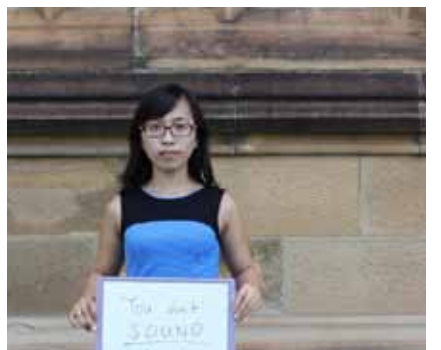


Honi Soit

AUTONOMOUS COLLECTIVE AGAINST RACISM

MINORITIES REPORT



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Before you begin reading this special edition of Honi Soit edited by the Autonomous Collective Against Racism (ACAR), we ask you to join us in acknowledging the Cadigal people of the Eora Nation, upon whose stolen land the University of Sydney stands. The Cadigal people are variously described as the traditional owners, custodians and caretakers of the land that spans Sydney's CBD and Inner City. However it would be just as accurate to say the opposite; that this land is the traditional owner, custodian and caretaker of the Cadigal people. In truth there is no way in the English language to sufficiently summarise the complex, symbiotic and spiritual relationship the Cadigal nation has with this sacred land.

We acknowledge that those of us who are non-Indigenous and identify as a Person of Colour, from an Ethno-Cultural background and/or marginalized by White Supremacy must confront our own participation and benefit in the ongoing colonization of sovereign Indigenous land. Whiteness in this country is intrinsically linked to the power to colonise and settle Indigenous land - in this capacity we must recognize that all non-Indigenous carry with them a piece of Whiteness.

We acknowledge that Cadigal people and the greater Eora nation were the first to suffer, resist and survive the brutalities of White Supremacy in Australia. Therefore we recognize

that our struggle for liberation is intrinsically linked to the centuries long resistance of the Australian Indigenous community. Any anti-racist victories claimed by those who are non-Indigenous are empty, without full freedom for Australia's First Nations. Therefore we stand in solidarity with Indigenous peoples and acknowledge that anti-racist activism in Australia will never be successful without the restoration of land and sovereignty to them.

We acknowledge the atrocities of the Stolen Generations. The untold destruction it wreaked on Indigenous families and individuals through the forcible removal of children from their families. This attempt to 'breed out' Indigeneity was nothing short of genocide and no amount of reparation will ever repair the damage that has been done. We also add that the kidnapping of Indigenous children and the calculated attempt to dismantle Indigenous families continues to this day, with more children than ever being taken away from their families by the colonial Australian government.

We acknowledge the crimes of the ongoing Northern Territory Intervention, now in its seventh year. This military occupation of sovereign Indigenous soil blatantly disregards the Colonial State's own legal obligations and highlights its moral bankruptcy. We condemn the gross fabrications of 'pedophile gangs' and 'child sex rings'

used to justify this intervention. These are nothing but old colonial stereotypes of deviant black sexuality mobilized to facilitate new colonial goals of control, dispossession and criminalisation. With bi-partisan backing, these policies indicate that the White Australian government's legacy of disregard towards Indigenous people, land and culture continues to this day.

We acknowledge the role of the police in continuing to suppress the Indigenous population through racial profiling, police brutality and deaths in custody. These are injustices that occur everyday and contribute to the fact that Australia's Indigenous people continue to be one of the most over-policed and over-incarcerated populations in the world today.

We acknowledge that the court system continues to be deployed as a technology of colonial power. The legal regime of this country continues to prioritise White Supremacy and Indigenous dispossession. This legal system is a daily threat to the lives and liberty of First Nations people. For these reasons, we are wary of superficial legislative solutions to deeply foundational racism.

We stand in solidarity with Indigenous wom*n who face the highest rates of sexual assault and domestic violence in this country. We stand with Indigenous men who experience the highest rates of incarceration and

suicide in this country. And we stand with non-binary Indigenous people, whose culture's progressive stance on gender and sexuality was first suppressed by conservative settlers and their repressive laws, and then later whitewashed by liberal ones.

We pay our respects to Indigenous leaders throughout history, who, against all odds, fight to defend their land, culture, communities and way of life. We pay our respects to every brave warrior fallen during the Frontier Wars. We pay our respects to the scores killed by foreign diseases from the coloniser's use of biological warfare. We pay our respects to every Indigenous child, woman and man who has died at the hands of White Supremacy and to all those who continue to **live** in the face of it.

We acknowledge that Australia is **not** a post-colonial nation. That this land was **never terra nullius** - a myth retrospectively concocted by a colonial regime to justify the genocide and dispossession it was already enacting. That Indigenous sovereignty was **never** ceded and that until the treaties are signed, the occupation is **ongoing**.

Finally, we, ACAR, acknowledge that White Australia has a Black History.

And we pledge to fight for a Black Future.

DISCLAIMER: The opinions of individual authors published in this edition do not necessarily reflect those of ACAR as a whole.

TRIGGER WARNING: This edition contains personal and at times graphic accounts of experiences of racism and other oppressions.

EDITORS' NOTE

"There's really no such thing as the 'voiceless.' There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard." - Arundhati Roy

It is an honour and a privilege to present to you, the first ever (super-sized!) issue of Honi Soit edited by the Autonomous Collective Against Racism (ACAR). This edition reflects so much of ourselves and our experiences within its pages. As a demonstration of the power of autonomy and self-determination, this issue was written and edited solely by individuals who identify as a Person of Colour, Indigenous, from an Ethno-Cultural background, or marginalised by White Supremacy. In this paper, we aim to give voice to those marginalised by racism and subvert the White hegemony of mainstream media that drowns out our dissent; be it on newspapers, television, film or radio. Providing a public platform for these voices is not discriminatory towards White people, rather it counteracts the wealth of social power already afforded to Whiteness in Australian society.

