human well-being. If meditation helps you clear your mind of anxiety or sadness, then that's wonderful. If praying helps you collect your thoughts and sort out your priorities, then that's a good thing. If positive thinking makes you a better, kinder person, then that's just excellent. Just don't think you are going to change the world with them.

Having had her life narrowed to the task of staying alive for so much of her youth, it is difficult to grasp how anyone would have the nerve to suggest that Zoe should be taking a different approach to her health. So when people tell her that she is not taking the right spiritual path to good health, she gets angry: "I don't have the strength to educate people with what's going on with me. So when I get the advice – to pray to get better, to just be positive, or that I just have to choose to be happy – I really resent that kind of advice from people because it feels like a criticism."

Why would a superior being, all-loving and all powerful, make a teenage girl who doesn't believe in it so sick that she would go as a last resort to a church to beg for mercy? And then choose whether to listen to her or not?

People suggesting prayer as a way of curing illness really believe it does what they say. There are many anecdotal stories of the miracles achieved through prayer. But, sadly, scientific studies have failed to reveal any evidence for its efficacy. "The Great Prayer Experiment" was a massive study funded by the Templeton Foundation in 2006. The \$2.4 million experiment involved 1,802 patients at six different hospitals, all of whom were receiving coronary bypass surgery. They were split into three groups – one group who weren't being prayed for and didn't know it, one group who were being prayed for and didn't know it, and one group who were being prayed for and did know it. Congregations of strangers were given the first name and initial of the patients they were praying for. The published results showed

there was no difference in recovery time for the patients who didn't know if they were being prayed for or not. The difference came in when the patients knew they were being prayed for; they suffered significantly more complications than those who didn't. It would appear that the pressure of being expected to benefit from the prayer was doing more harm than good.

While she appreciates the thought of her Christian friends praying for her, Zoe knows about this unnecessary pressure. She says "I've had people tell me that if I could give them time, if I would come to church with them, that they could heal me. [If it didn't work] I would have done

“It would appear that the pressure of being expected to benefit from the prayer was doing more harm than good.”

something wrong, like I didn't want it enough or didn't have the faith. But it wasn't really feasible for me to be giving that much time anyway. I was kind of busy doing treatment that was having an effect."

Positive thinking, Prayer's less "religious" counterpart, does something similar in putting the onus on the sick person to get well. Zoe sees it as a kind of sick (in both senses) competition. She says, "I really am so against people comparing someone who's sick to someone else who's been sick "better" than the other person. I hate that sort of competition. It's all shit. It's maybe different levels of shit, but it's all shit. I just think

that if you can't give support, don't make things harder." I ask why she thinks people suggest positive thinking to a chronically sick person. She says, "It's a way for them to deal with it. They want to think that it's something that you can fight against. That's why they use words like "the battle" against cancer. They want to think that in every case there is a possibility of winning."

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi was the creator of "Transcendental Meditation" (TM), and was one of the first Indian holy-men to come to Europe and introduce Indian spirituality into popular western culture. He had many famous followers, including The Beatles, giving him certain popular credentials. Though he died in 2006, millions of followers still subscribe to his wisdom. He promoted the idea that meditation through mantra-chanting will cause "yogic flying" (levitation while meditating) and global peace. His project for global peace started in the late 1950s. In 1962, India was at war with China. Two years later, they were at war with Pakistan. In 1970, another great war created Bangladesh. Perhaps without TM the situation in India would have been worse. A cynical view would be to say that it did nothing to help.

Positive thinking, quantum healing, the secret, or transcendental meditation is based on the idea that there is positive and negative energy that can be directed to or from your person with the power of the mind. But the idea of disease as a negative thing that can be eliminated is just wrong. Zoe's body isn't doing something good or bad, it's just functioning the way that it always has. She can no more psychically change the function of her immune system than she can change the colour of her hair or the length of her limbs. She explains, "It isn't like an evil parasite thing; it's just an imbalance. It's not good, it's not bad; it's just there. I had to realise that my body and this disorder were one. I just have to deal with it. You just want to take out the bits that are making you sick, you feel like you're not clean. But my system is already fighting against itself. I don't need to fight against myself. It's not malicious, [it doesn't] have emotions. People

attach emotions to it so they can feel like they have some power in it."

Positive thinking contains the malevolent implication that people who seem to have "bad luck" have somehow attracted bad things to themselves through negative thought patterns. It is making out that the person is somehow to blame for their own misfortunes. This is sometimes called the "Just World Hypothesis" – people don't think bad things will happen to them if they are "good." Zoe has endured many "unlucky" disappointments with her body's reaction to her medication. She explains, "I've heard so many times about things that should work. It's very rare for this not to work and it's very unlikely this will happen. But I take everything with a grain of salt because even if there's a 99 per cent chance of this not happening, there still has to be someone in the world for it not to be 100 per cent. And what makes me more special than somebody else to not be that 1 per cent?"

Perhaps she has bad karma. While prayer, meditation, and positive thinking can be good, harmless things when not given more credit than they deserve, karma is just nasty. According to Wikipedia, Karma refers to "the principle of causality where intent and actions of an individual influence the future of that individual. Good intent and good deed contribute to good karma and future happiness, while bad intent and bad deed contribute to bad karma and future suffering." In other words, if something good or bad happens to you, you deserve it. While the influence of karma is positive, if it encourages people to be kind to each other, the flipside is downright sinister. I asked Zoe, "What could you have done to deserve all this suffering?" She shrugs and says, "I don't know. I can't think of anything. I haven't stomped on any kittens or anything."

But she may have done something in a past life. Or she could have inherited bad karma from her parents. These are the justifications given for innocent people who have awful things happen to them. A baby born with a hideous, agonising disease? The little shit must have been an arsehole last time. People living in terrible poverty with no reliable access to the

“A baby born with a hideous, agonising disease? The little shit must have been an arsehole last time.”

necessities of life? They are lucky, because next time they may get something better. Just typing it makes me angry. It is horrifically irresponsible and arrogant to presume that huge numbers of ordinary children and adults deserve suffering worse than the punishments the worst criminals receive in prison. Imagine if we were to sentence all the rapists and murderers in our prisons to death by bone cancer. It would be rightly seen as too cruel and heartless, even for them. What could an innocent child have done to deserve it?

What does help Zoe is obvious: the support of her friends and family – particularly her mother who has been with her at every single appointment and seen her through the worst days and nights of her illness; an online community of people with her condition; modern medical treatment which, 40 years ago, would not have been advanced enough to save her life; living in a country with a partially socialised health system that pays for her treatment rather than burdening her and her family with unpayable medical bills; and her body that has responded well to chemotherapy. "They do know that this does work, this has worked. It's the treatment they save till last, till they have to. They started seeing improvements in my blood tests. They've been really careful and I've got total experts in the field – I've literally trusted them with my life, and continue to do so. I finished chemo just before Christmas last year." After chemo, Zoe had to inject herself weekly, with side effects being a day of intense nausea, flulike symptoms, fever and chills, extreme exhaustion, and headaches. She is now on weekly pills that are easier on the body. She takes them into the weekends, cutting into her own time so she can keep studying and lead a "normalish life." A lot

of energy goes into maintaining an outwardly "normal" appearance – you couldn't pick Zoe out on campus.

It would be wonderful if we could pray to something and end the suffering of undeserving people and animals; if life were fairer, and everybody got what they deserved based on their actions; if thoughts could attract positive or negative manifestations of reality, or meditation did bring global peace. But the world just doesn't work like that. Liking the idea of something doesn't make it true.

We have Anne Frank's diary; it doesn't justify her suffering. The people who died in the concentration camps didn't deserve what they got. Maybe last year's national uproar over the Roastbusters in Auckland drew extra attention to date rape. It doesn't mean it happened for a reason. The girls and women victimised shouldn't be pleased to be a part of a revolution. Maybe Zoe has become a better person because of her hardships. That doesn't come close to making it ok. Some things are life changing, some things are cool, some things are just utter shit. None of them happen for a purpose. They are not divine rewards or punishments. You didn't attract them to you through positive or negative vibrations. Magical thinking is not virtuous. To believe it is cruel, arrogant, irresponsible, and patronising. It puts pressure on people who have lived through hellacious events to look on the bright side. It is saying that it is ok for people to experience horror and then die pointlessly to help make you a better person. No god or intelligent creator would be witless enough to put that kind of system in place.



LOVEMAKING PREACHERS AND SALVATION AT THE CHECKOUT COUNTER

The Reverend Martin Baker has practiced as a minister for several decades and currently holds a position as the Assembly Executive Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. But, despite his experience (or maybe because of it), it is still a simple interaction at a supermarket checkout that spurs a wave of religious and philosophical questions.

DECLINED.
ACCEPTED.
DECLINED.
ACCEPTED.

WHO TELLS US THAT? WHAT GOD OF salvation or damnation awaits at the end of that EFTPOS cable? How many of us, for no particularly good reason, have a momentary sense of anxiety as we wait for one or the other of those words to appear? Our interactions with this technology provide us with daily judgement days.

Seventeen-year-old Hanna, the operator on checkout four at Roslyn New World, with a restful scene of the orient skilfully inked up her left arm, blushes slightly as I explain to her why I have been declined. It sounds more like a confession. Have mercy on me, tattooed and pierced Hanna, for I have sinned.

Put it back in your pants for a moment, that plastic card, which you keep inserting into things. Step away from Hanna and ask, "what's going on here?" How have we got to this point? When did we sign up to an agreement, which said that our very participation in this society would be determined by a transaction between a plastic card and some financial database god somewhere in the cloud? How many of us even know where that private book of life information is stored?

And we take another step back from Hanna and ask, since when was my essence, the core of my identity, summarised, described, limited in the naming of me as "a consumer?" Apparently the answer to that question can be easily worked out – sometime in the early 1960s, "consumer" became the word of choice, rather than "citizen," to describe the individual's relationship with the state. It is no coincidence that this shift in

human naming happened pretty much at the same time as the growth of neo-liberalism with its emphasis on privatisation, free markets and the intrinsic value of providing individuals with spending choices in an ever more competitive market place. Just think how much more difficult it would be for advertising to appeal to our sense of duty and obligation and the rights and responsibilities of being a citizen, rather than foisting on us the belief that there is yet another thing that we simply must consume? We are now, more than ever, what we eat.

