

*International
Cookbook Apartheid*

*The Science of
Immortality*

*Why Triple J
Sucks*

*The Arsehole
I Have Been*

tharunka

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THE
AGE ISSUE





Editorial

If there's one thing we at *Tharunka* hate, it's old people. If there's two, it's children. Both have similar problems. They're stupid, they like shitty music, they leak and drip and cannot coordinate basic motor functions, much less carry a decent conversation without talking about Pokemons (children) or being racist (old folks). So why we've decided to theme an issue around 'Age' is anyone's guess. One reason is the universality of the theme. Young and powerful though we may be, we've all felt the cold clammy hand of the reaper on our shoulders at one point or another, we've all feared for our own looming mortality. Perhaps most pressingly, even though ageism is entirely sensible and justified, the most noble of the forms of discrimination, we all live with the knowledge that we are getting older. One day if we survive our own youthful recklessness and get to retirement age, we'll probably becoming drooling selfish old cranks, leeching off the system and holding back social progress with our voting clout.

Among our age themed content, on page 22 our correspondent from 260 years ago, Benjamin Franklin, explains why a young man should prefer an older woman as his choice of mistress. That dirty old revolutionary. On page 8 Su-Min Lim takes on the myth that immortality is a bad thing whilst on page 13 Emily Bek looks at the science behind the idea.

Meanwhile Sean Lawson reminds us on page 11 what arseholes we all were in high school by offering his own past as an example. Anh Tran-Nam takes aim at the pasty white rock nerds who ruined Triple J's hottest 100 and maybe even bought the whole damn station's reason for existing into question, on page 24.

So, dear readers, as long as you're between the acceptable age bracket of 20-60, please enjoy the Age issue of *Tharunka*. If you're outside those years, fuck off and stop wasting our tax dollars on pensions, healthcare and schooling.

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Tharunka acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which the University now stands.



Refugees Should Not Be Caned

I am appalled at the suggestion made by Sing Keng Loon that Australia introduces caning as a form of punishment for refugees.

In his article, 'Spare the rod and spoil the refugee', Mr Sing recommends that these 'illegal immigrants' be caned and then sent back to where they came from. He holds up Singapore as an example where he thinks this zero tolerance policy has worked.

A google search of the name of the said writer with UNSW threw up a cached webpage listing the former as a secretary of the 07/08 committee of the Singapore Students Association (SSA) in this University. When I looked at the current SSA - UNSW website however, Mr Sing is not listed as a committee member anymore.

That Mr Sing Keng Loon, an overseas Singaporean student, would hold such horrible views should not come as a surprise to many. However, he does not speak for all Singaporeans.

As a student myself from the same country, I was exposed to the government controlled propaganda media that exhorts the virtue of judicial punishment. Singapore also does not recognise the status and plight of asylum-seekers or refugees. However, unlike him, I hold the complete opposite view on this issue.

First, caning as a form of punishment is meted out in Singapore for various crimes ranging from drug use and drug trafficking to rape and 'illegal immigration'. Yet, this is an archaic form of punishment which should be banned universally. This is because caning is a cruel, inhumane and

degrading punishment that is prohibited under international human rights law. People who have been caned suffer from long term psychological and physical scars.

Second, Mr Loon's use of the terms such as 'illegal immigrants' and 'boat people' betrays an inherent biasedness which he then uses to justify the draconian measures that he proposed. By portraying these asylum-seekers as criminals, he is suggesting that the victim be further punished for their situation.

Third, even if we can forego the previous two arguments, Mr Loon is unable to support his claim that caning 'illegal immigrants' has worked in Singapore. This is because the Government has not released any recent statistics on this matter.

As a western liberal democracy that is aimed at improving and respecting the human rights of its citizens and residents (such as the recent proposal to enact a bill of rights), the idea of caning by the Australian authorities will not only be unimaginable and barbaric, but definitely a setback to its human rights records.

Having had the good luck of having the money to study in Australia, I find Mr Loon's opinion extremely racist and distasteful.

If Mr Loon is indeed a Singapore student and/ or a previous secretary or committee member, I would strongly encourage the Singapore Students Association to publicly denounce his views. As a Singaporean student myself, I am disgusted at his vile comments and with the utmost indignation, clarify that he certainly does not speak for all Singaporean students, especially me.

CHARLES TAN

Alan Akbah

DEAR THARUNKA,

I'm sick of being told that Atheists are immoral. It really irks me that somehow, somewhere, someone decided that religious texts were the only way to be a decent fucking organism. And you know why people say that? It's because those peddlers are a bunch of arse-belching cuntin' fuckers who spend their cuntin'-fucking-munching time monkey-rimming others while ignoring the more important cum-slurping issues of our shit-mulching existence. Who the ball-slurping fuck do they think they are? I have never said a single gangrenous-leg-fucking thing that could be considered as immoral, and this letter proves it.

Fuck the skull of Christ with Michael Jackson's cock.

ALAN ZEINO

Dude Thinks Babies Are Awesome

DEAR EDITORS,

I would like to respond to *Adventures in Reproductive Autonomy* published in the last issue of *Tharunka*. It is difficult to believe that the author's mental landscape is "a strange and cluttered place". How short-sighted must she be, how petty -- her mental landscape! Writing this letter and glancing over the magazine, I cannot fail to notice the plain monotone colours of the article's first pages and to recognise the indubitable irony imbued by them, almost certainly unwittingly concocted by the editorial team. Malevich's *Black Square*. Not dissimilar to either, it must be, without doubt, an excessively picturesque graphical representation of that same dim mental landscape the author has at her young age of twenty one.

Avoiding an undesirable outcome of relentlessly attacking the young woman, notwithstanding any amusement this may deliver to readers with differing views, I will digress to commend the laudable efforts that she employed in her saga for sterilisation.

She used great resolve to try put into action "a decision that goes against the norms of how we are told to lead our lives", and how much more can be said of her courage to document and publish her experience for the benefit of others.

It is a fact hopefully no reader will dispute that we the people have values, alas I would not be surprised to find dissenters even here. There are certain things, conditions, and actions that an officious bystander would call right, and others -- wrong. Some, like human life, we have learnt largely from our mistakes, from innumerable wars, and from indiscriminate plagues (still learning that one, don't you think?). Others have transcended the ages, though it is difficult to find many that remain. Can you point out just three? In my mind, having children is a right and a good, not in the sense of 'permission' and not in the sense of 'product', respectively (any parent who teaches his ten year old child to decapitate people ought to be terminated with extreme prejudice for such a person in his reckless hatred ruins many lives, including that of his own child¹). One could deviate here to argue how the author's plot of her future would reduce competition for other children and would make a positive impact on world population, but such sarcasm is uncalled for.

Having children is a privilege the author may not even have, yet she sought to obtain surety by reducing her chances to zero, in a manner of a self-centered hedonist. It is another surety that regret and uncertainty for not trying can only grow with years, as she realises that charm is deceptive and beauty is naught. We all have around 25,000 days allotted to our lives (perhaps 30,000 at most), and she has already used up approximately 8,000 of hers. I hope this letter finds her well and that it will encourage her to look smilingly towards a future filled with colours of unconditional love, laughter, care, and perpetuation of her positive contribution to the world by her children.

Regards,
SERGE ROZ

1. Reference to one disgraceful and revolting video of a ten year old boy decapitating a man, slowly, with a machete, that I saw on truthtube.tv some time ago.

Hook, Line and Sinker

DEAR EDITORS,

I refer to Kristyn Glanville's disgraceful letter in Issue 5. How dare she criticise my articles. I certainly haven't seen her publish any articles in *Tharunka*. Perhaps she could be taken more seriously if she had more street credibility. She is clearly jealous of my success.

More concerningly, she seems to have misinterpreted my article on the late Princess of Wales. The main attack was not on the Princess herself, but on those who displayed irrationally high levels of grief upon her passing. It was really not that hard to understand.

As for picking on people who can't defend themselves, that is an outrageous and baseless assertion. My first article this year was about US President Barack Obama. He has command of a variety of lethal forces, like the US Army, the US Navy, the US Air Force, the CIA etc. If he wanted to, he could have sent over a real-life Jack Bauer to forcefully persuade me to recant.

As for the bloke in Brisbane, I showed him how we do things back in New South Wales. He had no chance.

MATT KWAN

DEAR WEBCT,

You are a useless piece of shit. Every single student and staff member that has had to use you feels dirty.

Hope you rot in the internet equivalent of hell,

MEOW-LUDO MEOW-MEOW

TERRORISTS CONDEMN INCONCLUSIVE CRASH INVESTIGATION

Islamic Supremacy, the terrorist group claiming responsibility for bringing down British Airways flight 546, has condemned what it called an "incompetent, incomplete investigation" into the causes of the plane's destruction, decrying the fact that investigators could not conclusively prove that the crash was the result of terrorism.

A spokesperson, speaking through video from an undisclosed location, angrily condemned the crash report, asking "how can we bring terror and mayhem to the populations of our Satanic enemies if nobody knows we have even attacked them?" The terrorist group called for a review of all safety and forensic protocols, saying that the inconclusive report merely undermines commuter confidence in airline personnel and other authorities, instead of instilling them with an appropriate sense of righteous terror in the face of Allah's mighty vengeance.

POKIES PLAYER SPENDS TIME WITH FAMILY

In a rare and possibly unprecedented event, Gerald Vögel was seen playing the pokies yesterday in a manner inconsistent with gambling addiction. Sources report that the man entered the local pub, met friends and had a drink, before briefly entering the gaming area for what he termed a "quick bet".

Whilst other players in the establishment's pokies area sat and emptied coin after coin into their machines in the standard dead-eyed, mechanical fashion, this man seemed to enjoy the experience, smiling and chatting whilst he played, deriving pleasure from the uncertain outcome and fantastic possibilities of each round of this game of chance.

The man, whom experts have dubbed a "casual" pokies player, didn't win. When his cash ran out, he did not go and get more, but simply left the area and returned to where his friends were drinking. After saying goodbye, he returned home to spend time with his wife and two children, to which he remains a devoted father, good provider and positive role model.

Experts remain baffled by this behaviour.

Turnbull leading poll for preferred Prime Minister amongst Turnbull family

Despite party-room divisions and questions over his suitability for leadership, the latest figures suggest that Malcolm Turnbull retains a large lead as preferred Prime Minister among members of the Turnbull family. The most up-to-date numbers have Turnbull's support holding steady at 60%. The strongest support came from Turnbull's wife Lucy and from Malcolm himself. Son Alexander and daughter Daisy remain swing voters, and thus crucial to the Liberal Party's chances of retaining majority support within the Turnbull family as the next federal election draws closer.