Intersectionality has always been (and hopefully, will always be) a focal point of ACAR's politics; a point that

has hopefully spilled on to the pages of this edition of Honi Soit. We have attempted to centre intersectional voices, namely, from people who identify as Wom*n, Trans, Queer, with a disability or of a low socioeconomic status, as well as being affected by racism. Those that find themselves in the cross-fires of multiple axes of oppression are often left behind by non-inclusive activism. Thus it is important to acknowledge and confront racism in its multiple manifestations and interactions with other forms of oppression. To that end we are proud to say that this edition of Honi Soit features content predominantly submitted by Wom*n of Colour - a telling indication that WOC face unique struggles that are too often erased by white-centric feminism and male-centric anti-racism.

ACAR is a community and its role as a safe space, a place of growth and learning for those who experience racism, extends to this edition of Honi Soit. This inaugural edition seeks to validate experiences of oppression that are too often, dismissed or erased. Here, we have the space to express ourselves, to challenge preconceived

notions of non-White creators, and to defy the restrictions of White Supremacy. To all of you who have been taught to be ashamed of your culture, ethnicity or race, we hope this edition helps you to embrace your identity, even if it has been a source of pain. We hope that victims of racism will find empowerment and solidarity within these pages, and that the beneficiaries of racism will find awareness and understanding.

We would like to thank Sex for Honi (circa 2013) who first conceived of the idea of an autonomous non-White edition of Honi Soit. Fahad Ali for founding ACAR. Oscar Monaghan and Tabitha Prado for their contributions to race awareness on campus as ACAR's "Official OBs" and founding members of Critical Race Discussion Group. Doctor Jane Park for raising race consciousness in the academy and bringing non-white students together. Regular Honi editors Justin Pen and

Astha Rajvanshi and Creative Director Judy Zhu whose expert guidance made this edition possible. And finally, we would like to thank each and every one of you that contributed, whether you were published or not. You are not stereotypes. You are creative. You are writers, poets, artists and so much more. You defy definitions.

And now, we proudly present to you, the very first edition in the history of Honi Soit, to be written and edited by the Autonomous Collective Against Racism.

Bridget Harilaou and Shiran Illanperuma (Unofficial Office Bearers of ACAR, 2014)



ACAR OFFICE BEARER'S REPORT

BY TABITHA PRADO

We're slowly approaching the end of the first working year of the Autonomous Collective Against Racism (ACAR). Though we are still a proto-collective of sorts, with policies still in the works and ideas yet to coalesce, the support it receives gives me optimism for its future.

I try to imagine what it would have been like finding an ACAR stall at O-Week a few years ago, when I was just prompted into my early days of race consciousness thanks to introductory sociology and forays into Tumblr, and I can almost taste the

relief. Not that I feel ACAR is ready for a stall at O-Week - despite political support from the SRC, there are still factions on campus that are hostile to our existence, and that made itself evident at the beginning of this year.

I hope our collective can be viewed as one that is not entirely constructed in opposition. While our name states that we are "Against Racism", we also stand for values of community, friendship, growth, radical love and empathy. Despite our formation in the midst of conflict, this collective is not just about "taking a stand" -- we hope to plant

the seeds of something positive. So, to people opposed to our autonomy and politics, I say: people should lead their own movements, and any anti-racism movement on campus that has no room for the emotional support of students who experience racism is lacking. This criticism is not just about validity, but priority of activism on campus.

All oppression is connected, said Staceyann Chin. Racism is complex and multifaceted, but thanks to colonialism and imperialism, seems to eerily follow the same pattern in most countries around the world. The differences

between those patterns need to be explored, and I won't ever claim that all forms of racism take the same shape. But the fantasy of biological race is behind it. The fantasy of biological purity, of whiteness, and the power it imparts to white people: those things must be called to attention and eradicated accordingly.

I, for one, am looking forward to it. To dismantling whiteness, and having some really good autonomous parties while doing so.

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A COG IN THE WHEEL OF A ‘FAIR GO’



Since arriving in Australia almost fifteen years ago, my father has written close to 40 cover letters every year.

I'm very proud of my father. He is a Captain in the merchant navy, having travelled to more countries in the last few decades than I can imagine travelling to in my whole life. When we moved to Australia, he decided to stay and work onshore after his separation had taken a toll on our family over the past years.

Now, every weekend I see him filling out job applications, perched at his desk or on the side of his bed. His reading glasses dangle at the tip of his nose, he types furiously on his laptop – an outdated, chunky clamshell, with keys spread too far apart, as he slowly drags the mouse across the screen. Every now and then, he will excitedly announce he's been selected for a job interview, to which the whole family will rejoice and ask a series of polite, now standard, questions: “What's the job? When is the interview? What will you wear to interview?” He prepares for every interview extensively, leaving no stone unturned. Each time we're hopeful things will work out. Most of the time, however, they don't, and so the cycle repeats itself.

But his story is not unusual. For many immigrants who move to Australia to provide greater opportunities, a better lifestyle, and better upbringing for their children – as was the intention of my parents – their integration to a White, Australian society comes at the cost of being subservient to a system that will, in no way, actively benefit their personal or professional development.