You see, I can't say to Hanna that I'd rather swap two dozen eggs from my chickens for a six pack of Speight's, nor can I appeal to her moral sense of fairness and shared humanity to explain that my hungry flatmates desperately need a couple of loaves of Vogel's, which I have no money to pay for. She would call the manager or the police in either scenario. The declined of today, like the

"I AM A PREACHER. IT IS ONE OF THOSE PAUSES-IN-THE-CONVERSATION MOMENTS JUST AFTER YOU ANSWER THAT TERRIBLE QUESTION, 'SO WHAT DO YOU DO?'"

sinner of old, always cause trouble, they are always the blameworthy. Or maybe I'm just hung about who names us. I am a preacher. It is one of those pauses-in-the-conversation moments just after you answer that terrible question, "So what do you do?" The same thing happens to undertakers, cops and for one of my brothers, who is a venereal disease specialist.

But someone must have said something good about preachers. Take Charlene's 1982 treacle dripping hit "I've Never Been to Me" – which made it to number five here in Aotearoa. The song contains the words "taking the hand of a preacher man and making love in the sun." What a nice thought. After all, Charlene was quite a looker in her time, and if she finds preachers attractive, then what is wrong with that? But then we have, in the same song, her crooning and gasping over seeing "things a woman ain't meant to see" (what is she talking about?). Which, perhaps incidentally, is the reason, albeit with the preacher lovemaking, "I've Never Been to Me" has been voted as a song with the top ten dumbest lyrics of all time. However, if I do want to look for a song that evokes a better impression of a preacher it is hard to go past the magnificent Dusty Springfield's 1968 "Son of Preacher Man," which makes it into Rolling Stone's Top 25 Songs Of All Time list. My father was not a preacher man but at least it offers some comfort for my own son, perhaps – and, yes, I did come within a hair's breadth of calling him Billy-Ray – how cool would that have been?

So what does come to mind when we start talking about religion? A while back an advertising

agency captioned an image of the crucifixion of Jesus with the title: "just another carpenter who said he would come back to finish the job?" The ad brought with it a degree of controversy – not from those who weren't Christians but from within the Christian community itself – some seeing it as trivialising what they considered the day of greatest significance in world history. Others, however, saw it as a helpful way of getting some kind of discussion going about the relevance of Christianity. While Pope Francis has done more than perhaps any recent religious leader has to give the faith some good press, you don't have to look too far to see in the media the world's main religions getting a pretty bad wrap. I remember one politician remarking that when he sees a minister he asks himself "who have you been molesting, I wonder?" Where do you go with that?

Although people go on to me about how New Zealand is not a religious country, or has become very secular, I don't really buy into that line of thinking. I don't think New Zealand was a better country in the 1950s because a lot more people went to church then than they do now. Nor do I think that people who don't go to church have some lesser kind of beliefs than those who do. I don't think there is a person alive who has an absence of belief or a faith in something, or some sense of, the more elusive to describe, spirituality. The much more interesting discussion I want to have with you is, what do you believe? What gives you a sense of value; purpose meaning fulfilment? And what is the relationship between those beliefs and what you do? The choices you make? Or are you just what you eat?

The late David Foster Wallace gave what is considered one of the great speeches of our time to a Kenyon College graduation. He pointed out that the exact same experience can mean two totally different things to two different people because of each person's different belief templates and two different ways of constructing meaning from experience. For example, I am a terrible backer of trailers. I will do almost anything to avoid being placed in a situation where I have to back one. My trailer often has a small aluminium boat on it, called Laura Palmer. One day, I am at the boat ramp at Blind Bay and I have mis-read the tide chart. I can't just drive down on the beach, back the trailer a few meters and drop Laura Palmer into the water. I've got to back down a ramp – a long, narrow, concrete ramp. And, of course, things don't go that well. I don't want to talk about it now. Except whenever I get into this situation, I feel a type of inadequacy, which may even raise questions about my masculinity. What's worse, whenever I am in that situation, an audience appears as if from nowhere. Three or four minutes of back and forth, back and forth, and I notice a Ferguson with a much larger boat waiting to back down, and then (to my horror), two long wheel based Land Rovers also waiting with their much bigger boats. I close my eyes and say "God, what am I going to do?" And into my short prayer intrudes the voice of my fantastic neighbour, Kevin – and the most gifted trailer backer this side of the black stump appears. "Need a hand?" He asks. Seconds later, Laura Palmer is sliding off the trailer into the warm waters of the Colville channel.

Was Kevin an answer to prayer? Yes? No?

AS FOSTER WALLACE WOULD SAY, THE WORST THING IS THE "BLIND CERTAINTY, A CLOSE-MINDEDNESS THAT AMOUNTS TO AN IMPRISONMENT SO TOTAL THAT THE PRISONER DOESN'T EVEN KNOW HE OR SHE IS LOCKED UP."

Of course, as educated people, we want to accommodate all views. But what happens if one is right, or more right or less wrong, than the other? How would we decide that? Where do our beliefs come from? You weren't born knowing the answer to the prayer question so how did you come to a decision about whether or not Kevin was, one way or another, sent by God? What I'm really interested in here is how we construct meaning.

And what really gets me, either way in all this, is the arrogance, on one hand, of the person who is totally certain in his or her dismissal of the possibility that Kevin had anything to do with my prayer for help, or, on the other, of the arrogance and righteousness of the person who claims to be both religious and certain of their own interpretations. Both share an equal amount of ugliness. As Foster Wallace would say, the worst thing is the "blind certainty, a close-mindedness that amounts to an imprisonment so total that the prisoner doesn't even know he or she is locked up."

"How's the water today?" says the old fish to the young fish. The young fish says, "What is water?"

You may not have read much by Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens and others who are part of the "new atheism" movement. They are considered brilliant thinkers, writers and commentators, and, I guess, I lack the intellectual depth to argue against such "pillars" of rationalism. The only thing I do have is a view that contrasts significantly with their assertion of God's non-existence. No matter how such views may confront the teachings of orthodox Christianity, what I fear most about things of faith and belief do not emerge from the diatribes of such doyennes of modern thinking, but evidence of the overwhelming power of some beliefs and ideologies that allows individuals and communities to inflict such unspeakable harm on others.

A couple of months ago, I read perhaps the most troubling book I have ever read – Timothy Snyder's 2010 book called *Blood Lands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*. The book details (it's a long book and it details a lot) the mass killing of around fourteen million non-combatants by the regimes of Joseph Stalin's Soviet Union and Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany between the years 1933 and 1945. Most died outside the two regimes' respective concentration camps. This happened in a region comprised of what today are Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia and the Baltic states.

One of Snyder's important arguments is that we should never resign ourselves to the temptation to, for want of a better word, "conceptualise" these events – to describe them, for instance, simply as evil. This was planned killing. There was a budget, a strategy, a bureaucracy, a business plan, and a vision. The fourteen million deaths are fourteen million stories of individuals who lived lives, people who wrote letters, scratched messages, sang, or cried before they were executed. The people who did the killing also had stories. Some of these executioners were people who lived their lives as neighbours, friends and even colleagues of those who, one day, they felt reason or justification in killing.

For Dawkins and his colleagues to champion the values of a secular society almost seems a negation of that fact we all have beliefs, and all of those beliefs have an associated spirituality. Even though I would not want to attempt a definition of "spirituality," I think it is something

we all have, and it is to do with the words and thoughts and deeds that express the things of most profound importance to our sense of meaning, identity, value and purpose.

There in an old Bob Dylan song called "You've Gotta Serve Somebody." I know it has been voted more recently as Bob Dylan's second worst song of all time, even though it did win a Grammy back in the day, but it also motivated John Lennon into writing "Serve Yourself" – as a kind of protest to Dylan's message. And that's what I like in this. Dylan versus Lennon – let's talk (or sing) about what we believe and see where that takes us. I think Jesus would have ended up sitting down and eating and drinking with both of them – and I still ponder why doing that was one of the things that got him executed – his powerful enemies kept going on about how he "eats and drinks with sinners."

Now, I don't know what I'm going to do. I could burn my Visa card, occupy Wall Street, share a beer with a tax collector or a prostitute. But I think, without wanting to sound too much like a preacher man, that it might start with working on some degree of self awareness – a sense of the choices and decisions you're making, and thinking about the beliefs that underpin our decisions and priorities. In the end, I think power is all about not only making choices, but also realising that there are choices to be made.



THE ABYSS

TURNING OFF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Exploring the three main obstacles on the search for enlightenment, *Hadleigh Tiddy* ventures back through his experiences of a meditation-fuelled spiritual quest.

AT SOME POINT IN MY FIRST YEAR of University, during a particularly bleak mid-winter-hide-under-the-covers-for-two-days binge, I was linked to a video on YouTube that would change the course of my life. The clip, entitled "Alan Watts: Music and Life," was only two minutes long, and was made up of a short animation by the *South Park* guys that was accompanied with a voice-over by a guy called Alan Watts. The two didn't go together at all – Watts has a deep and soothingly English voice, while the animations only reminded me of that episode where Mr Mackey scissors all the lesbians. Nevertheless, watching that video under the sheets felt like I'd suddenly stepped out of a moving car: I had the peculiar sensation that life was moving along and I was standing still. I quickly went about making my way through 20 other Watts videos, and over the next few years followed many threads that came of him. I had embarked on my spiritual quest.

My questing, over the next couple of years, was quite a standard one. I began to meditate, at first by myself in my bedroom, and later in a group. I started experimenting with some pretty heavy psychedelics and stopped drinking. I took a class at university called *Mysticism: Spiritual Maps and Reality*, and, in second year, tore through about 50 different books that could all be grouped under New Age (yes, I tried *The Secret*, and no, it didn't work out). I started eating organic, local foods; I bought a juicer; I became one of those yoga guys; and, during the course of this quest, I become very interested in the possibilities of "enlightenment."

Enlightenment. Nirvana. Awakening. Attainment. The word, to me, brought about the image of some kind of Mr Miyagi character, small and very Japanese, sitting on a stool in a low-lit room with incense, smiling peacefully. Somewhere, in the distance, a triangle dings, and the man opens his eyes knowingly: he has become enlightened.

I started reading more about it; I discovered that this kind of awakening has actually been the primary goal for Buddhists since the original Buddha reached it some 2,500 years ago. The experience frequently gets described as a complete dissolution of ego, a loss of attachments to everything, and the elimination of suffering – for the Buddhist, life is suffering and that suffering comes from our attachments to the world. If we can release all of our attachments and desires, we'll be free. Admittedly, this does sound pretty good if you're at all familiar with suffering.