BACKPACKER TOO COOL FOR "TOURISTY" THINGS

Rather than sticking to the well-worn trail of tourism, something which is catered to by an entire industry of people dedicated to enhancing the experiences of visitors, a young Australian backpacker thinks she is too cool to visit the same things everybody else goes to see. Instead she eschews conventional attractions in favour of seeking out what she considers to be cooler and more "real" activities and locations.

While insisting that she isn't a snob, she says she doesn't like "tourists," implying that she is not one herself. Instead she seeks out unusual things to do so she has stories that can impress her friends back home and allow her to feel generally worldly and superior.

Last night, after boldly and intrepidly exploring beyond "the touristy part of town," she found what she had anticipated would be a restaurant with a suitably authentic and local character. However, she was disappointed and vaguely embarrassed to find it filled with similarly hip young foreigners who had also found the restaurant in their Lonely Planet guides. She will not tell this story to her friends back home.

Joke sex toy gift put to frequent use

Gen X whiteboys vote for 100 favourite songs

Nirvana's 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' topped the Triple J Hottest 100 of All Time, a poll held to determine which songs are considered to be "the hottest" by white dudes born between 1965 and 1980. 'Smells Like Teen Spirit', an incoherent screaming mess of distorted guitars and drug-addled wailing, was penned by famous suicide Kurt Cobain and is remembered fondly by white guys who are now in their early 30s or 40s.

The huge number of votes for the song reportedly reflects the fact that the 'tune' reminds many middle-aged white males of simpler times when they didn't work resentfully in middle management positions, a time when grunge music and dirty flannel shirts made them feel cool and helped them annoy their confused suburban parents.

Other songs favoured among the increasingly ageing cohort of Triple J listeners with Y chromosomes included angry white-people anthem "Killing

in the Name" by Rage Against the Machine and several songs by the Smashing Pumpkins.

However, it wasn't only angry disaffected youth angst that was nostalgically recalled by Anglo-Saxon men with mortgages during the vote. The listenership showed its diverse range by voting not just for loud and angry songs but also more maudlin songs appropriate to the disposition of sensitive white males, with Joy Division's Love Will Tear Us Apart at number 4 and Jeff Buckley and Radiohead getting several entries each.

Members of Generation Y were unreachable for comment, reportedly too busy explaining how their tastes are "too obscure" to be on something as mainstream as Triple J.

Children returned unharmed to North Korean football team

After drawing with Saudi Arabia in Riyadh, a jubilant North Korean football team celebrated their team's entry into the 2010 FIFA World Cup and the return of their children, unharmed, as promised. "Truly this is a great day for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and our Dear Leader, and also because I have been reunited with my son. He even has all his fingers, such is the majestic wisdom of Kim Jong-Il" said forward Jong Tae-Se of his side's success.

Striker Kim Kuk-Jin shared the sentiment about their team's first entry into World Cup since 1966. He tearfully praised his coach and credited the guidance of Juche ideology for giving his side the discipline and strength to overcome their capitalist enemies on the football field. He went on to cite as instrumental the motivation provided by the firm and benevolent DPRK Football Association in kidnapping and threatening his children with injury or death, saying "without that incentive perhaps we would have shamed the glorious socialist revolution with our weakness."

- The team was then taken onto a plane and whisked back to Pyongyang and a victory parade. Attendance was mandatory.

World destroyed by Large Hadron Collider

Steve Carrell to portray sad and pathetic man in upcoming comedy romp



Who Wants To Live Forever?

SU-MIN LIM kind of does.

I've been thinking about death lately. Partly because I'm a bit of a morbid type and partly because of *Doctor Who*. For the uninitiated, this funny and touching TV series follows the adventures of an alien Timelord known as the Doctor, who has the ability to regenerate into a new body when his existing form becomes aged or irreparably wounded. This is useful as he often saves the world, the universe and time itself. It is also useful when the actor playing the Doctor decides to retire.

The episode I have in mind is the appropriately titled 'Lazarus Experiment'. An evil corporate genius (don't we all know one of those) discovers a procedure to reverse the aging process and return himself to youth. Unfortunately, an unforeseen side effect is that he periodically transforms into a giant

lizard and starts killing people. The Doctor confronts him at the top of a portentous stone tower, where they have a good old chat about life, death and the whys of it all. The Doctor tells him off for 'defying the laws of nature' and he ends up transforming back into human form and falling to his death, a shrivelled, aged and broken human body upon the floor. The message is clear. Age and death are natural and right. We should accept rather than resist our mortality, and anyone who would question this is dangerous, malevolent and guilty of hubris of the highest order.

It's a message that rings intuitively true. Until you ask yourself the question: if, as so much of our philosophy and culture seems to tell us, seeking immortality is so obviously wrong in itself – why did the dude have to turn into a giant lizard to prove it to us?

Then you think of all the other books and movies you've watched where celebrating your mortality is a mark of maturity and courage. 'To the well-organised mind, death is but the next great adventure,' Dumbledore tells us in *Harry Potter*. And yet Harry is still left standing when the series concludes. If the masters of fiction want to convince us that death is the proper and noble end to all things, they're doing an incredibly bad job of practising what they preach.

I'm not a scientist, and I'm not interested right now in investigating the practicalities of living forever. What I am interested in is the ethics of it, and why everyone from the Doctor to JK Rowling to more professors of bioethics than you could throw a fish at seems to be opposed to it. Typical arguments tend to look like this: It's natural to age and die – everyone always has and always will. Immortality would enhance social inequality – presumably anti-aging therapies would, initially at least, be available only to the most privileged in society. Finally, and perhaps most powerfully, we feel instinctive horror at the death of a young person, compared to a more muted sorrow for an aged adult. At some point, then, our moral intuition tells us that it's OK for old people to die.

On closer inspection, I don't think any of these arguments stack up. I'll come back to them in a moment. But first, let's introduce ourselves to Aubrey de Grey, who is a British scientist with a very long beard. He is also the founder of the Methuselah Foundation, an organisation which seeks to take the first step on the path to immortality by 'curing' aging.

De Grey flips the question 'Why should people be able to live forever?' on its head by pointing out that we fight death all the time. "Hands up anyone in the audience who is in favour of malaria?...OK. So we all think malaria is a bad thing." Over the laughter, he

Even if death is a bad thing, there may be some wisdom in convincing ourselves that it isn't.

continues: "I would like to put it to you that the main reason why malaria is a bad thing is because of a characteristic it shares with aging. And here is that characteristic – it kills people! The only real difference is that aging kills considerably more people than malaria does."

De Grey's point is simple. We struggle to preserve life because it is beautiful and full of potential. So why should we decide when a person turns 70 – 80 – 90 – that their life is no longer worth preserving?

With that in mind, let's go back to the ethical arguments against immortality.

First up: naturalness. It's not clear to me why being natural is intrinsically better than not. If 'natural' means 'letting nature take its course', other natural stuff includes: appendicitis, pneumonia, tuberculosis and sudden infant death syndrome. Some natural phenomena, such as smallpox, have been pretty much eradicated. You will not find many people complaining about this.

Secondly, fairness. While it's tangential to the argument, it's important to realise that the world is already full of

horrific inequity. Peter Singer writes that when people like us spend money on restaurant meals, nice clothes and other non-necessities, we're effectively signing a death warrant for people in the majority world, as the money could have been used to attend to their basic needs. I don't mean to defend my own choice to prioritise immediate pleasure over other people's wellbeing. I think it would be better if I and others made different choices more often. But to say that immortality might engender inequality, therefore immortality is beyond the pale, is pretty inconsistent with how we already live our lives.

Furthermore, we don't blame people for spending more on themselves and their loved ones if we can see why the thing they are spending on might be really, really important. Take chemotherapy. It's often vastly expensive and success is far from guaranteed. If you donated that money to, say, Oxfam and Unicef, they could use it to fund things like vaccinations, oral rehydration salts and community loans which could lift whole families out of poverty – and probably save multiple lives in the process.

And yet no one would begrudge you that spending. No one would say that a sick person paying for chemotherapy is immoral, even though in the strictest definition of the word, they are being selfish – valuing their own priorities beyond the needs of others. That's because we recognise that the death of one person can be awful beyond words for that person and those around them. If that's true of cancer – which, incidentally, is often a byproduct of the aging process – then why not of aging itself?

Finally – and most confrontingly – the special value of childhood and youth, and our deep-rooted sense that the urgency of protecting a life diminishes as it ages. "One can't say this is a deranged universe to live in because people die of old age," says bioethicist Daniel Callahan. Our moral instincts tell us: children are precious. Old people are less precious. Now read this:

"In a 1989 Canadian study, adults were asked to imagine the death of children of various ages and estimate which

deaths would create the greatest sense of loss in a parent. The results, plotted on a graph, show grief growing until just before adolescence and then beginning to drop. When this curve was compared with a curve showing changes in reproductive potential over the life cycle (a pattern calculated from Canadian demographic data), the correlation was fairly strong. But much stronger - nearly perfect, in fact - was the correlation between the grief curves of these modern Canadians and the reproductive-potential curve of a hunter-gatherer people, the !Kung of Africa. In other words, the pattern of changing grief was almost exactly what a Darwinian would predict, given demographic realities in the ancestral environment... The first correlation was .64, the second an extremely high .92."

(Robert Wright, summarising: "Human Grief: Is Its Intensity Related to the Reproductive Value of the Deceased?" Crawford, C. B., Salter, B. E., and Lang, K.L. *Ethology and Sociobiology* 10:297-307.)

Read it carefully, and then read it again. If that doesn't shake you, it should.

The love of a parent for a child, and of society as a whole for its young, is supposed to be the purest and most unconditional of human impulses. Yet there is evidence to suggest that this selfless affection has its origins in our selfish genes - that the rush of warmth and protectiveness we feel towards a child is based, partially at least, on a process of natural selection. I don't mean to say that parents who love their children are in any way thinking, even subconsciously, that they have to keep their children safe so they can pass on their genes. But accepting this data as reliable, our intuitive sense that the young are more valuable than the old may arise from a process that propagates behaviours enhancing genetic survival.

This is the opposite of morality.

Valuing individuals based on their utility - what they can do for us, how they can be useful - is the opposite

of morality. Morality is supposed to be about intrinsic worth. Morality is supposed to be about valuing a person not for what they do for you, but for who they are. If our sense that the young are more precious than the old arises, at a genetic level, from a judgement that an old person is less 'useful', it is not a moral position.