* * *

Today, close to 10 per cent of Australia's population have Asian ancestry. China and India represent the two largest source countries for immigrants. 4

million people speak a language other than English at home, including 1.3 million who speak an Asian language, with 650,000 speaking Chinese. Indeed, Asian migrants have also excelled in educational attainment and economic participation. These numbers state loudly and clearly: in Australia, multiculturalism has endured, and multiculturalism has prevailed.

And yet, those who arrive as immigrants also obediently adjust to values and institutions which do not repudiate the inequalities prevalent in any political, economic or societal power structures. In parliament, there are only four members who have Asian cultural origin. In tertiary education leadership, only two out of the 49 senior executives were from an Asian background. In the private sector, 1.9 per cent out of 9.5 per cent executive managers have Asian cultural origins.

And thus, Race Discrimination Commissioner Tim Soutphommasane asks, “Is there a bamboo ceiling that exists in the same way that a glass ceiling exists for women?” He refers to the public image of Australian society with the example of the media, where Asians still assume exotic characteristics. And if their token cultural value isn't needed in, they are invisible.

* * *

One afternoon, my father was casually telling me about his current shipping job, which often requires him to travel down to Port Kembla in Illawara. “The accounts manager is pretty unhappy because they think we spend too much on food on our trips,” he said. “So they're putting a limit of \$15 a day”. He used to eat at the only Indian restaurant in the area, in a small suburb called Corrimal, but he would soon stop.

BY ASTHA RAJVANSHI

“Will they suddenly become invisible when they attend job interviews as one person of colour to every five white candidates?”

PICTURED ON LEFT: CAPT. ALOK RAJVANSHI

I lost my mind at this. I told him that this was blatant discrimination. That the only reason his manager felt entitled to enforce such ridiculous rules – under the guise of ‘cutting costs’ – was because my father, and the only other colleague working his job, was not white. Because when this manager looks at my father, he feels a sense of entitlement that is propped up by his whiteness – the same dominant white power structures that will always prioritise the rights and feelings of those who will happily eat a bland potato salad, those that can speak in an Australian accent to, those whose skin colour they can see in their own reflections, those who are not different in any way or form.

But my father told me not to worry. His resignation comes from a deep-seated understanding that he is now but a cog in the wheel of Australia's multicultural masquerade: the ‘fair go’. In the bigger scheme of things – to provide for his family, to pay the bills and mortgage – this is not worth a fight. Now when he goes to Port Kembla, he will take food from home and spend his meal allowance on take-away from McDonalds, which he brings home for my brother or me.

* * *

When I look at the uncomfortable statistics that reflect an underrepresentation of a sizeable proportion of Australian society's labour force, I can't help but wonder what will happen when I go into the workplace in the coming years. Dr Soutphommasane accurately points out the risk of “a class of professional Asian-Australian coolies in the 21st century ... of well-educated, ostensibly over-achieving Asian-Australians, who may nonetheless be permanently locked out from the ranks of their society's leadership.” These are the people with whom I attended school,

many who have gone on to do some amazing things at university. Will they suddenly become invisible when they attend job interviews as one person of colour to every five white candidates? Or when, years from now, they begin to look for promotions? Will all they be suitable for is filling “the token ethnic” quotas?

Unfortunately, I do not have the answers. This pattern of invisibility will only change when we speak up against the unconscious bias we are thrust into, and point out the passivity we are expected to maintain. I do not know if this will help us get to those positions of leadership, but it will certainly make those who currently occupy them, squirm in their seats. It will make them question if things do, indeed, need to change.

* * *

It is only in obvious sentiments of exclusion and of bigotry – when a White woman verbally assaults a Chinese woman on a public train: “Why did you come to this country? This is our country”; or when a White shock-jock radio host profits at the expense of people of colour by humiliating them: “They have no connection to us: they simply rape, pillage and plunder a nation that's taken them in” – that the fears and anxieties of many Australians come to the fore.

We are split: the sensible, educated class of Australians sees skilled migrants as prosperous and a boost to the Australian economy, but at the same time, the risk of our society becoming ‘Asianised’, or of ‘Brown people taking over’ lingers in the back of our minds, serving as a continuous reminder to people like my father that they should not expect to benefit from the way things are: not now, not ever.

WORKING TITLE

BY LILY CHENG

Changing your name legally is a way of getting noticed and standing out. Much like how people get a facelift to look more attractive and get better jobs, people are changing their names and identity to fit in, get a job and access opportunities in life.

With the internship season having just passed, I recall conversations from my friends who told me that they hated their names because it gave away too much about their race and ethnicity. One of my friends from high school approached me and asked, “Hey you do law, how do you fill in paper work for getting your name changed? I want to maximise my chances of getting an internship with a corporate firm.”

She was dead serious about getting her name legally changed. She explained to me that she was ashamed that she had an ‘Asian-sounding’ name. She said that she was afraid that recruiters would assume that she didn't speak English or was an international student, needing extra help in securing a working visa.

She is, in fact, an artistic commerce student who was born and raised in Sydney and has a strong interest in literature. Yet she was afraid of writing down her Chinese name on job applications.

And myself? I have been ashamed of having an Asian last name for as long as I can remember. I was bullied in primary school for simply having a Chinese name. I was the token “Asian girl.” I would sit in class and fantasize. If I had the chance to change my last name, what would it be and how would it sound?