Becoming enlightened is not an easy thing to do. For the Buddha, it took about 10,000 lives worth of reincarnations, which he spent tirelessly perfecting his virtues. When he was finally born as Siddhartha Gautama, it took six years of self-mortification, and then a meditation that lasted 49 days without break. For many, it requires a complete isolation from society – legend has it that the monk Bodhidharma, patriarch of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism, spent nine years sitting in a cave, facing a wall, completely silent. When he decided to get up and leave, his legs were so atrophied that they fell off. In a more modern context, the Thai Forest tradition requires its monks to spend their nights

meditating in the Thai forest, amongst tigers, snakes, and spiders. Many have been eaten. Even if you're good at enduring physical pain, you still have to get around some other serious obstacles – obstacles that, in my view, make the whole matter not even worth your time. These obstacles are:

1. Enlightenment is ineffable
2. Enlightenment is illogical
3. You are already enlightened

Listen.

1、

Enlightenment is ineffable

If we can consider the entire group of "enlightenment texts" – from Buddhist to Ayurvedic to New Age – as some kind of pan-religious genre, then one of the biggest and most clichéd tropes in it is the assertion that enlightenment is *ineffable*, or impossible to describe. "The dharma (meaning teachings or discourses)," goes the old Buddhist proverb, "is like a finger pointing at the moon." The moon, in this expression, is like truth or illumination, and the fingers are like the words used to direct us there (meta, right?). If we spend all of our time with our heads down, focusing only on the words that we hear and tell ourselves, we will never look up and be able to see the big, real thing in the sky, which is quite different from any kind of description of it. Words fall short of reality – "big," "round," and "butter-coloured" can conjure up things *like* the moon, but they will never compare to the experience of actually seeing it. Likewise, any description of enlightenment will be bound to fall short of what it really is, because we need to take the big step of looking for ourselves. These words – so the argument goes – will not take you there. You need to look for yourself.

It gets even worse – not only can enlightenment not be *described*, it can't even be imagined! The Zen school, in particular, constantly reiterates that enlightenment is not a "concept" which we can ever hope to comprehend. Instead, enlightenment is an experience. In Shinryu Suzuki's

"Words fall short of reality – 'big,' 'round,' and 'butter-coloured' can conjure up things *like* the moon, but they will never compare to the experience of actually seeing it."

classic treatise *Zen Mind, Beginners Mind*, the famed founder of the San Francisco Zen Centre explains that

"There is no need to intellectualise about what our pure original nature is, because it is beyond our understanding. And there is no need to appreciate it, because it is beyond our appreciation. So just to sit, without any idea of gain, and with the purest intention, to remain as quiet as our original nature – this is our practice."

Or, the more you understand enlightenment, the less enlightened you are.

Of course, all of these claims lead to another, deeper paradox – the paradox that words like *ineffable* and *incomprehensible* are, in fact, tools we use to describe and understand what enlightenment is. Saying that something is impossible to understand is a method of understanding it – this whole section, by trying to outline how awakening is beyond the realm of description and conceptualisation is, indeed, a description and a conceptualisation of it. Suzuki's warning against intellectualising is itself an intellectualisation, his wordlessness hopelessly wordy. As the reasoning doubles back on itself, we find ourselves in some kind of theological straight-jacket where nothing we can say or do will make any sense. This is a problem that the sages deal with in the only way they can:

Silence.

2、

Enlightenment is illogical

One of the quirkiest traits within the enlightenment genre is the sheer bizarreness of how some of the traditions address the experience (given the supposed ineffability of it all). The Zen tradition is the best for this – one collection of

writings, *Zen Flesh Zen Bones*, contains some of the oddest spiritual tales you might hope to encounter. Here are some of my favourites:

"Everything is best"

When Banzan was walking through a market he overheard a conversation between a butcher and his customer.

"Give me the best piece of meat you have," said the customer.

"Everything in my shop is the best," replied the butcher.

"You cannot find any piece of meat here that is not the best."

At these words Banzan became enlightened.

"Gutei's finger"

Gutei raised his finger whenever he was asked a question about Zen. A boy attendant began to imitate him in this way. When anyone asked the boy would raise his finger.

Gutei heard about the boy's mischief. He seized him and cut off his finger. The boy cried and ran away. Gutei called and stopped him. When the boy turned his head to Gutei, Gutei raised up his own finger. In that instant the boy was enlightened.

These stories originally came from a book called the *Shaseki-shu*, and were written in Japan in the late thirteenth century. There are hundreds like them: other stories include dead cats, snake-head soup, and a certain enlightened tub-maker. For the student of Zen, these stories demonstrate another very important lesson about enlightenment – that enlightenment is *illogical*.

According to doctrine, our rational and judgmental minds are what are keeping us from becoming enlightened and, for the enlightened sage, the mind has been silenced completely. By silencing his mind, he removes the impediments of subjectivity that keep him from seeing things how they really are. Enlightenment is something that actively defies our powers of reason and logic; in order to see into the truth, those powers must be suspended. We cannot think our way there. This isn't exactly "pre-rational," but "trans-rational" (as Ken Wilber puts it) – a mode of experience that transcends our usual way of perceiving and processing the world. It is beyond thinking.

The story of Banzan and the butcher demonstrates this aptly. The butcher's claim that causes Banzan to become enlightened is that "everything in my shop is best. You cannot find any piece of meat in here that is not the best." On the surface, this is just a generic sales pitch for his meat – but on a deeper level, it's seeking to short-circuit our rational frameworks of "good meat" and "bad meat." By losing those categories, Banzan was able to see clearly the True Nature of things, freed from his own subjective and very biased lens. This is quite a radical action, considering how value-laden our lives usually are: bad apples, good weather, bad sex, good haircut. Judging things as *good* or *bad* is so integral to our lives that it seems strange to even point it out. Nevertheless, this is what Banzan comes to see: the butcher reveals to him an experience outside of the ordinary, subjective, and relative mode – a place where things are free from categorical judgment. And it's at this moment that he becomes enlightened.

For a university student such as myself, steeped in a culture of rationality and reason, this is utterly baffling. How am I supposed to not make any judgments about things? Aren't categories a good thing? Otherwise, how are we supposed to make any discernment about the things we want or don't want, between things good and bad? Isn't the "enlightenment experience" itself a category, just like all of the other "useless" categories? The sage's answers to these are just as vexing as the questions themselves:

Silence.

“I’m pretty confident that I’m unenlightened, and many people I know will back me up on that. If it’s really the case that everyone is intrinsically enlightened, then why does everybody seem so hurt, frightened, and lonely?”

3.

You are already enlightened

When Buddhism spread from India to China in the second century C.E., a very peculiar text called the *Nirvana Sutra* appeared. This text was peculiar because it was the first text we know of to describe what Mahayana Buddhists call "Buddha-nature," which is the notion that every sentient being has within itself an intrinsic enlightenment, waiting to come out. Instead of attaining some extra-special state through years of intense meditation and willpower, we simply have to sit down and let the nature of our enlightenment come through. In fact, any kind of effort towards reaching enlightenment is antithetical to the project – efforts in any direction are getting away from "what is." The real role of teachers and gurus, under this line of thinking, is not to take you anywhere new, but to return you to yourself.

If you're anything like me then this news will probably strike you as incredibly dubious. I'm pretty confident that I'm unenlightened, and many people I know will back me up on that. If it's really the case that everyone is intrinsically enlightened, then why does everybody seem so hurt, frightened, and lonely? The *Nirvana Sutra* has a beautiful story for explaining this, which begins with a man who had a very hard pearl between his eyes. One day, while wrestling, the pearl was pushed into the man's skin without

his noticing. When a boil started to develop, he called the doctor, and the doctor quickly recognized what had happened. The strong man didn't believe the doctor, but when the doctor showed a bright mirror up to his face, the pearl appeared! The man was greatly surprised, and "a thought of wonder arose in his mind." In just the same way, our "pearls" of enlightenment reside within, obscured by external boils and pus. To see it, all we need is a bright enough mirror.

Sri Ramana Maharshi, one of the great Indian gurus of the 20th Century, said it even more elegantly:

“Realisation is nothing to be gained anew ... Realisation consists of getting rid of the false idea that one is not realised.”

Our only problem is that we can't see it: it's buried down deep, but being born into a shit world and having to go through many shitty experiences has meant that the expression of it gets obscured. Giving up on achieving enlightenment, and simply being OK with how we are, is an intrinsic step on the path to enlightenment: the path is no path at all. Just like the iconic Zen circle, my quest had taken me right back to where I had began, before I had learned anything of the matter. To be truly awake, we need to forget any kind of goals to set, or places to be, or lessons to learn, or people to meet, or concepts to understand. The only way we can do this without making that a goal *itself* is this:

Silence.



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di lusso
BAR

Love is Blind

Critic's infamous blind date column brings you weekly shutdowns, hilariously mismatched pairs, and the occasional hookup. Each week, we lure two singletons to Di Lusso, ply them with food and alcohol, then wait for their reports to arrive in our inbox. If this sounds like you, email critic@critic.co.nz or FB message us. But be warned – if you dine on the free food and dash without sending us a writeup, a *Critic* writer will write one under your name. And that won't end well for you.

♂ HARRY

AS THE DATE GREW NEARER AND NEARER, I STARTED FEELING THE NERVES. I had club prize giving beforehand so I was downing as much liquid courage as I could get my hands on. When I was feeling much less coordinated and much more talkative, I headed out.

I walked into the bar ten minutes late so I wouldn't have to wait a half hour for my date to show. The bartender, seeing the look on my face, guessed why I was there and handed me a drink to help bury the nerves for good. We had a brief chat about how the dates went; some looked more like car wrecks than blind dates, apparently. After a few minutes, she walked in and I was happy to see that none of my flatmates' predictions had come true: she was cute with dark hair and didn't run out upon seeing me. We introduced ourselves and took seats and got to talking immediately; we both confessed we had friends ready to bail us out in case of a disaster but thankfully neither of us needed to.

As it turned out, we had both been set up by our flatmates and both of us had the same fears leading up to the date; the biggest being "what if we got stood up?" With the worries of a no-show gone, we started off on our bar tab and talk continued to flow. She was a second year food science student with a love of baking and travel; she gave me the rundown of the places she had been and her plans of working in New York.