Even if death is a bad thing, there may be some wisdom in convincing ourselves that it isn't. The vast vast majority of scientists besides Aubrey de Grey believe that a cure for aging will not be found within our lifetimes, and even de Grey is careful to point out that this wouldn't preclude you from being killed in, say, a plane crash. In this case, it's a reasonable psychological strategy to try and conceptualise our inevitable dying as something to be welcomed. At least it provides some consolation. And yet I can't help but feel that there is dignity, too, in acknowledging that sometimes we lose. There's something cathartic about recognising that life is sometimes tragic and unfair - 'nasty, brutish and short', as the dude said - and going out to meet your mortality with a sense of gracious defeat.

Perhaps living forever would really suck. Perhaps the world is exhaustible and eventually there'd be nothing left to explore. 'We imagined we knew everything the other thought, even when we did not necessarily want to know it, but in fact, I have come to see, we knew not the smallest fraction of what there was to know,' wrote Joan Didion after the death of her husband, the writer John Gregory Dunne. Now apply this formula to every single person you know, and all the people you haven't met yet, and all the places you have and haven't been, and then think about all of the stuff that hasn't even been thought of yet. Is that exhaustible? Maybe. Of course you and I will never find out. But it would be kind of cool if we could.

Think about it. Chances are we're all going to be raging against the dying of the light sooner or many-seasons-of-Doctor-Who later. But in the unlikely event that de Grey invents his anti-aging pill, I'm totally taking it.



At some point, our moral intuition tells us that it's OK for old people to die.

I, ARSEHOLE

SEAN LAWSON shares his personal journey as an arsehole.

Most of us cringe when we think about who we used to be. This is particularly true of our teenage years. Growth, self-discovery, all manner of confusion and awkwardness, the irresistible currents of trend and peer pressure. These are the forces that transform even the most pleasant children into horrible teenagers.

The good news is that it passes. Most of us grow up with newfound wisdom. Our new perspective shows us what jerks we were, and the vicious groupthink of our teenage years fades into the occasional wince-inducing memory of the things we used to do and say.

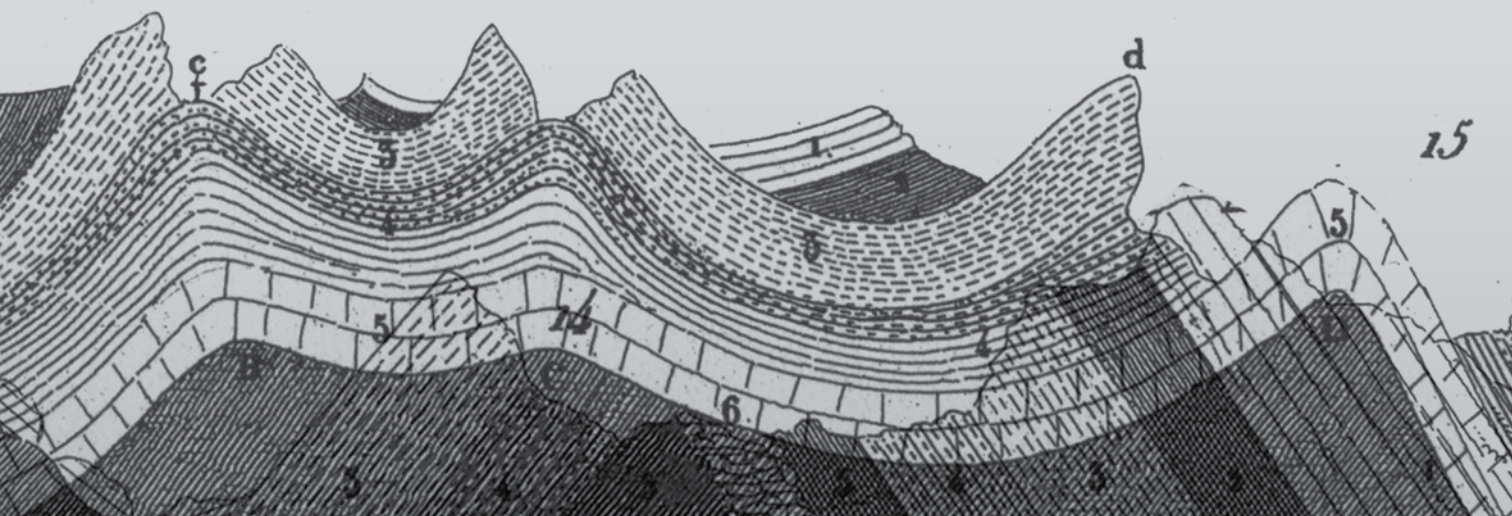
The bad news is that this point lies well beyond university.

I offer for consideration the evolution of my own arseholishness, as part of my ongoing quest to become a decent, mature, well-rounded human being.

I was a quiet and incredibly nerdy pre-teen, and probably not much of an arsehole to anyone besides my sister. Around age 13, however, I was gripped by the urge to actually interact with other human beings. Being a loser with no social skills, my arseholishness now assumed the form of utter obnoxiousness within my group of friends, all of a similarly loserish bent. It was a delicate mixture of arrogance and insecurity.

Through to roughly Year 9, my memory of my social environment resembles a pool table. Bear with me for the analogy. I am a single, self-contained ball of arsehole amongst a dozen or so, the others being my friends. I am of course convinced of my own superiority over everyone around me, solely because I'm probably smarter than most of them. In hindsight, we do not like each other much. All of the pool balls are bashing into each other, certainly not connecting and striving desperately not to be dumped into the corner pockets of rejection and alienation. A tortured simile perhaps, but I think it captures the mood. But hey, these "friendships" (such as they were) got me through the first 3 years of high school and I am still friends with two of them!

At age 16, I moved to the United States and became a foreign military brat in an insular Southern Californian town. I reveled in this environment, turning my foreignness into the new central focus of my being an arsehole. The chip on my shoulder now took on truly epic proportions. I got to be aloof and condescending and critical towards everyone and everything around me, pretty much with impunity. Given the standards of the education system there, I could even get away with this attitude towards teachers.



A mirror-image mindset took hold when I returned to my small Australian town 2 years later and became utterly disdainful towards everything and everyone there. This became the new crutch for my arseholishness. It was small and backwards, everyone was stupid and I was too worldly and sophisticated (I lived in California!) to fit in. The fact that my town actually did suck is kind of immaterial here.

It was around age 18 that I started drinking regularly and excessively. Enough said, really. I can still be an annoying drunk today, but back then I was truly unbearable. Loud, oblivious, moody, and with a tendency to inadvertently cock-block people. I once accidentally burned some guy's hair, nearly killed myself or someone else with a huge rock, and it goes without saying that I vomited in a lot of houses and cars. Sorry guys.

Now we get to uni, and my gradual evolution into the sort of arsehole that I am today at the ripe old age of 24! The principal ingredients are all there from my teen years. I'm convinced that growing up just means taming the worst aspects of one's obnoxious teenage years and fashioning it into something resembling a decent human being. In other words, converting your own personal brand of awfulness into something benign for polite society.

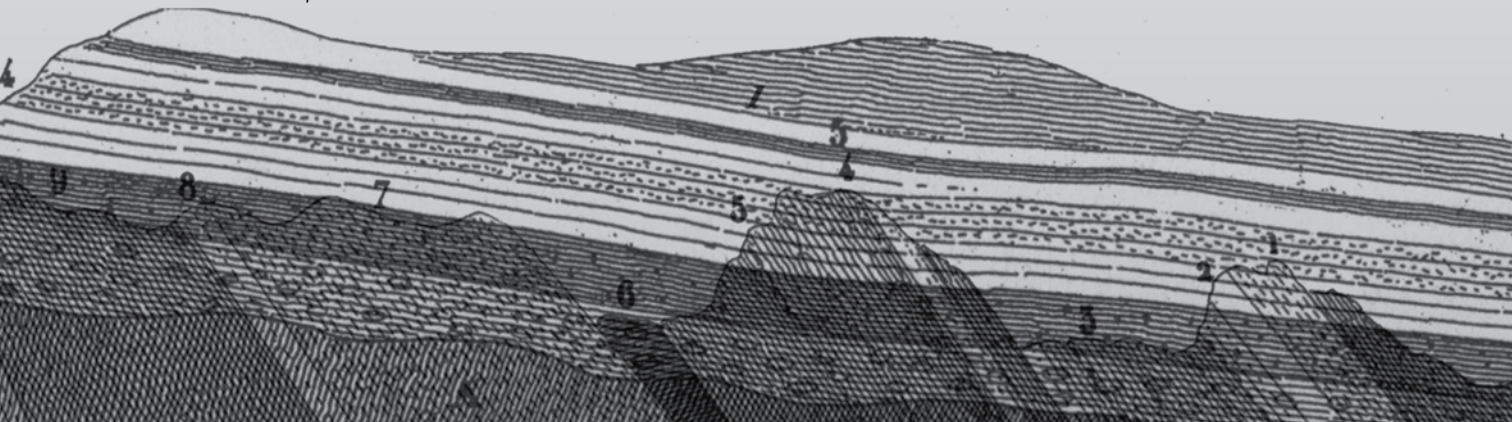
What future forms of arseholishness lie ahead?

My nerdy habit of talking endlessly about my own stupid interests when I was 12 has mutated into the tendency to talk endlessly about, well, anything that pops into my head. Nowadays, that mostly means politics and pop culture, but at heart I'm still that babbling 12 year old, mindlessly broadcasting his obsessions and opinions regardless of whether anyone wants to hear them.

The 14 or 15 year old me's conviction that I'm better than everyone because of maybe being a bit smarter has of course become pure garden-variety academic pretentiousness and elitism. This is common among students, particularly among anyone who was ever considered "gifted" when they were younger (although being hard-working and "self-made" can give people quite a fucking chip on their shoulder too). Signs include looking down on anyone who doesn't go to uni, goes to a less respected university, does the wrong degree, sounds stupid in tutorials, etcetera. Does this insecure status anxiety really go away, or will it just mutate again in the real world of employment and home ownership and such?

Living overseas gave me a smug sense of worldliness and sophistication back when I was 16 or 18. Then, studying abroad last year merely reinforced that, and added the fact that I am now competent in a second language into that mix of general arrogance. I might have slightly less contempt for everyone than I did when I lived in the US, but hey, maybe I've just learned to hide it better.