I met up with a consultant recently, I confessed to her that I was afraid of putting my true name to some of my pieces and I would rather go by a pen name. I admitted that I felt judged, does anyone take the artistic works of an Asian female seriously? Well, I'm inclined to believe that they don't. Nor do I feel that my opinions would be valued. Instead, I feel disempowered, oppressed and dismissed. I think of J.K Rowling as a classic example. Why not tell the world that it's really Joanne Rowling? Well, I can tell you. It's because no one will read something that a woman wrote. And an ethnic woman? That's even more unlikely.

I discussed to the consultant that there was a growing trend in people from all walks of life changing their names for the sake of a better life. We concluded that students were doing some radical things to get a “leg up” in the competitive corporate field. She admitted that it wasn't uncommon for students from diverse backgrounds

to have their name legally changed for the sake of looking better on job applications. It was all about “getting a foot in the door” or looking good enough on paper to get through to the interview round.

This trend isn't limited to students. There are people within the workforce who have over time, shortened their last names and taken on an English sounding name to save everyone the hassle of mispronouncing or misspelling their names.

I am always left wondering, why are we, people of colour made to feel ashamed of our names? They tell us who we are and where we are from mostly. Behind every name is a great story of family history that makes you who you are today. Getting rid of it and donning an Anglo-Saxon sounding name is essentially a form of rejection of one's heritage, but why should we reject who we are? Why are we always made to feel as though we are outsiders? And is changing your name going to make that much of a difference in your life? As tempting as it is to say “no,” I am inclined to believe that it does. I have filled in endless internship applications and I am convinced there is something darker going on behind the scenes, with questions asking me to identify my heritage, because you know, my name doesn't give it away already.

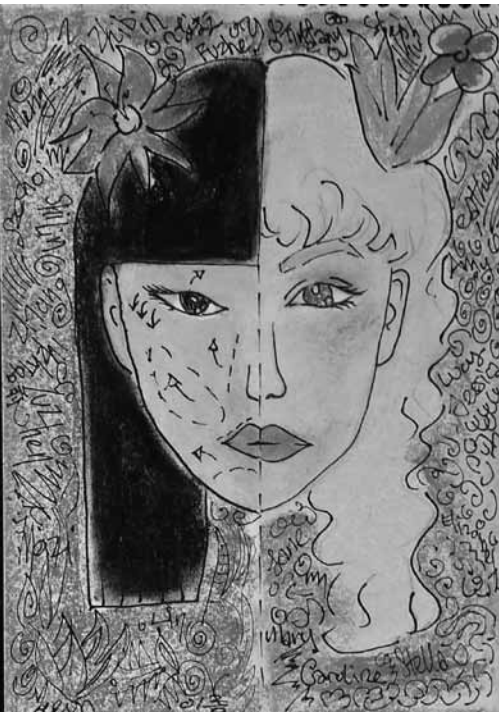


ILLUSTRATION BY JOANNA CHEN

Each and every time, I put my full name on paper; I feel I am being judged solely by my name and nothing else. Even the smallest of tasks like writing a cover letter for my assignment or putting my name to a model I built at work, I still feel that I am being judged, for my name simply tells everyone that I'm Asian.

I, TOO, AM SYDNEY

BY BRIDGET HARILAOU

I, Too, Am Sydney was a campaign run by the Autonomous Collective Against Racism to expose the daily lived experiences of racism experienced by students at the University of Sydney.

From micro-aggressions to overt insults and active exclusion on the basis of race and ethnicity, racism in Australia is both institutionalised and underhanded, to the point where it goes unnoticed as the norm.

This is why the I, Too, Am Sydney campaign is so important. It gives non-white people a visual way to express themselves. Elizabeth Mora described the campaign in a text submission to the tumblr; “I, Too, Am Sydney... When inaudible voices - now heard - roar against the denial of silence.”

This campaign gives people a clear outlet to convey their message, and reach thousands of people through the tumblr website and their profile pictures on facebook. With thousands of reblogs, hundreds of followers to the

website and hundreds of comments, these pictures have generated much-needed discussion around racism.

The messages that have flooded through the campaign are both inspiring, comedic and insightful. They reveal stereotyping, common racist comments and descriptions of oppressive behaviour experienced by students. This plays a vital role in showing that the University of Sydney is not merely populated by white, affluent, private-school educated, North Shore students.

I, Too, Am Sydney educates people about racism so that ignorance and white privilege no longer perpetuate a racist culture in which non-white students are invisibilised.

As Indigenous student Emily Johnson wrote, “I'm not an anomaly, my mother and sister went here too.” People of diverse cultural, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds, who do not conform to the white majority, are Sydney

University students too and they are not something new.

The submissions by Indigenous students are an essential part of the I, Too, Am Sydney campaign, as they illustrate the affects of Australia's racist colonisation that affect how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are treated today.

The prevalence of comments displaying a lack of knowledge of Indigenous culture shows the embarrassing need for education and progress in our racist society. Stephanie Bloxsome's message read,

“I'm not 1/2

I'm not 38%

I'm not part

I'm not mix

I AM ABORIGINAL!”

It may seem straightforward to

understand that a person's Aboriginal identity cannot be measured and that each individual defines themselves, however these comments come up again and again.

As people deny that they are racist, or complain about their exclusion from the campaign, they erase the fact that everyone must play their part in rectifying this culture. Even you. Without the recognition of White privilege, and acknowledging the oppression and struggle of people affected by racism, our culture will never change. Take responsibility for your privilege and think critically about race, instead of deflecting or derailing the issue.