She excused herself to the bathroom and I had a chat to the only other people in Di Lusso at the time, who turned out to be on a red card blind date and apparently went to the gym a lot. They gave me a thumbs-up regarding my date, and gave me some questions I should ask.

With the bar tab dwindling we decided we should probably order some food, which we barely touched. We finished our alcohol and I walked her to her door, got her number and will hopefully see her again.

Thank you *Critic* for a great date.

♀ GINNY

MY FRIEND AND I WERE JOKING ABOUT WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO GO ON one of the *Critic* blind dates, that it would generally be a laugh and a half. Apparently my small amount of enthusiasm was enough to have me signed up. The next thing I knew I get this text asking if I was busy on Thursday – which was closely followed by another text saying: don't make plans, you're meeting your potential soul mate. Good Lord.

Keen as I was to meet this potential soul mate, I was more enthusiastic about the \$50 tab that would ensure a good time. The general thought was to go on the date for the extras, and if the date was good looking, then that was the unexpected bonus. Thursday provided the unexpected bonus as the date was definitely blessed with good genetics. Props to his parents. Alongside the good looks, he was a good yarn. There was a determination in the air to deny any space for an awkward silence and it was fair to say that the tab also helped the conversation flow. However, that's as far as I was planning to connect with my date. As attractive as my date was, the ripe old age of 23 wasn't exactly what I wanted on top of me at the end of this night.

Hurrying the date along, we went off to play some pool. Chivalry shined through as he let me win but that didn't make his game any stronger. Two games and I was ready to go. We went back to his flat and, continuing the chivalry, he drove me home. Probably not the legal thing to do, but heels don't work long distance. At the door, I gave him my number and went in for the hug, setting down the mood for the night. Another time, I'm sure I would be more than keen for a piece of him. Just not when it has to be discussed with the public.

Cheers, *Critic*.

NOTE: *Critic* does not in any way endorse drink driving.



EXORCISE (E) BY JAMES ROBINSON

MINT GALLERY
EXHIBITED UNTIL 18 APRIL

MINT GALLERY IS CURRENTLY EXHIBITING *EXORCISE (E)* by award-winning artist James Robinson. Robinson was born in Christchurch in 1972 and currently lives in Dunedin. He completed a Bachelor Of Fine Arts at the Otago School of Fine Arts in 2000, and a Foundation In Fine Art at Nelson Polytechnic in 1990. Since then, Robinson has exhibited regularly in private and public galleries both Nationally and Internationally and his work is held in numerous public, private and corporate collections throughout New Zealand and Australia. Working as the William Hodges Fellow in Invercargill over the past year (which also resulted in a six-month New York residency), James has created drawings, paintings and collages in a methodical large series across a broad range of mixed media and technique as seen in *EXORCISE (E)*.

Robinson's works in the past deal with trauma and elevated levels of emotion, and his most recent work exhibits the same level of refined skill application, as each work leaves some kind of stain in one way or another. In his previous exhibition, *Astral Weeks*, exhibited last June, Robinson questions the crucial questions of life, existence and meaning, presenting his wonders in images of crystal skulls, pagan symbols, sci-fi images and obscure annotations which hint to his own uncertainty and misunderstanding. Similarly, in *EXORCISE (E)*, we see a range of stylistic innovations and obscure annotations.

Robinson is clearly motivated by the complexities of his own intellect and life in the creative sphere, and his works seem to offer a balance between the conscious and unconscious; and the material and immaterial world. The anxiety and doubt of the modern world is revealed through the flurry of brightness and brilliance of his work, but it is disrupted by an insistent nagging commentary of constant uncertainty and questioning – i.e. the cynical annotations

which ask the big questions, "why do I exist?" and "what does all this mean?"

Robinson does not necessarily provide these answers and it is unclear which side he falls on or whether he has decided for himself. The works are sincere, but not definite. Robinson says, "In the end, I don't know if the works are meaningful or not ... whether there is 'meaning' or not at all ... it's a kind of back and forth, an argument, but it's a process that I need to be with right now."

Robinson describes this body of work as a continuation of his New York series, integrating the nature of identity and globalism and what it means to be human in an increasingly inhuman world. Also inspired by nature and music, sex and movies, the works are described in the artist's statement as "the horror of human evil and degradation on most fronts ... The failure by design implemented by our masters for want of a better definition ... Covert, totalitarian, spiritual enslavement via self administered mind control surveillance, police-state of the planet and all them other silly irrational trifling paranoias I have as one of the mentally ill bio-chemical consumers gone faulty for some reason."

The series is in close dialogue with Robinson's on-going spiritual investigation between the more primal Eastern ideas of the mind and body, against the Western cultural values of materialism.

The surfaces are built up through various layers and processes of icons, texts and found materials, including string woven sacks, bottle caps, newspaper pages, straws and even HAIR. Using a variety of brightly coloured wet media, including pastel acrylic colours and water colour variations – as well as the blank areas of untouched surface, which reveal gaping holes or burnt, stitched and ripped out areas of inverted eruption – the paintings become a physical experience in themselves. Not only is there a strong sense of the artist's actions in what is seen, the surface is so varied, pitted and textually excessive, there is visual complexity that one must weave in and



out of in order to be able to take everything in. The agitation and anxiety of the artist is inherent, and this self-investigative oscillating work reveals the journey of the tortured soul within.

Robinson invites the viewer to participate in the search as we trawl through his trivial statements, symbolic forms and weird surreal vistas, trying to decipher any meaning. I couldn't help but think there is no real meaning, and perhaps the works are just a manifestation of Robinson's personal experiences, emotions and thought processes, recorded at the times in which they were felt.

By Hannah Collier | @HannahCollier21

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ZINE OF THE WEEK
MIDNIGHT COWGIRL

BY ANONYMOUS

22 A5 PAGES - DIARY FORMAT

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NOW, LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT A FRIEND OF mine who knew the value of meeting people without judgment. His name is Jesus. Yes, there is such a thing as Christian Anarchism and some people practice this. *Midnight Cowgirl* is one account from the source and free from politicians, pimps or hypocritical priests. It is not a zine about a sex worker who needs "saving" - it is about someone who deserves control of their own life, to think for themselves and to make their own decisions.

Let's be clear: sex work is work. All workers deserve their rights and those rights are ultimately human rights. Sex work is historically, and today still, one of the most steadily in-demand yet dangerous and marginalised lines of work. This is true the world over and to a somewhat lesser extent in New Zealand.

New Zealand is considered a world leader for recognising that sex workers deserve the same labour protections as any other worker as a result of the Prostitution Reform in 2003. These protections include protection from sexual harassment, which constitutes abuse and any attempts to control sex workers. This was highlighted in a recent Human Rights Review Tribunal decision, which awarded \$25,000 to a young woman when to quote the decision: "Over a three-month period, the older man belittled and frightened the 22-year-old woman until she felt unsafe and on edge, became depressed and turned to alcohol. His overtures included telling her he could do what he liked with the girls who worked for him, and threatening to take her out of her comfort zone."

Midnight Cowgirl emphatically argues for the solution to justice in the sex-sector that was given then, and is still given now: that it can be achieved through collective support and solidarity, with organisations such as the New Zealand Prostitutes Collective.

Zines of the week are chosen by volunteers at Blackstar Books, Dunedin's own anarchist-inspired community library and social space since 2003, located on Moray Place near the Octagon. Come by sometime - details and directions are available at cargocollective.com/zinefest

By Jacobin | @CriticTeArohi

THE OCEAN AT THE END OF THE LANE

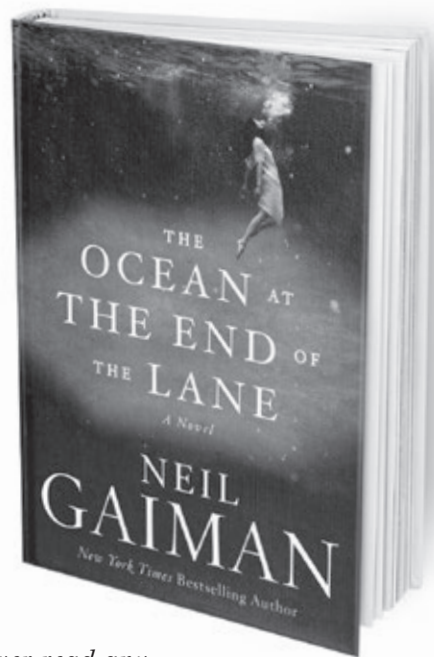
BY NEIL GAIMAN

THE OCEAN AT THE END OF THE LANE IS THE latest novel from best-selling author Neil Gaiman. If you've never read any Gaiman, he's sort of like the modern day Grimm Brothers, except there's only one of him and he's not German. Generally his works are modern day fairy tales with a great deal of dark, adult content - part of which ties back to his strong influence in Alan Moore (*Watchmen*, *V for Vendetta*). Some of his works are child-friendly - in *Chivalry*, an old lady finds the Holy Grail in an op shop and takes it home. Sir Galahad comes looking for the Grail, and thus the story begins. It's sweet and unassuming, and that's pretty typical of Gaiman. On the other hand, there are stories like *American Gods*, where you get women with teeth in their vaginas who eat the men they're screwing (mantis-style). That's pretty typical, too.

The Ocean at the End of the Lane falls neatly

in between the two categories. It's about an unnamed male narrator who returns to his childhood home, remembering the crazy mystical shit that happened when he was seven. It began with a lodger stealing the family car and committing suicide in it, which is pretty hefty stuff for a seven-year-old - but that's one of the interesting things about Gaiman. He doesn't shy away from the fact that kids aren't insulated like we'd like them to be. There's also a sort of emotional buffer for the reader because you're hearing about it from the perspective of the narrator forty years later. That distance between childhood and adulthood is a key theme of the novel, explored through the gap between the narrator and his younger self, but also through the child's relationship with adults around him. Some of them commit suicide and some of them are powerful ancient monsters out to rule the world. Discerning the wheat from the chaff is part of the development into maturity, although, again, the adult narrator provides an unspoken assurance that the child will turn out okay.