But what future forms of arseholishness lie ahead? Will I remain this person I have become, and just learn to hide my faults better? Is that what maturity is? Will I acquire entirely new arsehole vices as time goes on? In thinking about my personal arsehole's journey, it is clear that the key missing component seems to be sex and relationship-related arseholishness. Perhaps it is time to make up for those sexless teenage years and become that other archetypal type of arsehole: the selfish, womanising, oversexed manwhore. The line starts here, ladies. Wink wink.





THE SCIENCE OF IMMORTALITY

EMILY BEK

At some point in our lives, coincidentally around the time many of us enrolled in university, we stop growing (upwards at least) and start, gradually, ageing. The same is true of our cats, dogs, birds and goldfish. The process is so ubiquitous we tend to think it happens to all animals, but that is not true. Lobsters, for example, grow throughout their lives and can, it appears, live indefinitely (barring injury, disease, lobster mornay). Some species of turtles and giant clams are similarly long-lived. Rougheye rockfish have been found up to 205 years old. These seemingly ageless creatures make you wonder – why not us?

Lobsters grow throughout their lives and can, it appears, live indefinitely.

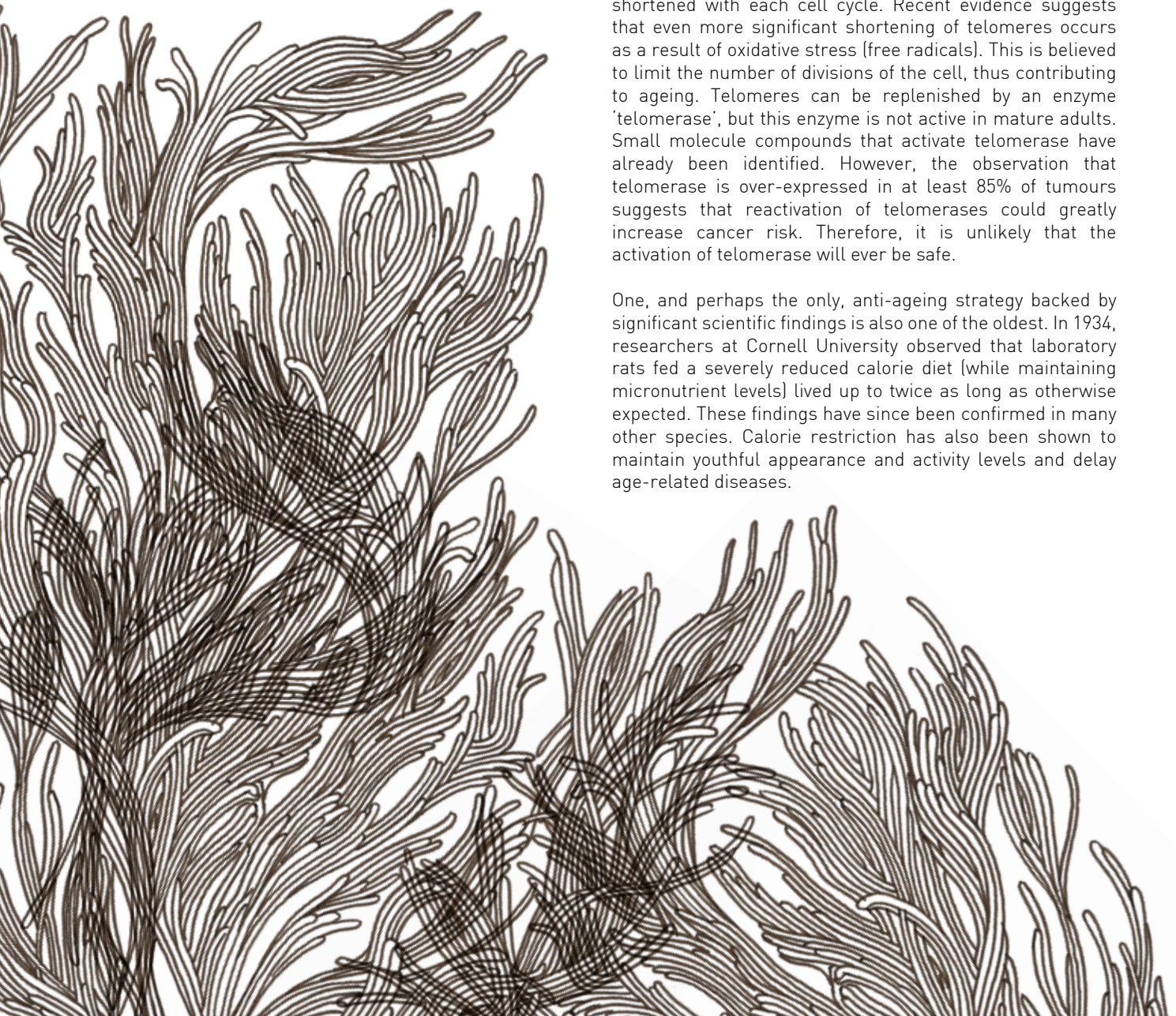
If agelessness is possible, why have humans so conspicuously evolved to age? Many evolutionary biologists think that strategies which result in a higher reproductive rate at a young age are favoured by natural selection, even if they shorten overall lifespan. This is because accidents, predation and disease will eventually kill the organism no matter how much energy is devoted to repair of the body. However, for animals living in very crowded environments there could be an evolutionary advantage to longevity as a means to 'wait out' periods of overcrowding and produce off-spring in the rare event that space becomes available for them to develop.

This evolutionary theory is all very interesting, but not very useful in real life. Old age is essentially 'outside' of the evolutionary pressures that make living things 'make sense'. Genetic material is only passed on during an individual's reproductive life, so beyond the age of fertility the physical attributes of the body have not been subject to strong selective pressures. For example, the dominant mutation which causes onset of Huntington's disease around age 45 has not been eliminated by natural selection, perhaps because most people would have successfully reproduced by then.

This lack of selective pressure means that old age is a difficult state to understand. Some scientists think human ageing evolved as an active, programmed process, where a biological clock regulates the ageing process by changing the expression of genes that affect the body's maintenance, repair and defense responses. Increasingly, however, many scientists see ageing just as the cumulative results of environmental impacts such as damage to DNA, cells and tissues by oxygen radicals, toxins, and UV light, together with the progressive failure of maintenance and repair processes.

Given the lucrative market open to anyone who finds a way to increase life span, the question has been investigated at length, but with few promising results. Telomeres, first described in 1978, are a classic example. Telomeres are lengths of 'disposable' DNA at the ends of each chromosome. The enzymes that duplicate DNA cannot copy the ends of chromosomes. If cells divided without telomeres, they would lose necessary information. Telomeres are successively shortened with each cell cycle. Recent evidence suggests that even more significant shortening of telomeres occurs as a result of oxidative stress (free radicals). This is believed to limit the number of divisions of the cell, thus contributing to ageing. Telomeres can be replenished by an enzyme 'telomerase', but this enzyme is not active in mature adults. Small molecule compounds that activate telomerase have already been identified. However, the observation that telomerase is over-expressed in at least 85% of tumours suggests that reactivation of telomerases could greatly increase cancer risk. Therefore, it is unlikely that the activation of telomerase will ever be safe.

One, and perhaps the only, anti-ageing strategy backed by significant scientific findings is also one of the oldest. In 1934, researchers at Cornell University observed that laboratory rats fed a severely reduced calorie diet (while maintaining micronutrient levels) lived up to twice as long as otherwise expected. These findings have since been confirmed in many other species. Calorie restriction has also been shown to maintain youthful appearance and activity levels and delay age-related diseases.



The benefits of calorie restriction are probably due to lower metabolic rates. When our bodies break down energy, some high energy electrons 'leak' onto oxygen molecules and form molecules called free radicals such as superoxide. Free radicals cause constant wear and tear on the body, and contribute to diseases including cancer (by damaging DNA), Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases (by damaging neurons), and heart disease (by damaging artery walls and promoting atherosclerosis).

This wear and tear from metabolism is present throughout the animal kingdom. As a result, the number of heart beats/lifetime (which is a good indicator of metabolic rate) among mammals is remarkably constant (averages about 7×10^8 heart beats/lifetime), despite a 40-fold variation in life expectancy and 35-fold difference in heart rate. This supports the correlation between life span and oxidative stress from metabolism. For example, a Galapagos tortoise with a life expectancy of 177 years and a heart rate of 6 beats/min has 5.6×10^8 heart beats/lifetime, while a mouse which lives for up to three years will have up to 11×10^8 heart beats/lifetime. The microscopic plankton *Daphnia* live for just 30 days, but use 1.3×10^8 heart beats. There is growing evidence that lowering heart rates in human can increase healthy life span.

Of course, we can already limit free radical damage to our bodies – by avoiding sources of free radicals like smoke and deep fried food, and consuming sufficient anti-oxidants (especially vitamins C and E). With a heart rate of 60 beats/min, the average human reaches 7×10^8 heart beats after just 22.2 years. Clearly, humans are already resisting wear and tear from free radicals. There is growing evidence that a restricted calorie diet, if followed properly, has numerous health benefits and anti-ageing effects. Might it allow us to live forever?

Life expectancy has nearly doubled in the past century (in the USA, life expectancy was 47 years in 1900 and 77 years in 2000). There are two ways to improve life expectancy – to reduce the frequency of 'premature' deaths (thus increasing the average age at death), or increase life span (the maximum number of years an individual can live). For the time being there is still plenty of room to improve life expectancy by decreasing mortality resulting from accidents, infectious diseases (especially HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria), and treatable cancers and heart disease. Another area to target is mental illness. In the western world, average life expectancy of the seriously mentally ill is 25 years shorter than the general public (in the 1990s it was just 10-15 years shorter). Working in these areas and others should further increase life expectancy for a decade or two at least. However, we will ultimately reach a point where the premature death rate is so low that attempts to reduce it will not significantly affect life expectancy.

Increasing life span is in some ways more intriguing. If life span does not have an inherent limit, increases in life expectancy could also be unlimited. To achieve further increases in life span we will need to counteract the damaging effects of free radicals. Will the answer be a calorie restricted diet? Probably not – it's hard to imagine such an eating regime gaining widespread popularity and being safely followed (it's vital to ensure adequate consumption of micronutrients). But the results of calorie restriction in animals may teach us to live longer by showing us that free radicals are a major contributor to the ageing process.

Limitless increase in life expectancy still seems rather fanciful.

We are already finding other ways to exploit this observation. For example, the gene PHA-4 has been linked to the longevity produced by calorie restriction in animals, with similar results expected in humans. Discoveries like this could lead to the synthesis of drugs to simulate the effects of calorie restriction and confer the longevity benefits. However, limitless increase in life expectancy still seems rather fanciful.