I, Too, Am Sydney has given a voice to students who have been sidelined. We declare openly and without shame, “We want to reclaim our individual and collective identity, stand up against institutionalized racism, and speak up to say: ‘this is our university, too,’ (I, Too, Am Sydney manifesto).”

AUSTRALIAN? MUSLIM? TRY BEING BOTH

BY MARIAM BAZZI

I am an Australian born, coffee-lovin’, procrastinatin’, café-boppin’, multi-assessment taskin’, double-majorin’, don’t-talk-to-me-in-the-mornin’ 21 year-old student currently completing her undergrad degree and hanging by the skin of her teeth to remain part of a collective of educated young people, who, for the most part, see nothing about me on first glance ... but my hijab. My scarf doesn’t even need to be a conversation starter for people who have never met me to know who I am. I wear my whole belief system publically, and I bare the unspoken prejudice willingly.

You see, as an Australian Muslim, I’m currently in a bit of a dilemma. A minority of people who know nothing about Islam are placing a whole nation of innocent Muslims in a very difficult position because of the atrocities being committed all over the Middle East and other parts of the world. As a result, Islamophobia has heightened dramatically, and become an everyday ordeal everywhere I go. Whether it is to the shops, on public transport, or even just to uni, I feel like I’m struggling to be who I want to be, because I fear that conforming fully to what I believe in will ultimately lead to me being shunned by the same people I believed were supposed to protect me – our own government (way to go, Tony Abbott). But alas, as the days go by I feel a growing sense of anxiety, and a deepening sense of ostracism.

Being the first in my family to be accepted into university, I’m trying

to set a good example for my younger siblings, whilst also bearing in mind that I’m simultaneously trying to set a good example of my religion as a whole. I sometimes fail to see the point, however. I feel like the Muslims who are working profusely and productively for their families are also hoping that their efforts are being recognized over the slander that is being perpetuated by the vile, vicious and ruthless media. The double standards blurring the lines between ‘freedom of speech,’ and just straight bigotry and discrimination is actually sometimes funny. But, quite frankly, I’m sure I can speak for the majority when I say this. We’re all sick of it.

The everyday struggle has made my skin thick, and the hide of my tongue even thicker. It has forced me (and the rest of society) to see the ugliness of the world through a microscope rather than its beauty through a telescope. It has taken from me the pride I once felt comfortable expressing, in a place that I thought was supposed to be my home. Coming from a background and a family that built itself up from nothing but faith and hope, I looked forward to growing up and enjoying the modest luxuries my family built for my siblings and me. A home, food on the table, and most importantly, an education. Even if both my parents didn’t speak English. This has ultimately allowed me to see my life through the same lens. On really bad days, I have to remind myself to bite my tongue and utter to myself, “gratitude and hope”.

My father—my strongest support system—has always been the one who taught me to toughen myself mentally through education. He instilled a hunger for knowledge that

I never knew I had and that till this day I am still attempting to quench. I came to USyd believing (and still believing) it to be an absolute honor, because not many people that were (and still are) where I was, are granted the same opportunity. I find myself constantly needing to be reminded that I’m here because I deserve to be here. Because my family and I have worked so hard, and continue to do so to get where we need to be. But in my endeavour to do what I need to do to get by, labels for which I never gave permission are barricading me. In society’s attempt to cover me with a name, I feel like I’m ironically being stripped of my identity.

I’m not ‘oppressed,’ nor am I ‘violent,’ ‘menacing’ or ‘crude’. I don’t believe killing sprees grant me paradise, and I don’t want to be associated with such a minority. How explicit does a majority have to be for society to get the message? We don’t want sympathy and we don’t want apologies. We don’t need to be loved, liked or even accepted (although it would be nice). We do however want respect and tolerance. To live our lives based on what our religion stands for: peace (in other words, we’re cool; I promise).

Here’s a verse from the Qur’an that actually doesn’t need any context for you to understand:

“And do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness.”

-- Qur’an 5:8

How many media outlets have published that one?

I LUV U BUT: A REVIEW

BY STEPH ABI-HANNA



What’s a gay Arab to do when faced with parental pressure about getting married? Get married to another gay Arab of course! I luv u but follows the stories of Sam (a gay man) and Mouna (a lesbian) who get married to please their overbearing Lebanese mothers. Each episode is funnier than the last and the show does not hold back at all (see the ‘Etiquette To Orgies’ episode for an example). If I haven’t sold you yet, one of the best scenes involves relationship drama where the claws are out and hummus is thrown.

On a more serious note, the series explores a lot of issues regarding ethnicity and sexuality that are shared by many in the Lebanese community, such as the pressure of coming out, familial ties and multicultural Australia. The tension between being out and shaming the family or staying in the closet and denying yourself are illustrated through Mouna and her girlfriend Sach in the more serious episodes. What makes the series great is its ability to be funny whilst still raising these issues. As each episode is 5-10 minutes long, it’s perfect to watch during the semester and each episode leaves you wanting more. Currently there are two seasons available online and no word of a third, but here’s hoping!



HAMAS HYSTERIA

BY FAHAD ALI

The dehumanisation of a people is a prerequisite to their subjugation. It’s clear that this tactic is being employed by the Israeli government against the Palestinians. Just look to Netanyahu’s recent address at the UN, which was denounced as Islamophobic by Arab-Israeli members of the Knesset. Or the choice of “experts” on Palestinians prepared for media enquires. Of whom, one Professor Mordechai Kedar of Bar-Ilan University, asserts: “The only thing that can deter terrorists [...] is the knowledge that their sister or their mother will be raped. It sounds very bad, but that’s the Middle East.”