The plot of the novel revolves around the ancient powers stirred up by the suicide. One of the powers sneaks through into the real world,



"If you've never read any Gaiman, he's sort of like the modern day Grimm Brothers, except there's only one of him and he's not German. Generally his works are modern day fairy tales with a great deal of dark, adult content."

and attaches itself to the narrator's family in the form of a bustling nanny. The narrator immediately sees through the façade, and tries to persuade his family that the nanny is evil, but they

all ignore him and the nanny sets about doing evil things. It's an intricate way to explore the feelings of frustration and helplessness that a child experiences, and it's mixed with a growing awareness of the very human flaws and failings of the narrator's parents. The refuge from these insecurities is found in three women who live on a farm at the titular end of the lane. They are supernatural figures who've popped up from time to time in other Gaiman novels, but here they're all brought together as one cohesive family. Their magical abilities are quickly revealed, and they are established as secure, reliable people. Where the narrator is terrified by the nanny, who appears to hold the power of life and death over him, the women aren't really all that bothered. They certainly set out to deal with her, but she's always considered more of a nuisance than anything else. It's a rather touching way of espousing myth and the supernatural as the emotional foundation of humanity - a sort of bastion against the pressures and difficulties of life. It's a nostalgic novel, but at the same time it's very aware of the difficulty of negotiating a path through a treacherous, uncertain world.

By James Tregonning | @CriticTeArohi



A-

MR. PEABODY AND SHERMAN

DIRECTED BY ROB MINKOFF

IF YOU WERE ANYTHING LIKE ME, YOUR CHILDHOOD was full of cartoons. A personal favourite of mine was the 1960's *Rocky and Bullwinkle*, a charming Cold War reactionary cartoon about a moose and a flying squirrel on the run from Russian spies. The show was made great by its excellent writing including witty puns, topical and intelligent comedy and self-referential humour. The show had a variety of additional characters, one of which was Mr. Peabody, the smartest dog in the world, and his adopted son, Sherman. 50 years later, Mr. Peabody and Sherman have gotten their own film and, thanks to Rob Minkoff, it is everything it should be and more.

If the name Rob Minkoff sounds familiar, it's because he was the co-director of *The Lion King*, and that same prowess shows in this film. *Mr. Peabody and Sherman* is a delightful mixture of a long-dormant, but excellent, comedy style with a modern children's film narrative. Children's narrative sounds condescending, but it's not. *Mr. Peabody and Sherman* is a film that stands with the revolution of clever, poignant and emotionally evocative children's films that



the Pixar generation has given us.

Mr. Peabody and Sherman's latest adventure sees them travelling throughout time, visiting a variety of superbly conceived locations and moments of history. This partly allows for the expression of the cartoon's function, which was for Mr. Peabody to teach Sherman about the world, but it also ties into a greater narrative. Though the narrative is excellent, the real charm of the movie comes from its tone and humour. It is refreshing to see something that feels so different from everything else being released.

All of these fantastical locations are held together by the movie's breath-taking art style and finesse. Every scene has something different and beautiful to look at, and there are moments of truly innovative directing that bring the world to life.

Minkoff has successfully resurrected a classic with *Mr. Peabody and Sherman* by retaining what made these characters so great while also bringing them into the 21st century in a big way.

By Baz Macdonald | @kaabazmac

B+

NOAH

DIRECTED BY DARREN ARONOFSKY

RATHER THAN A FAITHFUL AND PREACHY account of the Bible jazzed up into a feature-length, Aronofsky attempts a blend of biopic, CGI fantasy, gritty reboot, and ecological fairy-tale which moulds the well-known story of Noah into something entirely new. Any moral preaching is reserved for environmental rather than biblical causes; a good fit for a story about a man who saves a boatload of animals, but delivered with such unapologetic bluntness that it feels ... well, preachy.

Crowe is well cast in this complex and dark take on the biblical character, explored in unforgiving depth. The muffled screams of those left to die heard through the walls of the Ark is something left out of most children's books, but it makes powerful and thought-provoking cinema, well-suited to the harsh morality of the Old Testament.

Dealing largely with the emotional, moral and existential dilemmas facing Noah's family, the film leaves many of the practical questions of the story (food and basic reproductive biology)



untouched. Though possibly more sensible than trying to fill every plot hole in *Genesis*, this tempers the powerful angst Noah otherwise paints beautifully, and the result is a confusing sprawl that teeters between a human drama that makes no sense and a fairy tale that takes itself far too seriously.

Puncturing suspense of disbelief in an entirely different manner, some of the CGI – the parade of the animals, the *Lord of the Rings*-style battles – isn't quite up to standard. That said, the beautiful time-lapse shots of the creation of the

universe are almost worth the ticket price alone, and the CGI destruction of the world is delivered with all the pomp Hollywood can muster.

There's a lot to enjoy, as a spectacle, and even as fuel to a good discussion about religion or environmentalism, but *Noah* itself never quite gels into a coherent film. All in all, it's a miss, but a near one; genuine ambition and vision played out with big blockbuster money. That has to be worth something.

By Simon Broadbent | @CriticTeArohi

CLASSIC
FILM

STAND BY ME (1986)

DIRECTED BY ROB REINER

A LONGSIDE *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*, *Stand By Me* is by far the best film about children, for adults. Based on the Stephen King Novella *The Body*, *Stand By Me* tells the story of a ragtag group of young friends in the All American town of Castle Rock in 1959. After hearing about the rumoured location of a local missing boy's dead body, the four 12-year-olds set out on a dangerous journey to witness it for themselves. The boys are a motley crew: there is the bookish and sensitive Gordie (Wil Wheaton), the chubby and timid Vern (Jerry O'Connell), the eccentric and unpredictable Teddy (Corey Feldman), and the cool kid Chris (River Phoenix).

There are so many iconic moments in *Stand By Me* it's hard to know where to start: the boys getting attacked by leeches; the imaginary pie-eating contest; the near fatal train incident; Chris' teary confession to Gordie that he doesn't want to end up like his family ... the list goes on. But there's no denying the magic of this film comes from the four hilarious and touching child actors. Wheaton, who played our protagonist Gordie, stated in a 2011 interview that the genius



of *Stand By Me* was how Rob Reiner cast boys who were basically their characters: Wheaton was "awkward and nerdy," Jerry was "funny," Corey was "incredibly angry," and River was "cool, smart and really passionate." At the end of *Stand By Me*, the audience hears what the boys become when they grew up and, hauntingly, many of the actors followed their characters fates: Wheaton became a writer, Feldman went off the rails with drug addiction and a

questionable relationship with Michael Jackson, and Phoenix became the "it" boy of Hollywood, only to die of an accidental drug overdose at age 23. The big surprise is that the chubby, annoying O'Connell would grow to become a smoking hot babe. Who'd have thought?! At 28 years old, *Stand By Me* is all grown up, but still one of the most revered films of all time.

By Rosie Howells | @CriticTeArohi



C

ROMEO AND JULIET

DIRECTED BY CARLO CARLEI

IT'S CLEARLY NOT EASY TO ADAPT A CLASSIC FROM the stage to the screen. Many have tried and very few have succeeded. When Shakespeare is involved, these adaptations invoke the question: do you try and stay loyal to the context and language of the original text? Or do you modernise it to make it relevant to today's audience? Unfortunately, in Carlo Carlei's adaptation

of *Romeo and Juliet*, he thought that there was a middle line between these two concepts ... turns out there isn't.

Carlei's adaptation of one of the English language's most famous love stories made too many mistakes to outline, however, its greatest flaw was its attempt to combine a terribly edited version of Shakespeare's text with modern Hollywood conventions. This included all the clichés you would expect from a modern Romantic film, such as a sickening abundance of make out

sessions and a truly awkward sex scene. The real trouble with these particular conventions is that Carlei made the decision to emphasise the age of the characters, who are both supposed to be 13. Unfortunately, the Romeo (Douglas Booth) looked at least 20, and the Juliet (Hailee Steinfeld) truly looked 13, or, at the very least, like a young woman just entering puberty. This made every "romantic" moment overly creepy, undermining the whole point of the film: i.e. to be romantic.

This was made even worse by the truly horrendous performances that almost every actor gave. The film felt like a high school play that had way too big a budget. Every moment was horribly overplayed, with actors finding openings to scream, wail and cry at every possible moment. The one shining light in this film came from the great Paul Giamatti as the Friar. His beautifully heartfelt performance was a real contrast from every other, but unfortunately highlighted the pitfalls of the other actors.

If you're a fan of Shakespeare, then this film will break your heart. If you're new to Shakespeare, please, for the love of God, find another way to be introduced to his work.

By Baz Macdonald | @kaabazmac



INGREDIENTS

SERVES 4 (THREE PIES EACH.)

- > 3 sheets pre-rolled flaky puff pastry, cut into four squares
- > 16–18 eggs
- > 8 pieces of shoulder bacon
- > 3 onions, sliced into thin wedges
- > ½ cup frozen peas (optional)
- > Chopped parsley (optional)
- > Salt and pepper to taste
- > Cooking spray for the tray
- > Texan muffin pan

MINI BACON & EGG PIES

THERE MAY OR MAY NOT BE AN EMBARRASSING video on the Internet about me making pies. You could say I am somewhat of a bacon and egg pie expert.

Last year, I frequently made and delivered these beauties to my favourite *Critic* employees, Sam, Alex and Dan, for their lunches. I did tend to get some odd looks as I walked down George Street holding boxes of hot and delicious smelling pies.

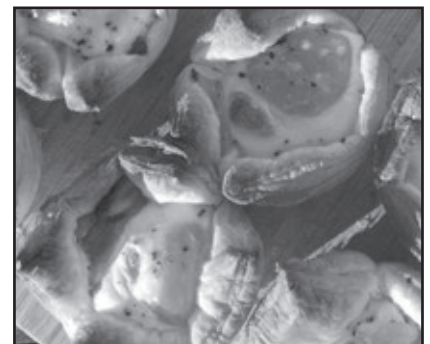
These make great picnic date food (my brother can vouch for that), a good substantial party food or even a quick and easy dinner option. Make the most of the remaining good weather and pack a batch of these up, take them outside and munch down on them whilst sitting on your favourite moth-eaten blanket from St Vincent de Paul's.

All you need is a few sheets of flaky puff pastry, eggs, bacon and a couple of onions. Feel free to add greenery in the form of parsley or peas if you so wish. I like to use Texan muffin pans for these (find them in the baking section of New World) as it makes a nice substantial pie. You can use normal muffin tins but you will have to cut the pastry a little smaller and you get less filling in them.

I tend to only eat two of these things but the boys seem to be able to nail at least three when I make them. It's really easy to make more or less depending on the number of mouths you have to feed.