Some argue that if there was no limit those people surviving past their predicted life expectancy (80+ years) would be fit and healthy. In reality, they are clearly in a state of decline. Others argue that if there was a limit (close to current life expectancy), improvements in life expectancy would be slower in areas with highest current life expectancy. However, this is not the case.

Life expectancy has already increased dramatically. In the first half of the twentieth century, improved nutrition and control of infectious diseases drastically reduced child and infant mortality. Later, mortality from chronic diseases, especially heart disease and stroke, was lowered largely thanks to advances in medical treatment and reductions in smoking. These increases in life expectancy have been strikingly linear, leading to the question of what the limit is. And, indeed, whether a limit exists at all.

A STERN BUT DELICIOUS WARNING



KYLAR LOUSSIKAN

Stoners, drug abusers and delinquents everywhere are turning to the guava fruit not for its fleshy, sweet inside, nor its abundance of healthy vitamins, but for a far more sinister purpose. *Psidium guajava*, of the magnoliopsida class, has picked up popularity amongst those more inclined to deviant behaviour for its hallucinogenic properties. A simple operation involving crushing the dry outer shell of the plant and combining with readily available potassium carbonate produces a pulp than can be orally ingested or combined with a tobacco cigarette.

Health authorities are monitoring incidents of use, but these users may be amongst you even now. "They come into our homes and our communities," said Beryl Braithwaite, a prominent youth worker and anti-drug activist, "why can't these people be content with normal everyday things? Like I tell my kids, it's the three C's, community, Christ, and Channel Seven."

As several MPs prepare to speak in parliament, grocers and retailers have been urged to recall guava-related products including popular favourites such as Dried Guava Baby Delights. "It's inappropriate for these products to be in a family home," said one concerned mother as her young son sat behind her consuming a family pack of Maxibons.

Expected to take a toll on local guava growers, Guava Farmers Union chief Brendan Bilson has urged the Government to assist in restructuring the industry to deal with the fallout. "Those damn hippies, destroying all the hard work we've done over the last ten years," he told reporters. "And it's not just the bare-footed bums neither."

Indeed, the ANZ and Commonwealth Banks today were denying rumours they were forced to stand down several market traders who had become delirious after a corporate lunch ended with lemon and guava tart. Others, including this paper, take a more cynical view – as cocaine prices become increasingly unaffordable, we're bound to see an upswing in corporate casualties.

As yet, no mainstream media source has committed to providing detailed coverage, but several journalists have reported to be missing after committing to researching the phenomenon. One was later found wandering through Liverpool, and several others spotted crying outside the Fairfax headquarters here in downtown Sydney. A large roasting machine and freeze-drier were seen being delivered to the Channel Seven studio late yesterday afternoon, but sources within the network have expressed doubt that anything will replace television as the opiate of the masses.

The dried guava phenomenon has not escaped the top levels of government, with a senior minister in the Rees cabinet announcing several hundred new train lines, decent funding for state hospitals and the resignation of the entire front bench. A spokesperson for the minister later apologised for the minister and attributed the comments to an accidental intake of guava skin.

We can only hope that action is taken quickly to halt the spread of this terrible affliction and rid society of such intolerable incidents. In the meantime, stay indoors, avoid panic, and don't eat the guava.



A HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO HITCHHIKING

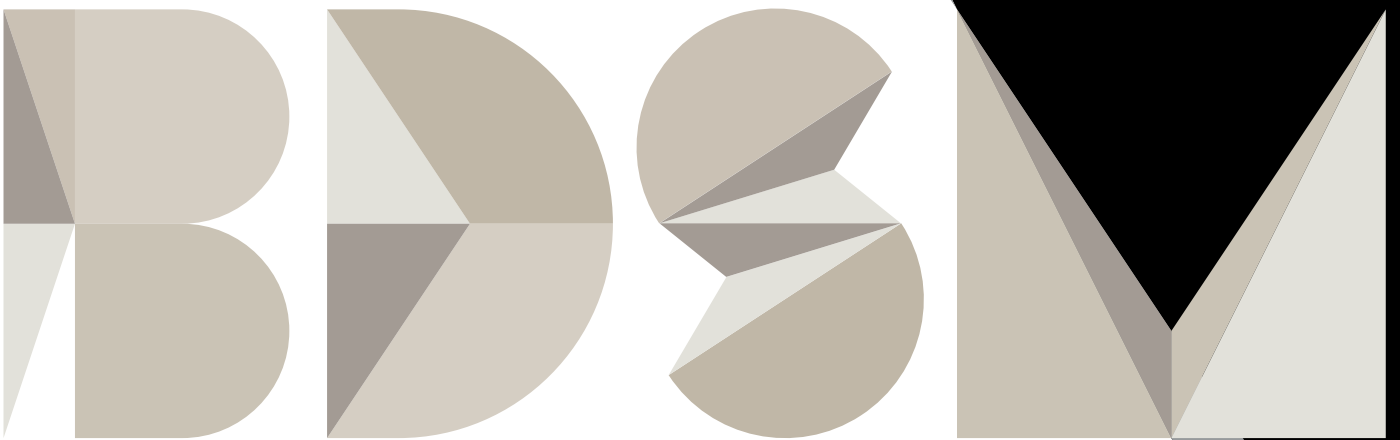
EMILY MARGO

On a recent trip to New Zealand, my travelling partner insisted that we hitchhike everywhere. Since Tim was 6 ft 4 and had muscles like tree trunks, I felt relatively comfortable with the idea. What I didn't anticipate was how difficult it would be getting out of Queenstown. In the four and a half hours it took us to hail a ride, I made a number of mistakes. I realised that all I had needed were some guidelines on hitchhiking etiquette. May these ten tips help you get picked up.*

- 1 POSITION YOURSELF ON A ROAD HEADING OUT OF TOWN.
- 2 REMOVE UNSAVOURY PIERCINGS AND ANY FLASHY ACCESSORIES.
- 3 STAY RELATIVELY CHEERFUL. NO ONE WANTS TO PICK UP AN ANGRY STRANGER.
- 4 HAVE A BAG AT YOUR FEET SO YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE A MORNING-AFTER DRUNK.
- 5 DON'T JUMP UP AND DOWN OR WAVE IDIOTICALLY. IT'S TEMPTING BUT THE DRIVER WILL PUT HIS FOOT DOWN ON THE ACCELERATOR.
- 6 DON'T SHOUT INSULTS AT PASSING CARS.
- 7 TAKE OFF YOUR SUNGLASSES; YOU SHOULDN'T LOOK LIKE YOU'RE TRYING TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE.
- 8 PUT YOUR THUMB DOWN WHEN POLICE CARS PASS.
- 9 DON'T LOOK TOO COMFORTABLE (NO FOLD-OUT CHAIRS OR TAKE-AWAY COFFEES).
- 10 GET READY TO BE HONKED AT. BLOW KISSES IN RESPONSE.

*Remember, do not to hitchhike at home, or in anyone's home, unless you are in the South Island of New Zealand with a male travelling companion, who is muscly and street-smart.

THE



SCENE

BART CUMMINGS

I have always had an interest in the whys and hows of sado-masochism. This is one of the reasons why I recently agreed to visit a fetish club in the city called "Hellfire". Its website advertises the club as "the epicenter of fetish fashion and perverted performance in Australia, as well as the social hub of the Sydney scene." After my experience at Hellfire I have come to understand why they use words like "scene" and "performance" – when it's in public it somehow isn't allowed to be real.

Bondage, domination and sado-masochism (BDSM) are practised by a minority of consenting adults in this country; about two percent, according to an extensive survey published in the Journal of Sexual Medicine. And by all accounts it is generally a healthy and unproblematic activity, unrelated to a background of mental illness, sexual abuse or any other disempowering condition. There is the odd well-publicised mishap, but these seem to be avoidable accidents. It is the overlapping of consent and 'submission' that generates the real ethical tension at the core of BDSM. How can it be consensual when it deliberately sets up and eroticises a power imbalance? In practice this is a non-issue, because safe-words and explicit rules ensure that the 'sub' in fact controls proceedings under the affected disguise of vulnerability. There is no more risk of assault in a BDSM setting than there is in the ordinary instance.

But then again, assault was not what frightened me when I thought about going to Hellfire. I knew from the tone of the website that I wouldn't be in any physical danger, particularly because of its policy of making the club safe and comfortable for women – "...able to walk around the club with their breasts out, unmolested and unremarked, if they feel like it. Able to be tied up to a rack, knowing that no unwelcome hands or comments or advances will intrude on their pleasure." Basically I was just terrified of being surrounded by lots of

naked people. They would be naked! But since I was kind of chuffed that my partner, who is somewhat bolder than me in these sorts of experiments, had invited me to go along, I couldn't say no.

We both went well covered, she in sparkly fishnets, myself in bowtie, waistcoat and short brim hat. Others in the club were less so – groups of people gathered in dark fleshy knots of PVC, leather chaps, studded chokers and bright red underpants. One silent customer at the bar nursed his/her drink all night behind the anonymity of a tiger mask. They were mostly middle-aged, which meant the troll men stomping around in red underpants were bloated, hairy and bald. They were my favourites.

I GUESS I'M NOT A SUB

For some reason our naivety must have been exposed, because the manager noticed that we were new straight away. We turned from staring at the Grain Waves in the vending machine to meet him.

"Welcome to Hellfire! I am Master Tom." He loved our outfits. "When no one fits in here, everyone fits in. Don't worry about the others, they're well behaved – they won't bite... unless you ask nicely." Then he turned and walked jovially away, and I saw that the seat of his leather pants was missing.

There is no sex and no exposed genitalia at Hellfire – both are against the law in public places, and the police wandered around the club nearly all night, ostensibly to uphold the statute books but probably just to see the amazing Hula Hoop Lady (she performed later on). It was a place that was somehow full of exhibitionists but devoid of any

eroticism. Standing near the dance floor to observe the other guests I encountered many people and their bums (indeed, one fellow beside us virtually stood facing the wall gyrating to the music, the better to show off his arse). But I didn't see any genuine domination or humiliation or honestly self-absorbed sexual expression at all – it was all very clearly and designedly a performance, by amateurs for amateurs, meant to be watched and public and meant to be fun. The clients in all their various stages of nudity were, as the website had promised, not models; they came in all shapes and sizes, and they weren't all in the usual grim corsets and tight leather. Several came as Dracula, or Edward Scissorhands, or village peons from the Middle Ages.