It’s concerningly effective. Even those who agree that Israel is in the wrong express deep reservations over the collective conduct of the Palestinian populace. Hamas is a dangerous organisation, the line goes, and they must be stopped by any means necessary. The Palestinians must turn their back on Hamas, and instead embrace the Palestinian Authority led by the prince of mediocrity, Mahmoud Abbas. Equating Hamas with the Islamic State is not only boldly inaccurate, but deeply Islamophobic.

The bogeyman fear of militant Islam clouds our better judgement. The Palestinian Authority is a blight on the liberation efforts of Palestinian people, and the sooner it is dissolved, the better. Hamas, which was democratically elected in 2006, was never given a chance as its electoral success was immediately punished by Western-backed sanctions.

Do we have any reason to believe that Israel would have been in danger had Hamas remained in power? Following Hamas’ victory at the polls in 2006, the newly elected Prime Minister, Ismail Haniyeh, wrote to President Bush: “We are so concerned about stability and security in the area that we don’t mind having a Palestinian state in the 1967 borders and offering a truce for many years. [...] We are not warmongers, we are peacemakers.”

Of course, this was ignored.

And then earlier this year, when Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal told the world “we ask for tolerance, for coexistence,” the world turned its back.

It’s so much easier to see Hamas as a vengeful, destructive organisation, but it’s a false classification that endangers any peace endeavour. Peace can only come about in a united Palestine: it’s not a stretch to say that elements of the extreme-right in Tel Aviv know this and have done everything in their power to undermine a unity government.

The 1988 Charter of Hamas, which is so often pointed to as supreme and overriding evidence of the supposed genocidal intentions of the organisation, is, I will concede, unashamedly anti-Semitic. But it is not at all representative of the contemporary organisation. As Professor Menachem Klein of Bar-Ilan University explains, “The differences between the party’s platform and the Islamic Charter do not represent an attempt at deception or the empty and

unconsidered use of words. They are a product of a change and modification of lines of thought as a part of the process by which Hamas has become a political movement.”

In the words of Mashaal, the Charter “should not be regarded as the fundamental ideological frame of reference from which the movement takes its positions.” Moreover, Hamas spokesperson Ibrahim Ghoshesh has said “it goes without saying that the articles of the charter are not sacred [...] they are subject to review and revision.”

Of course, it would be patently absurd to attempt to absolve Hamas from its various failures and crimes. It is worth pointing out that the extreme-right frequently attempts to dissuade the world from taking a position on Israel-Palestine by professing that the conflict is “too complicated” to understand. Nothing is black and white, they claim. While I will suggest that there is a clear distinction between occupier and occupied, between oppressor and oppressed, I would wonder why the courtesy of grayscale thinking is not extended to Hamas.

Hamas is not what you think it is. The scapegoating of the organisation and the scorn heaped on Palestinians that dare to defend it is nothing short of Islamophobia. Whether the world likes it or not, Hamas must be a party to peace for there to be any peace at all.

NO IRAQI HERITAGE – NO OPINION

BY FATEMA ALI

Iraq is very close to my heart. The cradle of civilisation has been at war for far too long now. In my opinion, no one has suffered from the Iraq war(s) more than Iraqis. For years, I have lived with a strong Iraqi identity even though I was a product of a tragic diaspora. It didn’t matter to me – my parents brought me up in a way that even if Iraq ceased to exist, I would still know who I was and where I came from. Both of my parents lost family and friends because of the war and while it has brought hardships upon my family, and constant sorrow, it has become an unquestionable part of my identity. Anyone that has ever met me can confirm that one of the first few things I introduce about myself apart from my name is that I’m from Kadhmiah, Baghdad. I’m Iraqi and I’m proud to be Iraqi. No one can ever take that away from me.

However, with this strong affiliation also comes the defensiveness I cannot help but feel towards my homeland. In an age of information, where fact and fiction are too often meshed as one,

everyone suddenly thinks they know the real Iraq. It can’t be denied. Having been raided and invaded 4 times in the past 20 years means that the name of then-Mesopotamia is constantly on the lips of many. Despite this attention, what really affects me is when people think they have a right to have an opinion about Iraq and Iraqis, even if they have never interacted with an Iraqi, or never been on Iraqi land and soil. As if, just because Iraq has been in the media for the past decade or so, people are suddenly experts in Iraqi politics and society. That they have a right to determine who we are and what our country is made of.

No.

I’m afraid that is the furthest thing from the truth. Iraq didn’t go through war after war, loss after loss, bloodshed after bloodshed so that people would feel comfortable making the misconception that “Iraq is made up of terrorists” or that “Iraqi’s are sectarian.” Have you even walked the beautiful streets of Baghdad? Or visited the countless shrines and mosques across the country? Have you seen the way people treat each other in times of

distress and times of elation?

Don’t tell me Iraqis are sectarian when we have members of all Islamic sects living side by side. A Shiite shrine for Musa Al-Kadhim and Mohammed Al-Jawad is only a suburb away from the Sunni shrine for Abu Hanifa. Don’t tell me Iraqis are terrorists when people tend to turn a blind eye to the fact that it was America that invaded Iraq and dropped depleted uranium on our children. Don’t tell me Iraqis are sectarian when, in traffic jams, an Iraqi will roll down the window and greet you as “habib qalbi” (the love of my heart) regardless of who you are. Don’t tell me Iraqis are terrorists when we are the ones that have the largest peaceful gatherings ever recorded in history, in Karbala, with around 30 million people present every year.