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 200 degrees.
2. Spray your Texan muffin pan with the cooking spray. Lay the pastry sheets out to defrost to the point they are malleable (DO NOT MICROWAVE).
3. Sauté the onion wedges until translucent. Put to one side. Pan fry the bacon and, once cooked to your liking, chop up into pieces.
4. Generously spray the insides of each muffin pan well with cooking spray. Once the pastry has defrosted, gently press each square into a well of the muffin pan. You will get a triangular edge poking out but that is ok. Make sure it is well fitted into the bottom.
5. Sprinkle the bacon pieces and onion evenly across the pies. Do the same with the frozen peas and parsley if using.
6. Gently crack two eggs into each pie. Don't worry if they slightly overflow. Season with salt and pepper.
7. Bake for 25–30 minutes or until the pastry is golden and the egg is firm when gently pressed. Pop out of the tins with a butter knife.
8. Repeat the pie production until you have all the pies you need.
9. Serve with a good dollop of good old tomato sauce!





B+

MERCENARY KINGS

DEVELOPED AND PUBLISHED BY
TRIBUTE GAMES
PC, MAC, PS4

OVER THE PAST COUPLE OF YEARS IT HAS made me overwhelmingly happy to see video games being inducted into museums all over the world, including the illustrious Smithsonian museum. I'm sure every gamer has their own reasons for why they consider video games art, however, it may surprise many of you to hear that one of the biggest reasons for video games receiving these high honours is, in fact, Pixelart. Pixelart is exactly as it sounds: art (or graphics) comprising of pixels. The video game industry started with this art style out of necessity and as technology progressed so did the number of pixels that a video game could be comprised of. However, despite the fact that we have become capable of creating almost true to life visuals, there are still a plethora of games being developed using the Pixelart style. Now, there are many reasons for this – such as it being a cheaper development option and less demanding on technology. But the real reason you still see so many of these games is for the same reason that Museums recognised games as art. Pixelart is an art style that has

been developed by the video game industry; we created it, we refined it. It is our own.

One such developer that proudly recognises this is Tribute Games. This team is comprised of developers who created the *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World* video game, a series based on the culture Pixelart has inspired. Once again this team is displaying their reverence for Pixelart with their latest game, *Mercenary Kings*. *Mercenary Kings* is a side scrolling shooter that looks and feels like some of the Pixelart generation's greatest games. It brings many tried and true mechanics together to make something familiar but new. Think *Metal Slug* meets *Contra*, all wrapped up neatly within some tasty RPG mechanics.

Like *Metal Slug*, there isn't a great emphasis on story. The basic premise is that you are a group of mercenaries sent to an island to take down a group of terrorists. Despite the fact that you will never know, or particularly care, what exactly is going on, the game is full of colourful characters that keep things interesting. These characters occupy the base of operations where you return after every mission. It is here that you get to choose your missions. Much like an RPG, the commander offers you a series of missions that you can undertake at your leisure. Each mission has a main objective with, possibly, some optional and secret objectives as well. These missions are pretty straightforward, taking the form of "Fetch 10 of this" or "Rescue the Hostage." But, in true *Metal Slug* style, the main objective is really just acting as a platform for you to create havoc on.

The real joy of *Mercenary Kings* comes from the gameplay. There's something truly satisfying about a ridiculously over-the-top side-scrolling shooter. As you explore the map trying to achieve your objectives, you encounter a wide

range of characters – from your classic foot soldier to a litany of goofy mechanical and animal foes. It is these foes that you get the pleasure of mowing down. Some may just fall, however, a well-placed shot will result in them exploding in some fashion. Almost every foe will drop a material of some kind. This is the introduction of the upgrading system, which is what gives the game its real longevity. By collecting materials and money you get the opportunity between missions to upgrade and modify your weapons and armour. Starting the game with a measly pistol, it is a great feeling to trade it in for a big ass shotgun or rifle. My time with *Mercenary Kings* was largely focused on constructing the most brutally awesome weapon possible.

The game is great to play by yourself, however, what makes it really special is its multiplayer. You have the option of playing with up to three friends online or locally. This turns what can be a tactical game into a bloody free-for-all. What would have been a traversal, in which you had to plan encounters and time your shots well, becomes a murderous spree throughout the map. This becomes less possible as the difficulty of the game progresses, but there is something overtly appealing about storming through the map like this, meaning that even if it's to your detriment, you'll probably still play this way. After all, this game is not meant for thought provocation, but for brutal fun.

Mercenary Kings is a great homage to past games that still offers a new experience in a familiar skin. The game can be fun alone, but is best played with three friends at your side screaming at you. Plus, it's free on PlayStation Plus this month.

By Baz Macdonald | @kaabazmac



B

PIXIES
INDIE CINDYPIXIESMUSIC (USA); 2014
ALTERNATIVE, DADCORE

COULD TALK ABOUT BUTTONED-DOWN SHIRT DADS shyly squeezing into old pairs of their black pipe jeans. I could talk about how the waistlines of their jeans pinch at their beer bellies, causing them to initially suck in for the "big gig night" with their old university buds (and how, after a few pints, they'll let it all out). I could describe the Pixies' new album, *Indie Cindy*, as a confident and unconstrained roll of beer belly. But that's both mean and places the legendary Boston band into a suffocating regime dictated by strict (and naive) rules of how they should sound. Who cares how they should sound? Just let them sound!

Indie Cindy is the Pixies' first studio album since *Trompe Le Monde* came out in 1991, and consists

of a mix of tracks from their *EP-1*, released in 2013, as well as their *EP-2* and three songs from *EP-3*, which were both released earlier this year. With Black Francis, Joey Santiago, David Lovering and Simon Archer on bass (Pixie co-founder Kim Deal left the band in 2013 and does not appear on this album), the resulting album has a classic Pixie-style in its shifts from loud to quiet both within songs and throughout the album, but it never quite achieves an edge that'll keep the listener replaying.

"What Goes Boom" opens the album with a rock metal urgency (chilling out slightly as Black Francis pays tribute to Kim Deal, singing, "Kimmy and her bass/She really likes to get rockin'"). It is hectic - with an energy really only achieved again in "Blue Eyed Hexe." In "Greens and Blues," Francis' enduring attachment to the extraterrestrial makes an appearance as he sings, "I said I'm human but you know I lied, I'm only visiting this

shore." This song provides the first hints of the tired-romantic sound that persists (and threatens to entirely embody) the album. Building on the first two songs, "Indie Cindy" grounds the mood of the album. This is a mood that conjures up an image of an older man road tripping across the States - driving during the night and spending the days in a worn down motel. He's either running from or chasing a love that is never going to work out. At times the protagonist is overcome with almost a child-like frustration, but more often he slips into an exhausted state as he watches the dull, fluorescent lights of fast food chains pass by - over and over again - into monotony. This tired mood is particularly felt in the downbeat vocals and guitar of songs in the second part of the album.

While "Bagboy," with its masculine spoken-word bite, and my personal favourite, "Magdalena 318," with its sad, echo-y sound that drifts into moments of unearthly guitar by Joey Santiago, are interesting, *Indie Cindy* lacks something. Perhaps it's the eclectic, sudden (and exhilarating) frenzies that youth, relative anonymity and Kim Deal (with her harmonies and eccentric bass) brought to the Pixies in the past. Or it could be a lack of inspiration. While repeat listenings in different settings and approaching it with a fresh mindset is recommended, keep in mind that the lonely driver may have come from somewhere but now he's not going anywhere in particular.

By Loulou Callister-Baker | @LouLou_cb

B-

TWEENS
TWEENSFRENCHKISS RECORDS (USA); 2014
TRASH-POP, NOISE-POP

ALTHOUGH THE CINCINNATI NOISE-POP TRIO are not actually about to enrol in their first year of high school, the name isn't entirely inappropriate. They're bratty, they're full of energy, they're bored. These guys don't deliver a lot of thoughtful wordplay or wise life lessons; instead Bridget Battle will tell you, in true tween style, what she wants and when she wants it at the top of her voice. It would be easy to lump Tweens in with the lo-fi pop trend that happened a few years ago (Wavves, Dum Dum Girls) and dismiss them as latecomers. But Tweens don't seem to quite fit that mould, drawing more from bands like Be Your Own Pet, Yeah Yeah Yeahs and even Blondie.

The album starts fast with "Bored in this City." Battle cries that her town "is eating her alive" in an infectious blown-out chorus worthy of Perfect Hair Forever. From there it is a sprint to the finish, with few stops for Battle, or the listener, to catch their breath. By the time slow-burning "Want U" comes around at track 10, the wavy echoes of guitar are a sweet relief from the aggressive playing that dominates the album. Battle is reminiscent of Bethany Cosentino as she worries about thinking "way too much" and uses straightforward cliché lyrics like "all I know is I want you." "Star Shudder" ramps things up one last time, borrowing heavily from Nirvana's "Stay Away."

While the songs on this album aren't bad at all, Tweens sounds more like a band you'd want to play in (or at least see live) rather than play through a pair of speakers. With relatively basic song writing and playing, these songs rely on



the energy and grit that comes with live performance. It's hard to imagine this album sticking around to make a lasting impression. Kim Deal likes them though, so that's cool.

By Peter McCall | @CriticTeArohi

NEW THIS WEEK / SINGLES IN REVIEW



HOW TO DRESS WELL REPEAT PLEASURE

Another single from How To Dress Well, AKA Tom Krell. Another romantic themed tale, told with a great soulful melody, and a flurry of illuminating synth work. Features lightly strummed acoustic guitar, sounds a bit like a remixed version of a John Mayer song.



PARQUET COURTS SUNBATHING ANIMAL

Brooklyn based four-piece Parquet Courts bring their classic, loose approach and combine it with a dose of militaristic, hardcore punk. A fast paced, no-nonsense song, sung at a terrifying speed.



LONE - 2 IS 8

Lone is Matt Cutler, an electronic musician based in Nottingham, England. "2 is 8" is the first single from upcoming album Reality Testing. With his mixture of quirky hip-hop beat making and techno, dance influence, "2 is 8" is a fun-loving, hypnotic piece.



PROTOMARTYR - COME & SEE

Detroit band, Protomartyr, release another single to their forthcoming album *Under Color Of Official Right*. The track is packed with dark slabs of synth combined with deep, rugged vocals. Like if Joy Division featured Nick Cave as their vocalist.