The most interesting conclusion I left with was the way these costumes positioned people. BDSM may be an eroticization of power imbalance, but I've come to realise that elaborate costume parties like Hellfire are an electrifying act of submission just of themselves. My appearance doesn't normally attract attention, and I found the experience of being stared at on the street and on the bus kind of disempowering. It didn't titillate me. I guess I'm not a sub. But it made me think about vulnerability as a trigger for sexual excitement, and that it takes someone quite special indeed to have the self-assurance to accomplish that. Maybe it's something to aim for. When I get older I'll go in my red underpants.

Summer of the Accidental Voyeur

SIME KNEZEVIC

children walk past the front yard
of her house
licking 30c cones
re-buckling sandals
[my car dies here]

she's wearing a red-dotted bikini
big red-rimmed sunglasses and
a straw hat guarding her diesel red hair
[enough with the red already]

she's lying on the lawn
her feet graze over the grass and
a guitar rests on her lap and she
strums the thing terribly
[my camera phone clicks]

she rises unsteadily
her lips twitch to resist smiling
I don't care if she thinks I'm a
pervert she's mine for the summer.

Michael Jackson

– it matters if you're black or white

MATT KWAN

Upon his death, Michael Jackson was hailed as a superb entertainer and an amazing person. Famous people worldwide contributed their thoughts, saying how great he was. The internet over-flowed with posthumous tributes. However, the full story was never told. Only half of it was.

Unlike the other targets of my vitriolic articles, I actually enjoy some of Michael Jackson's music. One of my favourite songs is his 1979 hit *Rock With You*. In the early days of stardom, Michael was a cool guy with signature hip gyrations and looked like he genuinely enjoyed life. He was having fun.

However, the downfall came when he decided to turn himself white. Instead of a cheerful, smiling figure, he became angry at the world. This is exemplified by the song *Bad*, where in the Martin Scorsese video, he returned to his New York ghetto neighbourhood as a white person and tried to convince his black gangster associates that he was 'bad' by eventually confronting them wearing a black leather suit. He was bad, but not in the way that he intended that word to mean.

Diehard fans argue that Michael suffered from vitiligo, which is a condition causing de-pigmentation of the skin. However, it does not affect the whole body. Michael could have treated it topically, and stayed a black man. Instead, he chose pigmentation treatment that turned him white. To look more like a white man, he also straightened his hair. In a recent issue of *Tharunka*, Gabriel McManus argued that a hypothetical pill transforming black people into white people would not be such a bad idea. The major argument against this proposition is Michael Jackson. When he became white, his life went downhill.

Let's look more in detail at his musical career. Black Michael was an amazing child prodigy who sang enduring hits like *ABC*, *Ben* and *Never Can Say Goodbye*. He continued this greatness into adulthood, through further hits, such as *Thriller*, *Don't Stop Till You Get Enough*, *Billie Jean* and *Beat It*.

White Michael, on the other hand, lost the plot. *Bad* was bad enough, but he created a baffling song named *Black or White*, where he claimed 'it doesn't matter if you're black or white'. If that were really true, he would have stayed black. It is also not true, because Black Michael made better music. Like many white people, White Michael started to feel sorry for himself for being a privileged white man and sang songs like *Man In The Mirror*, *Heal The World* and *Earth Song*. The fun had been removed from the music. He had become a brooding apparition.

On a personal level, White Michael turned into a freak. He decided that he would purchase a pet monkey, Bubbles, who essentially lived as a human, alongside White Michael. He also decided to build his own personal theme park, so he could entertain vulnerable children. He named it the Neverland ranch. As he was acquitted in 2005, child sexual assaults officially 'never' occurred on the land, but it still looked dodgy.

As if being just white wasn't enough, White Michael decided to cake his face in white makeup all the time, accentuating it with lipstick and eye shadow, making him look like a cross between the Thai lady boys I saw on my last trip to Thailand and the ghoulish figures portrayed in his *Thriller* music video. He looked like a freak to match his personality.

Michael Jackson fans might protest, and argue that his weirdness was a result of his non-existent childhood. That may be true, but that's just an excuse they made up themselves. White Michael never made excuses. He knew he was weird.



“White Michael never made excuses. He knew he was weird.”

Others claim that I am too harsh, and that I should forgive White Michael for his eccentricities because he did lots of good charitable deeds. That may be true, but other charitable people were not freaks. Bob Geldof may, like White Michael, have given his children weird names, but seems like an otherwise normal person. Bono of U2 may occasionally seem like a bit of a tool, but also appears erudite and eloquent.

The real Michael Jackson died when Black Michael became White Michael. The release of the *Bad* album, the first for White Michael, heralded the end of Michael Jackson as a legitimate human being. It was over from then, only nobody realised it until later. The physical cessation of life in White Michael's body was merely a long awaited confirmation of his earlier spiritual death.

Advice to a Young Man on the Choice of a Mistress

June 25, 1745

My dear Friend,

I know of no Medicine fit to diminish the violent natural Inclinations you mention; and if I did, I think I should not communicate it to you. Marriage is the proper Remedy. It is the most natural State of Man, and therefore the State in which you are most likely to find solid Happiness. Your Reasons against entering into it at present, appear to me not well-founded. The circumstantial Advantages you have in View by postponing it, are not only uncertain, but they are small in comparison with that of the Thing itself, the being married and settled. It is the Man and Woman united that make the compleat human Being. Separate, she wants his Force of Body and Strength of Reason; he, her Softness, Sensibility and acute Discernment. Together they are more likely to succeed in the World. A single Man has not nearly the Value he would have in that State of Union. He is an incomplete Animal. He resembles the odd Half of a Pair of Scissars. If you get a prudent healthy Wife, your Industry in your Profession, with her good Economy, will be a Fortune sufficient.

But if you will not take this Counsel, and persist in thinking a Commerce with the Sex inevitable, then I repeat my former Advice, that in all your Amours you should prefer old Women to young ones. You call this a Paradox, and demand my Reasons. They are these:

1. Because as they have more Knowledge of the World and their Minds are better stor'd with Observations, their Conversation is more improving and more lastingly agreeable.
2. Because when Women cease to be handsome, they study to be good. To maintain their Influence over Men, they supply the Diminution of Beauty by an Augmentation of Utility. They learn to do a 1000 Services small and great, and are the most tender and useful of all Friends when you are sick. Thus they continue amiable. And hence there is hardly such a thing to be found as an old Woman who is not a good Woman.
3. Because there is no hazard of Children, which irregularly produc'd may be attended with much Inconvenience.
4. Because thro' more Experience, they are more prudent and discreet in conducting an Intrigue to prevent Suspicion. The Commerce with them is therefore safer with regard to your Reputation. And with regard to theirs, if the Affair should happen to be known, considerate People might be rather inclin'd to excuse an old Woman who would kindly take care of a young Man, form his Manners by her good Counsels, and prevent his ruining his Health and Fortune among mercenary Prostitutes.
5. Because in every Animal that walks upright, the Deficiency of the Fluids that fill the Muscles appears first in the highest Part: The Face first grows lank and wrinkled; then the Neck; then the Breast and Arms; the lower Parts continuing to the last as plump as ever: So that covering all above with a Basket, and regarding only what is below the Girdle, it is impossible of two Women to know an old from a young one. And as in the dark all Cats are grey, the Pleasure of corporal Enjoyment with an old Woman is at least equal, and frequently superior, every Knack being by Practice capable of Improvement.
6. Because the Sin is less. The debauching a Virgin may be her Ruin, and make her for Life unhappy.
7. Because the Compunction is less. The having made a young Girl miserable may give you frequent bitter Reflections; none of which can attend the making an old Woman happy.

8thly and Lastly.

They are so grateful!!

Thus much for my Paradox. But still I advise you to marry directly; being sincerely

Your affectionate Friend.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

SIXTEEN SIGNS OF AGEING

SEAN LAWSON is having a quarter-life crisis

- 1** Spongebob Squarepants has been around for over a decade.
- 2** Children have referred to the Smashing Pumpkins as "oldies music".
- 3** There's a new Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and they're remaking god damn Care Bears.
- 4** My lower bound for girls it's acceptable to date according to the "half your age plus 7" formula now excludes people of legal drinking age.
- 5** The Simpsons episode "Lisa's Wedding" takes place in 2010.
- 6** I have shaken my head and, with complete earnestness, said "kids these days". Frequently at what they're wearing.
- 7** Teenagers have idols I have never heard of. Who the fuck are the Jonas brothers?
- 8** Green Day are middle aged.
- 9** I have hit on girls born in the 1990s. They're also allowed to vote.
- 10** On that note, the characters from Rugrats are past the age of consent now.
- 11** People younger than me are not only competing at the highest levels of professional sport, but people younger than me are burning out on fame, drugs and booze as a result of their professional sport careers.
- 12** Kids who went to high school with my little sister have mortgages.
- 13** Hell, my little sister has a damn career.
- 14** I just found out that Miley Cyrus is Billy Ray Cyrus' kid. What the hell?
- 15** I am almost a quarter of a century old.
- 16** Michael Jackson, the Elvis of our generation, died alone, broken and disgraced, ending all our childish delusions of immortality and reminding us that we too will someday die alone and surrounded by the faded dreams of better days.



ANH TRAN-NAM takes on
Triple J's blinkered Hottest 100

In July this year, Triple J, the national 'youth' radio station funded by the Australian Government, released its Hottest 100 of All Time list. Listeners voted online voting for up to ten songs, selecting the top one hundred songs from the entire History of Music. The list named *Smells Like Teen Spirit* by Nirvana as the #1 song of all time and also featured other artists like Rage Against the Machine, Jeff Buckley, Radiohead and Queen in the Top 10. The list has created a lot of hoo-ha since it was released, and rightly so.

Lack of diversity and under-representation of important groups and genres were striking features of the list. Out of the one hundred songs, only one song – *Teardrop* by Massive Attack – contained female vocals (and even then, that trip hop song features guest female vocals in an otherwise two man band). On the list were only two rap songs, *The Nosebleed Section* and *Sabotage* by (non-black) hip hop groups Hilltop Hoods and the Beastie Boys, and only five black artists made it on, including Michael Jackson (R.I.P.), Jimi Hendrix, Bob Marley, Stevie Wonder and the indie band TV on the Radio (who are four-fifths African-American).

It would be a bit ridiculous for anyone to expect the listeners of one Australian radio station to come up with a canon of music that reflects the incredibly rich and diverse nature of the entire history of music in the world, but that doesn't let Triple J or its listeners off the hook.