Far too often, Iraqis don’t discuss their heritage for fear of judgement and prejudice. I have something to say to those who decide to pass judgement: No Iraqi heritage.

No opinion.

DEAR ‘BAN THE BURQA’ ADVOCATES

Many of you have expressed concern about the oppression of Muslim women. I would just like to clarify a few things –

Have you considered that the burqa represents a different way of occupying public space that subverts consumerism and judgements based on physical appearance?

Are you the same people who verbally and physically abuse the Muslim women you *do* encounter?

1. Does your concern for the well-being of Muslim women encompass the destruction of so many lives resulting from the aerial bombing campaigns subjected upon Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Palestine, and now Syria? Do you care when the infrastructures of these countries are so devastated that the Muslim women who live there will likely live in poverty and destitution for decades to come?

2. Do you care that American, European, and Australian governments have so often sponsored the politically repressive regimes that have made life in the Middle East so difficult for several decades?

3. Do you care about the *human rights* of the Muslim women who try to reach Australia’s shores by boat in order to rebuild their lives after experiencing so much destruction?

If you answered ‘no’ to any of the above, please accept my rejection of your concern and refrain from false feminist rhetoric in the future.

Yours sincerely,

A Muslim woman.

Shayma Taweel

Arts III

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE BEARER’S REPORT

BY EMMA LAU

“Even for those international students who have local friends, they find it more comfortable making friends with students from similar ethnic backgrounds.”

For a very long time, the University of Sydney, and perhaps most Australian universities, have been faced with the problem of International Students’ engagement. Many International Students arrived with the hope of building local networks and integrating into Australian society. However most of them graduate realising that they have zero domestic friends.

Blame is placed on both groups for their reluctance to get out of their comfort zones. Although many programs such as Australian Discussion Group and language exchange program are organised on campus, they have little impact on the situation. So what is it that makes these two student groups almost mutually exclusive to each other?

Most of the international students interviewed say that they have very few domestic friends. However, when asked about their interaction with local students in class, some of them gave positive feedback. ‘I have no problem interacting with local students in class’, says an anonymous Korean student. ‘I am welcome to participate in group

discussions with local students’, says a Chinese student. However, despite some students’ pleasant personal experiences, not everything is perfect. An anonymous international student comments that there is a clear distinction between the two groups in class. International students from the same background will always form their own groups while local students are in separate groups. She adds that although she is welcome to contribute, local students sometimes make fun of her accent. “They probably mean no harm, but I get really upset”, she adds.

In general, international students feel that their brief interactions with local students in class do not result in real life friendships. There are three main reasons that are commonly agreed: a language barrier, culture shock, and the transient nature of international students.

Culture shock is the most talked about topic. Many international students find that they do not share any mutual interests with their local counterparts. ‘I don’t know what music they listen to, what shows they watch, what events

they are following. What is trending for us is not trending for them.’ In fact, this is probably true and is immensely difficult to fix. Even for those international students who have local friends, they find it more comfortable making friends with students from the similar ethnic backgrounds. They still struggle to adjust to cultural differences and find that friends who are people of colour have more empathy towards them. An anonymous student from Hong Kong confessed that it took her a long time to make her white friends realise that they were privileged and for them to begin to appreciate the difficulties she went through. Culture shock is a two-way issue. One side of the friendship cannot always demand the other to adjust to difference. Both international and domestic students need to take a step back and try to appreciate the cultural differences that prevent their friendship.

All local students interviewed alleged that they understand that International students are their equals and that they struggle in many aspects of life in Australia.

RENTER’S GUIDE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



Expectation



Reality

CHECK YOUR DOMESTIC PRIVILEGE

BY UMEYA CHAUDHURI

“I didn’t realise Sydney was so... hostile.”

I have spent the past three years studying Arts/Law at Sydney University without interacting with international students. ‘They’ are there, ‘I’ am there, but ‘we’ aren’t there.

Recently I have found myself spending more time with international students, mostly those who are from Mainland China and studying at the Centre for English Teaching before continuing to their relevant university course. USYD

has expanded its international student intake, but there is still a pervasive culture of alienation that many of them experience. The dichotomy of ‘us’ (domestic students) and ‘them’ (international students) has become a shared narrative amongst many non-white international students.

This malicious dichotomy is internalised racism that ‘Others’ these people for no other reason than their ethnicity and nationality. It wasn’t until I met a Chinese student in her second year of a Bachelor of Commerce who laughed awkwardly while saying, “I didn’t realise Sydney was so... hostile,” that I recognised the discrimination many international students face. Her anecdote centred on a moment where

she had apparently asked a fellow student in her class to be partners for a group assessment, but was rejected. The reason was because this other student thought they “would have to do the entire assessment because you can’t speak English properly.” She brushed it off. In her experience these explicit, and sometimes implicit, dismissals happened frequently.

Many domestic students nonchalantly dismiss this ‘issue’ with an offhanded comment – “it’s their fault – they don’t want to talk to us,” or “I can’t help it that their English isn’t that great.” Of course, I am talking about you – the average middle class white person, forced to do group assignments with these undesirables. SURPRISE! Yet

again we see white people privileging their own experiences and perpetuating racist attitudes towards others in a way that is accepted, and further marginalises ‘them.’