JUST FRIENDS - DON'T TELL ME

Just Friends is a collaboration between deep house mastermind Nicolas Jaar and Wardell vocalist Sasha Spielberg. "Don't Tell Me" is soulful, pretty and mesmerising. Highlighted by a infectious vocal hook, the track goes through a series of interesting, pulsing beats and synth runs.

NZ DOWNLOAD OF THE WEEK:

MERMAIDENS - BONES

SELF RELEASED; 2014 DREAMSURF

MERMAIDENS ARE LILY PARIS WEST, GUSSIE Larkin and Abe Hollingsworth, a three-piece, psych-pop outfit from Wellington. Combining dirty, looming riffs and impassioned vocals, their three track EP *Bones* is available for name-your-price download from mermaidens.bandcamp.com.



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A-

TYCHO AWAKE

GHOSTLY INTERNATIONAL (USA); 2014
ELECTRONIC, AMBIENT

TYCHO IS SCOTT HANSEN, A SAN FRANCISCO based visual artist and producer. Having released music since the early 2000s, it wasn't until 2011's *Dive* that Hansen's music started gaining considerable attention. *Awake*, like *Dive*, is a sleek, electro-ambient record with an undercurrent of warmth. But unlike its predecessor, *Awake* feels considerably more spacious, expansive and almost vast in comparison. The low end comes through sharper and crisper, the synths float, sweet and lustrous. And whereas previous efforts have been largely solo ventures, this record marks the first time Hansen has entered the studio with a three-piece band. "This is, in many ways, the first true Tycho record," he expresses.

Featuring Zac Brown on guitars and bass and Rory O'Conner on percussion, the more energetic, driven sound of their live performance is more apparent. This of course results in an atmosphere, more electric and alive. A sense that the music now has room to inhale and exhale, and has sprouted lungs constructed of not only flesh but fiberglass. Now with more organic instruments in the mix, Hansen's synth work pulses in, around and underneath a mainframe

of tender tepidness. Interweaving beautifully and developing into breathtaking swells or more pulsing, hypnotic grooves.

Title track "Awake" is a glistening start to the record, interplaying a driving bass line with intricate layers of soaring synth and a captivating guitar melody. This is pretty much the basic structure for most of the pieces on this album and though there is little variation, I hardly think of that as an aim for a record of this nature. Instead, Tycho hopes to immerse us, mesmerise us in this lucid wonderland their music seems to instill. It sounds something like a sun rise in still frame, or like watching a skyline being constructed in fast-forward.

With a playing time of around about 35 minutes, Tycho is wise in not running the risk of wearing out their welcome. Regardless, I would describe *Awake* as more of a device of atmosphere than a centerpiece. There are moments, quite breathtaking indeed, which extract your full attention. But to me it is more of a complementary soundtrack, a companion piece to the sometimes bustling, sometimes tranquil world around us. There are lulls, as with any album, but Tycho have succeeded in creating an album that is undeniably beautiful and engaging when it feels the need to be.

By Adrian Ng | @TrickMammoth



INTERVIEW: RON HANSON FOUNDER OF WHITE FUNGUS

WHITE FUNGUS MAGAZINE BEGAN IN Wellington as a photocopied publication delivering political messages.

Nine years on, brothers Ron and Mark Hanson are still creating their magazine and last year released its 13th issue. Zane Pockock and Loulou Callister-Baker chatted with Ron Hanson over Skype to understand what *White Fungus* is all about, and how the team maintained enthusiasm and drive for a project that only now is on the verge of an international launch.

Ron: Where are you?

Critic: We're in the *Critic* office in Dunedin. Where are you?

No way! Wow! I'm in Taichung in Taiwan. I went to university in Dunedin. I didn't work for *Critic* but I had a band that was written about in the magazine.

I have a connection to the city. I like Dunedin – it's got its own space – it does its own thing. I went to high school in Wellington [and in comparison] I felt like Dunedin was a place where you could do your own thing – it wasn't caught up in the trends – everyone in Wellington was so much more concerned about being cool. One of the best periods of my life was in Dunedin. That time was a chance to dream. I used to go for walks every night and [think about things].

What about your life now?

Life now is pretty exciting! There's more pressure than I had back in those days – we've been making our magazine *White Fungus* for nine years but it's just starting to come together now.

March 2012 was the turning point for us. Our magazine featured in an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and in that same month there was an article about *White Fungus* in the experimental music magazine *The Wire*. Since then everything has been on a roll. Almost every day there's some good or exciting news for us! We're really enjoying ourselves because we're feeling in control.

How did you maintain enthusiasm for this project for nine years?

We were broke, you know? Before we started we spent four years in Taiwan teaching English. We then had a bit of money to get the magazine going. We also spent years back in New Zealand on the unemployment benefit, we got some grants, we lived with our parents for quite a while. Oh – my mum is calling me! I don't Skype that often! Ahh bad timing, I just declined her. [Everyone guiltily laughs] ... Anyway, during that time all we had was our magazine. We invested everything into it.

If you turn it into a real business will you stay in Taiwan? What's the allure of being in Taiwan? There are a number of reasons. Originally it was because we could make money teaching English here but Taiwan also has really good funding for the arts.

Can you apply for that funding as Kiwis?

We haven't yet but we're about to. We've done a lot of projects with Taiwanese artists and we can always get funding. We were just in San Francisco and we got funding to fly some San Francisco artists over here. Last year we got funding to fly an artist from Taiwan to New Zealand. Recently

we've been introduced to someone high up in the Taiwanese government who has suggested we could get funding here.

I don't know if you know about Taiwan's political situation but Taiwan isn't recognised as a country because of the One China policy. When the KMT moved to Taiwan and Mao took over the mainland there were two governments of China. Eventually the West shifted allegiance to Mao and Taiwan got the cold shoulder even though it was becoming a democracy. Because Taiwan doesn't have all that representation it puts a lot of money into the arts because it wants to get its name out there as much as possible. Taiwan is like New Zealand – it's an underdog, it's politically isolated – but there are some really great artists here. We've spent so much time here now we feel at home. The magazine's name *White Fungus* even comes from a can of white fungus that we discovered in a supermarket here.

When *White Fungus* was starting out, how did you establish connections in order to constantly have content to fill your magazine?

That's a good question. In the first issue we didn't feature any artists, instead we wrote about the bypass being built in Wellington. It was really a political propaganda piece.

It was against Kerry Prendergast, wasn't it?

That's right! We'd just come back from Taiwan and we were working on a music project but we were really struggling to find a studio. Then all these artists were kicked out of their studios because of the bypass – including famous artists like the *Flight of the Conchords* guys. All these people were getting kicked out of their studios and the mayor was still going around saying that "we're the creative capital" and bragging about Wellington, which was kind of embarrassing, too. The mainstream media didn't want to cover this story. I wrote an article for one of Wellington's community newspapers and they edited the hell out of it, so by the time it was published it was totally different to what I had written. In the end we decided to write about what it is they're destroying to build this motorway. We wanted to make a publication about the history of this area – about Cuba Street. Because we wrote about issues that people cared about, our publication instantly got traction. After that we followed the responses. At first, some of the artists we wrote about we had met through art galleries. But at the beginning we had no contacts except the people we'd gotten drunk with at the pub. It



"We were broke, you know? Before we started we spent four years in Taiwan teaching English. We then had a bit of money to get the magazine going. We also spent years back in New Zealand on the unemployment benefit, we got some grants, we lived with our parents for quite a while."

involves trial and error and not being afraid to be rejected or not get any response at all.

Do you have any bad or good rejection stories?

Not so much! You get ignored more than you get rejected. One time a bookstore sent back a copy of the magazine with its business card that said "No. We do not want this." I won't name the store because it's now stocking us. There's no point in cutting off your nose to spite your face!

Generally, we'd be ignored and underestimated. In the past, people would see our photocopied magazine and never see that it could grow into something. People only see something for what it is – they very rarely see a vehicle or a person and see the potential for what he or she or the project could become. Every time we made a new issue people would be shocked. But a lot of people preferred it when our magazine was simply a photocopied work because it was less threatening, I guess. But we were ambitious. We wanted to cause a stir and eventually live off what we did.

Very few people have the courage to cold call but if you do that you will have some successes. But I've always felt like when we didn't get a success or a response, that was for the better anyway. They're not the sort of people we want to talk to. You've got to be open otherwise you go backwards.

What barriers have you faced over time?

Despite the obvious money barriers, the biggest barrier we encountered was a kind of defeatism. People would tell us, "You can't do a magazine," like it was an established fact. Do you know that magazine Pavement? Back in the '90s, Pavement was huge but it went broke and closed down. There was a magazine called Staple, which closed down, and then there was a magazine called Loop, which turned into a record label and the

magazine closed down ... This made everyone think that we couldn't do a magazine in New Zealand because New Zealand is too small. Also, New Zealanders are often suspicious of ambitious people. It was a hard road – there was very little comprehension or enthusiasm. But when things do start going well, people can turn on you even harder because they don't want to be proven wrong. But we were operating on a whole different model and we weren't just dealing with New Zealand – if we were only making a magazine for New Zealand, it would be a lot harder.



I'd like to challenge the sense of defeatism in New Zealand. I want young people to know that just because no one seems to get what they're doing, they should continue to do it anyway. If you're determined, you can make it happen but it does take sacrifices. People ask me if they can be involved with *White Fungus* and as soon as I give them some work to do they suddenly say they're busy. There's this sense of a consumer culture – of instant gratification. This idea of sacrifice and hard work has been lost. For us, we've had a lot of hard years and we may have paid a very heavy price for it at times but in the end that's the price you pay for doing what you want to do in life.

We want to counter more than mainstream culture but consumer culture as well – the culture where you buy your identity rather than discover it or create it yourself. With *White Fungus* we

want to get away from that niche specialisation – we want to create a different response and bring different kinds of people together. We want to create an active reader – the reader has to play an active role in decoding our magazine's content and creating meaning from it. I'd like to think that *White Fungus* doesn't have fans but instead the people who read it are all people who I'd like to meet and who I do meet over time! I watch a big rock or pop band perform to 50,000 people and I think those bands don't want to meet all these people after the gig! We're doing things on a smaller scale but, even as things get bigger, we'd like to think that we're cultivating readers who we do want to meet. This is totally different to the consumer model. We want to create a counter culture to that passive, over-specialised culture that creates these detached individuals who have little connection to other people.