To me, this list, as well as the general taste of Triple J listeners (having wiked the annual Hottest 100 lists from the past ten years), is trapped in a parochial mindset which almost exclusively thinks of 'good' or culturally valuable music as white, male-dominated rock. I use the word "rock" in the more liberal, guitar-ish sense of the word, including sub-genres like indie rock, indie pop, metal, punk, acoustic, dance rock, etc. Although the genres covered under the label "rock" may seem pretty diverse, it doesn't cover many other very important genres, like pop, hip hop, R&B, reggae and dub, dance and its sub-genres (like drum and bass, breakbeat etc), jazz, blues and classical.

**THERE'S
MORE
TO
MUSIC**
(than
white
dude
rock)

It's clearly reasonable for commercial or community radio stations to stick to particular types of music to cater for target audiences, because by the very nature of their funding, they have to program music that meets the tastes of listeners. The problem when you deal with a station like Triple J is that tax dollars from all Australians, no matter what their musical preference, is going towards funding a station that privileges white, male-dominated rock as a culturally superior type of music.

Triple J loves to brand itself as a station dedicated to the 'youth' of Australia and its guiding principles (available on the Triple J website) tells us that the station's mandate is to "satisfy all your musical and cultural needs". Yet the 'youth' are obviously not a group of people with a largely homogeneous taste for white, male-dominated rock. Young people generally have a strong preference for Top 40 music – according to a 2009 Nielsen survey, 65% of 18-24 year olds who listen to radio in Sydney tune into 2Day, Nova, Mix or Vega. Seeing as Top 40 pop, rap and R&B is virtually unrepresented in the Hottest 100 lists, the whole claim to be about being a 'youth' project seems pretty disingenuous. In the very least, the station could be more transparent and specific about what niche tastes it is predominantly catering for.

Of course, the Hottest 100 of All Time list is not representative of the Triple J playlist, especially in the past few years. Unlike what the Hottest 100 list would suggest, Triple J do play and promote female artists, like Missy Higgins, Ladyhawke and more recently ex-Australian Idol contestant, Lisa Mitchell. It's also hard to deny that in the past few years, Triple J have been giving more air time to hip hop, Australian (Hilltop Hoods, the Herd) and otherwise (Kanye West, Dizzee Rascal, Lupe Fiasco). There's also a three hour weekly hip hop show, as well as Roots 'N All program, which covers miscellaneous genres like blues, jazz, soul, reggae.

It would also be hard to argue that Triple J is explicitly hostile to rap. Triple J claims to have been the "only station in the world" playing the seminal NWA song *Fuck Tha Police* in 1989 and slowly, American hip hop and pop is finding its way into the Hottest 100 – Kanye's *Stronger* was #20 in 2007, *Hey Ya!* by Outkast was #2 in 2003. Regardless, white, male rock seems to be played without much consideration of quality (think: Limp Bizkit, Alien Ant Farm, arguably Kings of Leon...), the prevailing attitude towards rap is still that 'good' hip hop is an exception to the rule of crap, mainstream hip hop. There are a select few rappers, like the ones named above, who are anointed diamonds in the rough and that's why you just wouldn't hear rappers like 50 Cent or Flo Rida on Triple J played in a serious way, no matter how good their songs are.

The reason I used the word "parochial" earlier is because Triple J seems to retain outdated prejudices of what can be considered 'good' music. The station still seems to cling to

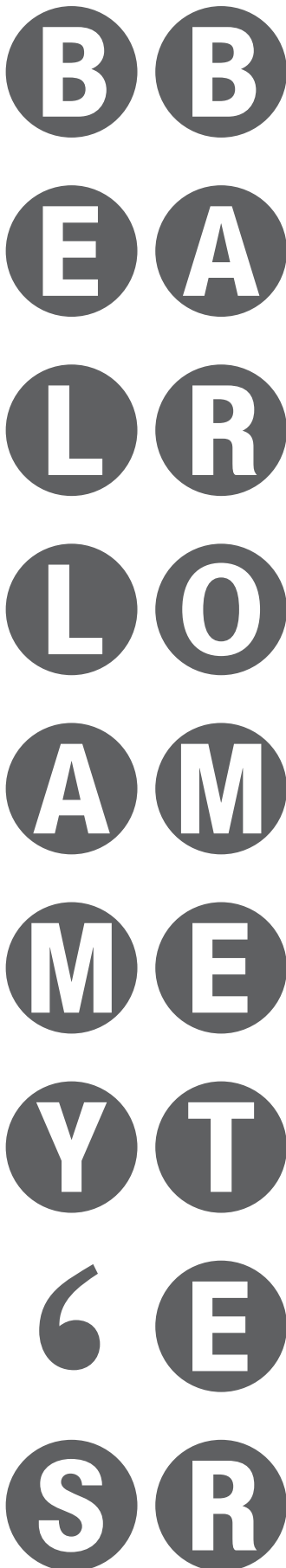
the idea that Top 40 pop and R&B generally has no artistic merit and therefore is excluded from its playlists, despite the fact that even the biggest indie, elitist music institutions like Pitchfork have made their peace with pop, R&B and rap. In 2006, Pitchfork named *My Love* by Justin Timberlake the #1 song and at least 10% of their Top 100 Tracks of 2008 list were rap and R&B songs by artists like Beyoncé, Usher and Rihanna.

If you've already bought into this cultural bias that Top 40 pop, R&B and rap are just necessarily (with the odd exception) bad, then that's a real shame. It's probably too obvious of a point to make, but Top 40 music is prolific in part because of why any music becomes popular – because it conveys meaningful ideas, experiences and emotions that engage people in compelling ways. For example, Katy Perry's song *I Kissed A Girl* is a song about sexual awakening, experimentation and pleasure, and reflects the real cultural phenomenon of 'bicurious' young women. *Fill Me In* sung in that characteristically smooth, sweet and syncopated style of Craig David is a song that plays with narration and is told from two points of view – the verses tell the story of a guy who is dating a young woman discretely so that her parents don't find out while the chorus assumes the voice of the suspicious parents of the young woman.

As for rap, it is a technically (in terms of rap flows, rhymes, as well as sound and beats production) exciting and alluring way of expressing very real and very subversive ideas, experiences and emotions – ranging from the struggles to respect women in a sexist culture (*Keep Ya Head Up* by 2pac), ghetto life stories (*In My Hood* by 50 Cent), questioning the legitimacy and impartiality of institutions of authority (*Fuck Tha Police*) to female sexual desire and gratification (*Work It* by Missy Elliott). It's not without its flaws, but there's no need to like everything that's contained within a genre in order to recognise its worth. While dismissing the cultural value of hip hop doesn't make you a racist and is not necessarily motivated by malice, it is ignorant.

For a station that is continually trying to project the idea of young edginess, Triple J has not progressed into a programming policy that questions narrow-minded and prejudiced ideas of what can be considered good art. Instead, using taxpayer money, it largely subscribes to, and perpetuates, cultural biases that favour white male rock.





JESS BELLAMY

So, my little chickens, my sweet feathered hens, my great squawking cocks, I am writing this column for you while OVERSEAS, in a DIFFERENT COUNTRY, while I huff about the coast of Ireland for nerdy reasons that I won't go into right now, but it will suffice to say (for now anyway) that I am not getting any of my very important thesis done. In my extremely cosmopolitan and alcohol-filled world travels, I have noticed a few new very hot/very not things that I would love to share with you, just to open up your eyes the way mine have been opened, pry those eyelids into a gaping mess with burning hot tongs o'revelation. Here is my WORLD TRAVELLER HOT OR NOT.

HOT

Non-Australians

So I met a whole bunch of people while on this trip, people from America and Canada and England and Poland and Amsterdam and Italy and Ireland and Melbourne. Being a massive racist who wants to laugh at the way they pronounce "buoy", I hung around the Americans and Canadians the most. There were no annoying Californians to piss us off with their tanned skin and white teeth, just a whole bunch of nerdy literature students who only saw sunlight when it was used to represent a sense of bleak, ironic solipsism in Gus Van Sant films. My faves were the people from the American South, because they said lots of DELIGHTFUL THINGS in DELIGHTFUL ACCENTS. There was Laura from South Carolina who would respond to my regular whingeing with, "are you alright, pet?" Anne-Marie from Texas would say "y'all" all the time and also cook grilled cheese sandwiches. And then Zach from Kentucky would sleep all day and recognise the type of cattle that was shitting (DAIRY COW! ELDERLY SHEEP!) from incredible distances. There was also the girl from Oklahoma who wrote and read out a poem about blow-jobs. Including the line "hot, salty love." God bless you, America.

NOT

People who are smarter than you

So at this ~~Yeats International Summer School~~ Sexy Camp, there were a lot of really intellectual ~~university professors~~ surf instructors who were thoroughly intimidating with their huge degree of knowledge about the Irish literary twilight, who held theories about which STIs Nietzsche really had, and who totally knew how to navigate a mad plexiboard around some totally sick fifty-foot barrels. Although I love smart people, although I am constantly propelled to greater heights and aims by attempting to emulate their great success, I also hate them a bit. I think about ways I could hurt them if they didn't want to be my friend and proof-read my essays. So while Sexy Surf Camp was a humbling and inspiring experience, it was also an experience that filled me with the superhuman rage that can only be understood by psychotics like myself.

So here is my advice, moorhens, because I am now attempting to usurp Agony Aunt Dave's column by dispensing my much cleverer and sexier advice: surround yourself with the uninspiring in all that you do, and you cannot go wrong. You'll never have to stay up at night worrying that Nietzsche never really had syphilis, it was all just a massive conspiracy to discredit his theories. On that exciting note, time to go ~~write a thesis~~ make out with someone hot.



Dr Lurk

Doctor,

Like many old people, my grandparents hold offensive and prejudicial views on a wide range of subjects. Is there any way of severing my genetic ties to them?

Belinda, part time B Arts

Belinda,

Unfortunately no, it's a matter of trying to educate yourself and pursue your own interests, like I have. Best of luck!

DJ ASSault

Dear Lurk,

I have a problem with shaving. The skin on my face is very sensitive and doesn't seem to respond to the usual shaving cream supplements. I have searched the internet exhaustively and no male waxing websites or otherwise have been able to help. How can I get a smooth face again?

MARTY, Unibar

Dear Marty,

Yo Uncle, Yo Granpa, Yo Auntie's a bitch. Yo Uncle, Yo Granpa, Yo Auntie's a bitch. Bitch bitch bitch bitch bitch bitch.