Are you hoping to expand outside of the magazine as well?

We've been doing this more and more over the years. Last year we did all sorts of different projects. We brought an artist to New Zealand. We also had an exhibition/project of our own work shown at the Adam Art Gallery in Wellington, accompanying exhibitions by the Wellington Media Collective and Martha Rosler. We made poster works and a big broadsheet publication called *The Consumers of the Future*. The title comes from a quote by John Key on Campbell Live before he was first elected: "Our children are important ... they're the consumers of the future."

Also, Taiwan has just signed a Free Trade deal with New Zealand, too, so it looks like there will be the opportunity to do a lot of cultural exchanges between the two places. We really consider ourselves as artists who happen to make a magazine.

By Zane Pocock & Loulou Callister-Baker



LETTER OF THE WEEK

The letter of the week wins a \$25 book voucher from the University Book Shop.

Woops. We'll be more careful.

To the Editor,

Issue 07, page 14. Notice something wrong? Anything? No? Look again. Still nothing? I'm not surprised you still can't see it, because if you missed it before going to print then you must be blind. You used the same shortURL for two items in Best of the Web and, quite frankly, I REALLY wanted to see the heroes' hideouts. You bastards.

Not happy

We're so happy you think so

The Editor,
Critic.

Dear Sir,

I was glad of your interest in happiness. In 50 years of random daily readings, found happiness is a quiet, warm couch, a memorised favorite song, the best exercise in pursuit of a skill, a smiling face tells the brain it is happy in any circumstance, to cure depression, clean your house, the happiest ages are 29 and sixty something, a giver of gifts gets a bigger buzz than the receiver, many a rich man dresses in rags, kind, happy people live longer, more healthy lives (and those born in autumn), and a community is only as happy as its unhappiest member.

Yours faithfully,

Sue Heap.

1st University Relay for Life

What a group of amazing, enthusiastic wonderful students involved in this event. You all rock!

You were a pleasure to watch and I commend you all for the massive part you played in making this event such a success.

To Katy Atkinson, your team and the many volunteers – thank you and well done!
Be proud

Donna Jones

We concur, naturally

Great Wall of Internet - ace feature Loulou!!!!

I agree, it was very current considering everything else going on around the world at the moment, and I feel like it's something that everyone kiiiind of knows about but are in desparate need of such a feature to actually get it. It was clearly thoroughly researched and basically just a really good piece that everyone should read.

Boom! Feature!

Critic does not endorse this message

...

Hello Critic,

In a column from last week, you were trying to help people recognise their privileges. Hopefully this handy guide should help!
pastebin.com/mTHWJB6A

Also, if you'd like a glimpse into the realities of subjugation to social oppression, have a look at this. imgur.com/F2Ygpet.png

Yours,
White, heterosexual cis-gendered bigoted man

... nor this one.

I read your article on unisex toilets, Urinals are kinda gross already. imagine how messy it would get if we had females squatting over them to do their business too.

Regards
Not into sharing

But they slip people up?

Dear Critic,

I like bananas because they have no bones.

Standing by the fruit store on the corner
Once I heard a customer complain
You never seem to show
The fruit we all love so
That's why bus'ness hasn't been the same

I don't like your peaches,
They are full of stones
I like bananas because they have no bones!

Don't give me tomatoes,
Can't stand ice-cream cones
I like bananas because they have no bones!

No matter where I go,
With Susie, May or Anna
I want the world to know,
I must have my bananas

Cabbages and onions
Hurt my singing tones
I like bananas because they have no bones!

LETTERS POLICY

Letters should be 200 words or fewer. Deadline is Thursday at 5pm. Send letters to critic@critic.co.nz, post them to PO Box 1436, Dunedin, or drop into the Critic office. All letters must include full contact details, even if you don't want these printed. Letters of a serious nature directly addressing a specific person or group will not be published under a pseudonym, except in extraordinary circumstances negotiated with the Editor. Critic reserves the right to edit, abridge or decline letters without explanation. We don't fix the spelling or grammar in letters. If a writer looks stupid, it's because they are.

Domino's DUNEDIN NORTH 736 GREAT KING ST	PICKUP VALUE RANGE FROM \$4.99 <small>EACH PICK UP WITH 2014 STUDENT ID DUNEDIN NORTH ONLY</small>	PICKUP TRADITIONAL FROM \$8.99 <small>EACH PICK UP WITH 2014 STUDENT ID DUNEDIN NORTH ONLY</small>
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We noticed, too

Hi Critic,

What's up with the other student rags in the country all being huge copy-cats? The Wellington one basically looks the same as an Australian one (Veritgo), another one (Hamilton? Lincoln? sTewart Island? I dunno/forget) has copied Critic's Contents page, albeit shitter, and yeah. I'm spent, but get my point? **WORK HARDER, PEOPLE!** Life is a remix.

Concerned blogger

She's baaaack!

Where was Josie Cochrane in the last issue of critic?

I missed her and I bet others did too. It's nice to see someone coming up with some real news once in a while - or nearly weekly in critics case. It's a flashback to the strength of decades gone by, in my mind. This magazine used to be quite good, so my parents have told me, and I wonder if Josie is the answer to everything ever. Keep up the stuff.



NOTICES

SARS

Society of Atheists, Rationalists and Skeptics- SARS, is dedicated to advancing scientific thought and challenging outdated concepts of religion and pseudo-science. We aim to meet monthly where plan to have discussions, watch documentaries etc. Search 'Otago SARS' on facebook for our events and keep up with our online blasphemy!

Sri Lankan New Year

The Sri Lankan New Year's celebration is a day in our culture which marks the end of the harvest season. We welcome everyone to commemorate this holiday with us at 5pm on the 12th of April at the Sargood centre. There will be plenty of free food and games to go around!

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

We are seeking volunteers for clinical comparison studies of market brand-leading drugs alongside generic formulations of those drugs, *If you fit this criteria;*

- ✓ Male or Female, between 18-55 years
- ✓ Have no medical condition
- ✓ Non-Smoker (for at least six months)
- ✓ Not on medication (excluding female contraception pill)
- ✓ Not taken any drugs of abuse

All participants will be remunerated for their time and inconvenience

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OUSA Anzac Day Service

Friday 25 April, 1.30-2.30pm
University Clocktower Lawn*

Honouring those who fought. Valuing Peace.

Afternoon tea to follow at University College

*In case of rain the service will be held in the University of Otago
Link area near the library entrance.



ousa
otago uni students' association





President's Column

OUSA prides itself on the fact that we know exactly what you guys want and need in your student association. But how can we figure that out? Apart from having students lead the strategic vision for the association (your executive) we also have surveys! Each year we ask you guys to let us know if you're loving the services that we provide. Or if you think that we're not really nailing it. The services that we're asking you about this year are:

The Recreation Centre, the beautiful new building opposite the library, if you haven't already pop in for free breakfast and cheap meals! It also houses our 121 clubs and has room hire!

Events! These include Orientation, Hyde Street, Capping Show, Re-Orientation, Art Week and the Dunedin Craft Beer & Food Festival. You like these, dislike these?

Student Job Search! Money makes the world go round! While sometimes, it's no fun having to borrow money from the government that's for sure! Have you managed to get a cheeky part time one through SJS though?

Student Support! Flat dramas, uni dramas, food dramas, no dramas?! Whatever it is, they have you covered! Or do they? Would you like some more

support on say, oxygen?

CRITIC AND RADIO ONE! These are my two favourite, because they are super fun and I study communications.

Having your own student magazine and radio station is seriously amazing. And it's great because YOU, yes you can participate and contribute in both! Maybe even at the same time?! But what do you want to hear or see or read more of?

Last, but certainly not least, we want to know what you think of me, and the team around me, your executive. Do you like the campaigns that we run, do you feel like you're able to approach us? Should we be doing something a bit different?

Fill out the survey and get your two cents on all of these things! Maybe even win some cash prizes! Also, don't forget, I am just a phone call away, and even just a couple of steps. Pop into OUSA if you want chat to me about something that we can change. We are here to make a difference but we need your help.

We've also got another survey looking into Queer Wellbeing on campus, but you don't have to be LGTB to fill it in. Our full time Queer Support coordinator is researching perceptions of students on campus, and how we're doing compared to the rest of the world. All the surveys are completely confidential, be open and truthful so we can create the student association of your dreams and maybe win a few \$\$\$ or an iPad at the same time!

I would also like to thank all of you who voted in the By-Election for the Education Officer and a special thanks to Kullasit, Henri, Laura and Matt for running in the elections. It's a big deal to throw your hand up and represent the students and I applaud them for taking such a wonderful opportunity!

Stay safe, enjoy the week!

Much Love, Ruby xxxxx

What's the haps with ousa recreation

Mid-semester Break Closure

As Easter, Otago Anniversary (Observance Day), and Anzac day all fall within Mid Semester break the center will be closed from April 18th - April 27th. We'll be up and running (normal hours) from April 28th.

DING DING! Round 2 Recreation Programme Enrolments are open!

Check out our fantastic line up for the second round of rec' programmes, activities and events. Art, Crafts, Dance, Food, Beverage, Languages, Music, Sport, Exercise or Technical YOU DECIDE www.ousa.org.nz/recreation/

Show me the talent, I'll show you the money!

The OUSA Recreation Centre is NOW HIRING! We're on the hunt for semester 2 recreation tutors. So if you've got the qual's, skills or experience we want you. Email michaela@ousa.org.nz for more information.

Queer Wellbeing Survey – Be in to win an iPad!

Want to go into the draw to win an iPad and participate in some important research? Fill out a quick, anonymous online survey about how safe it is for queer students enrolled at the University of Otago. It doesn't matter what your sexuality is, we want to hear from you! bit.ly/queersupport

OUSA Survey – Win 1 of 5 \$100 prizes!

How's your old mate OUSA doing? Let us know what you like about OUSA and what you think we need to do more or less of in this quick and easy survey. Help give us direction at bit.ly/ousasurvey

Check out the Semester 1 Photo Comp winner!

As we mentioned last week, we had a fantastic response with over 130 entries and we thought you guys might like to see the winning image! If you missed your chance for submitting a photo you've got another shot next semester so get snapping and keep your eyes peeled for details at www.ousa.org.nz/recreation/



Keryn Speight "Long Time Waiting"

Don't Break It! Bin It!



Breaking glass leads to a fine.
For more information
www.otago.ac.nz/proctor