DJ ASSault

Dear Doctor,

I was in a GP's waiting room recently because I had a cold and I needed to get my cough fixed. I had a cough that sounded fake but wasn't. It was a feeble baby-like cough that oozed from me like a Pee-Wee Herman parody but would leave me honestly breathless and lung-ragged and teary eyed. As I was waiting in the waiting room, the cough started up and the doctor came outside to look down on me and say "Yeah yeah, just wait. I'll get to you soon." She thought I was giving her the hurry-on. I was mortified by this misunderstanding. What should I have said?

BERTLE, B Law

Dear Bertle,

Yo Mama, Yo Daddy, Yo Sister's a Ho. Yo Mama, Yo Daddy, Yo Sister's a Ho. Ho ho ho ho ho ho ho ho ho ho ho ho ho ho ho.

DJ ASSault (Gordon Lurk is on leave)

PRESIDENT

Charishma Kaliyanda

The SRC has been a hive of activity since the start of Semester 2. You might have come by our stalls (with plentiful platters of Subway cookies – we realise that hungry students need some sweet treats) at Foundation Day. The SRC is currently working on developing a training program for student representatives, as well as communicating issues students have with their faculties. This semester we'll also be continuing our Info Stall every Tuesday and Thursday up near the Library Lawn. If you want to find out more information about what the SRC is doing for you or you want to get more involved in our campaigns, come by and speak to someone on the stall or flick me an email on c.kaliyanda@arc.unsw.edu.au.

STUDENT WELFARE OFFICER

Matt Ward

Hey Kids lots going on in Welfare Land so I will try and be concise. Recently we had our local member Paul Pearce come to Uni to discuss the Welfare State. A squiddy discussion was had by all so a big thanks to all who attended. Mmmm, brine. Coming toward the surface we will have workshops on a variety of topics squincludng tenancy, centrelink and budgeting so keep an eye out for them. Also week 11 is Stress Less week, exams will be coming toward the surface and we will help you with strategies for dealing. As always if there is anyway I can help drop me a line on m.ward@arc.unsw.edu.au

By Voracious Matt the Devourer

Ed: The above report was translated from English into Squid in accordance with Tharunka's equal opportunity policy. Mmmm, brine.

INTERNATIOAL
STUDENTS OFFICER**Sakshi Sehgal**

The main highlight for the department was the International Festival in Week 6. We had organised a lot of fun activities such as: Henna workshop, African Drumming Workshop, Hip-Hop dance workshop, Film screening, Soccer match, Dance competition and the Night market.

It's an exciting opportunity for the students to volunteer and help organise this event. We had a lot of support from students, Arc and University.

Hopefully this event will achieve greater heights in the coming years!

The department is also working towards the National Day of Action on 2nd September regarding Travel Concession, Safe accommodation and equal work rights. We are working alongside the Education Department on the SRC. The rally centres' around International Students' rights and issues. We ask for the support of students in making this rally a success.

international@arc.unsw.edu.au

POSTGRAD STUDENTS OFFICER

Georgie Smith

Postgrads, very important big exciting news - the Postgrad Council is coming! As of 2010 we will have our very own elected representative body, working hard to represent YOUR interests. But in order to happen, it needs you. If you want to see a Council of students elected by you, for you, then there are a couple of things you can do. First, email postgrad@arc.unsw.edu.au and ask to be put on the mailing list. This will keep you in the loop with what's happening. Second, join Arc.. Why? Because Arc's constitution needs to change in order for the Council to get born, and only Arc members can vote for it.

STUDENT WITH DISABILITIES OFFICER

Marita Morgan

Semester Two started off with a relatively successful Disability Awareness Week. We had many students involved and interested. The Free Auslan and Braille Workshops were popular, as was the visit from the Paralympians on Upper Campus!

Hopefully this semester we will run another Auslan Workshop and also have the NSW Wheelchair Basketball Team on campus. In Week 11 we will be acknowledging NSW Mental Health Awareness week with various events on campus. We are also aiming at having a disability space on campus this semester and also trying to establish a mental health support group so if you have any suggestions or comments let me know!

Don't forget that I am located in the Blockhouse every Wednesday afternoon from 3-5pm if you want to drop by. My email is m.morgan@arc.unsw.edu.au so feel free to drop me a line. Don't forget that I'm also interested to hear from students without disabilities and see how they would like to help students with disabilities on campus!

I look forward to hearing from you!

ETHNIC AFFAIRS OFFICERS

Aaron Chan & Celeste White

Semester 2 kicked off With Acceptance Week in week four There was forums, leaflets, trivia And food galore.
On the Monday was a Braille workshop,
On Tuesday a Stall
On Wednesday a barbeque
And a trivia night, which was a ball.
Thursday saw a discussion About the Welfare State,
The continued distribution of the zine SISTA
And a presentation by Amnesty about refugees, it was great!
Thank you to all those Who attended this week of fun –
And just a reminder, that the collective meeting
Is at 1pm on Mondays in the Blockhouse, Training room one.

Aaron and Celeste.

QUEER STUDENTS OFFICERS

Rory, Vicki, Jocelyn & Genesis

Heya all!

Week 7 is Queer Week on campus, so keep your eyes peeled for our events (and any rainbow flags we've drawn around campus). For details of our various goings-on, check our website www.queer.unsw.edu.au.

Also, we'll have a Queer Zine around from Week 7, which you can pick up from the Queer Space, the Blockhouse and anywhere else we can get it to.

Our weekly events are also continuing in the Queer Space (Room 920, Level 9, Chemical Sciences). These are:

Queer Girls, Mondays 1:30pm-3:30pm

Queer Boys, Tuesdays 3pm-5pm

Mixed, Wednesdays 4pm-6pm

Hope to see you around!

Your friendly neighbourhood Qu'officers,
Rory, Vicki, Jocelyn and Genesis

INDIGENOUS STUDENT OFFICER

Warren Roberts

Hey Indigenous Students,

I hope Semester two is going great. As winter steps out and summer creeps closer, Semester Two will again be over so I hope all your assignments are well planned in advanced. Coming up are some very exciting events that include: social events with Indigenous students from other Universities, local Indigenous community engagement events both within Redfern and La Perouse. Also there will be more guest speakers on campus and musical events organised as well.

For the first time the Indigenous students will have the opportunity to vote and elect their first Indigenous officer.

I would like to thank the Indigenous students for the support during my time as the Indigenous officer and wish the next Indigenous officer all the best in the future.

Finally if you would like to get involved on campus either to understand Indigenous culture or just meet some new friends, get involved with YARN on campus. The meeting times are Wednesdays from 4-5pm meeting in the Marsh room in the Round House for more information please email me. Good luck with your studies and enjoy the exciting events on campus. Cheers!



UNJUST DESSERTS

How Arc robbed the true winner of the International Cookbook.

Every now and then in life you encounter something beautiful. An idea so novel and yet intuitively right, you feel like it's been with you all your life. So it was when *Tharunka* first discovered 'Bob'. Now, 'Bob' is the affectionate name used by gastronomic genius and UNSW student Kenneth McLean to describe his newest and most scintillating creation. Chocolate dumplings...filled with melted chocolate...served with caramel sauce.

Tharunka encountered this eighth wonder in the UNSW *International Cookbook*, an annual publication featuring selected recipes from students. After weeping with joy for a short period, *Tharunka* looked back to the pages to confirm the near-certainty that Bob had, indeed, been awarded the prize for Best Dessert.

It had not.

The prize for Best Dessert had not been awarded to 'Bob'. It had been awarded to a recipe for apple crumble.

APPLE CRUMBLE?????

Let it be known that *Tharunka* has no objection to apple crumble. Some of *Tharunka's* best friends are apple crumbles. But while it is undeniably simple and tasty, everyone in the world has had apple crumble before. It is not, nor will ever be, a dessert of the originality or calibre of 'Bob'.

Flicking through the Cookbook with increasing consternation, *Tharunka* was unable to find an explanation for this inversion of justice. In fact, *Tharunka* was unable to locate any transparency in the selection process at all. Who were the judges? – what were the criteria? – what criteria could there possibly have been to rank a mere apple crumble above 'Bob'?

Finally, some probing investigative journalism revealed the truth. All UNSW students had been allowed to enter the Cookbook, but only Arc members were eligible for prizes.

They call it membership privileges. We call it Arcpartheid.

We caught up with Kenneth to see how he was holding up. Throughout his ordeal, Kenneth has displayed a quiet, dignified resolve. Having fled to Canada to escape possible retribution from Arc, Kenneth graciously agreed to the following email interview, in which he discusses the systematic oppression through which he was robbed of the prize that was rightfully his...

Tharunka: How did you cope with your white-hot rage when you discovered you had not won the prize?

Kenneth: Hate to disappoint, but I did not have white hot rage when I found out I had not won. The year before I tried to enter, and found out that I had to join Arc to enter the Cookbook. I quickly decided that it is not worth the Arc membership costs to enter the Cookbook. I coped with the rage by sending emails trying to gain insight on why they want to limit the number of student recipes that are submitted.

T: Will you ever eat apple crumble again now it has been poisoned with the bitter taste of injustice?

K: Of course I will eat apple crumble again. Why should I suffer having my diet restricted because of bureaucratic decision?

T: Do you see the prohibition on non-Arc members winning prizes as a form of modern day apartheid?

K: No, I see it as a strange attempt to limit prizes and promote Arc membership.

T: Would you be supportive of an armed insurrection against Arc in the name of 'Bob'?

K: The last thing we would want is to have a civil war at UNSW. Why can't everyone just get along and have their desserts happily together?

T: Does the ban on non-Arc members winning prizes make you more or less likely to join Arc?

K: Does not affect my opinion. I guess if I knew I had a winning recipe I might join Arc to get the prize, but I am not much of a gambling man so the Arc membership fee is more than I would bet.

T: What do you think of Arc generally?

K: I really don't see what the benefits are, and also how it is advantageous to grad students.

T: Do you fear reprisals from the International Cookbook or Arc for your courageous stance against food-related oppression? And, will you cook us dinner?

K: No and no.

POLICE DESTROY LIVES

Smoked or injected, the problem with Ice is that poor people do it. To avoid drug laws, consume in the home or do a line before you leave work. Remember, you can't get arrested for drug crimes if you're dressed nicely. For more information, call 123 400 or visit waronsomedrugs.gov.au

Take 'rich people' drugs instead

NATIONAL DRUGS CAMPAIGN
NATIONAL DRUGS CAMPAIGN

Authorised by your local cocaine dealer



Australian Government