The underlying animosity and anxiety towards international students is insidious and perpetuates a university culture that creates an offensive dichotomy. I am not saying this is the only experience international students face when interacting with local students; I am however saying that it is time to check your privilege, and recognise that the language barrier you claim as justification to avoid contact **is racist.**

STRANGER IN AN UNSTRANGE LAND

BY SHONA YOUNG

“I’m living with a tourist visa in my own home.”

It’s 12:45 in Sydney’s CBD and in the midst of corporate lunch breaks and midday engagements, Saaya and I order two coffees. It’s a relatively mundane situation - two friends from high school in a casual catch up but while we sit and wait for our cups of caffeine, amidst black suits and ties, Saaya begins to share her story.

“It’s really hitting me... I’m living with a tourist visa in my own home,” she says.

As a Japanese-born and Australian-raised university graduate, Saaya Haga has just been hit with the inevitable crisis that awaits Student Visa holders at the end of their degree. These temporary permits allow foreign citizens to stay in a country for the duration of study at any Australian educational institution and are brilliant opportunities for international students.

As reported by the Department of Education, there are 494, 625 full-fee paying international students currently enrolled across the nation - a 12% increase from the previous year. Likewise, for the past two decades the international student market has contributed significantly to the economy, generating an estimated \$15 billion a year. This lucrative industry comprises Australia’s 4th largest services sector, the largest source of export revenue for Victoria and the second largest for NSW.

Migration is something that is embedded in the Australian story, with new structural adjustments introduced and restrictions relaxed over the years. The pathways for international students to study, work and stay in Australia appears, on the surface at least, to be broadening.

But for Saaya, this isn’t the reality.

The temporary graduate visa, commonly known as the Subclass 485 Visa, promises a four year extension only to students who were granted their first visa on or after November 5th 2011 or have graduated from a skilled occupation course such as engineering or nursing. Those caught in the gap before the November 5th cut off have a different migration

story to tell - a narrative riddled with trauma and uncertainty.

Saaya arrived in Australia, in 2006 with her older sister, younger brother and mother. “The first few years were really tough; some people couldn’t understand my English and that became my biggest insecurity,” she says whilst recalling her early years.

Before following her mum to Australia, she had no desire to settle in her new home. “It’s only when I made friends, I started feeling more Australian and I started to become more ambitious about my future in Australia,” she shares.

Saaya begins to slow down at the mention of her future, and fixates her attention on the remnants of the latte in front of her. It’s a sensitive topic and we take a moment to comment on other areas of our lives but we probe closer to the dreaded question, “What’s next?”

A few minutes pass and as we reflect on the successes of our friends that are blatant on our news feeds, Saaya continues. “I always thought that I would be one of them. It’s tough seeing my friends without problems. I felt like I was being left behind and to get to the same place in life as others, I felt I had to work harder just to get to the same level.”

I felt a pang of guilt. The past two months have been self-focused as I tossed up potential cadetships or additional courses to pursue without once questioning my legal status as a citizen, and if I ever left Australia it would be out of my own free will - when and if I choose. But these same opportunities are not available to Saaya, a fellow Australian.

After her final subject last semester, Saaya’s student visa had reached its expiration date and, having just missed the November 2011 cut off, she packed her bags for Japan, her imposed home. Saaya was expected to follow her sister’s footsteps and pursue a career in Japan in the hopes of raising sponsorship and funds to return to Australia later in life.

But it took countless, strenuous job interviews and applications for Saaya

to grow confident and assured in one main thing: She was an Australian.

“When I went to Japan, I felt like a tourist and I learnt how Australian I really am,” she admits. Saaya packed her bags for a second time and returned home, on a three month tourist visa to weigh her future options. “I had to come back on a tourist visa, this is where I call home and there’s nothing harder than getting kicked out of my own country. Australia is my home,” she declares.

As we leave the cafe, I catch a snippet of the conversation behind me and unsurprisingly, two business men discuss stocks while our fellow Australians on the other side of the cafe enjoy casual chatter and occasionally share laughter. It’s a picturesque scene of Sydney’s cafe culture but with Saaya’s story of inequality ringing in my mind, the incongruence is too much to comprehend.

“It’s because I wasn’t born in this country...” she regrets.

Instead of planning a post graduation trip around Europe like many of her peers, Saaya’s mind is overwhelmed by the options that lay in front of her - She could invest two years applying for a de facto status with her Australian boyfriend but the uncertainties of any relationship imposes an additional layer of risk for Saaya. Alternatively she could compete with experienced professionals for sponsorship, or pay for another full priced degree in a skilled occupation while giving up her passion for marketing - all in the hopes of one day being recognised as something she is.

Saaya’s story is not unique and the complex intersection of race, migration, economy and national identity is familiar to many international students aspiring to the Australian dream. But the way is fraught with uncertainty and costly confusion, and the barriers into our lucky country seem more impregnable than ever.

“STAY IN YOUR LANE”

This is an important lesson that everyone needs to learn. I have learnt mine through my experience with other women of colour.

My hometown, Hong Kong, is currently being watched by international media because of the recent protests for universal suffrage. Hong Kong expats have gathered around the world to express their support for all the freedom fighters back home.

While many of us appreciate the international media attention, I was irritated to see a USyd SALT member speaking at the Sydney protest on Monday (29/9).

Regardless of her (or her faction’s) intention, her presence on the speaking list was unwanted and not necessary (I do not intend to blame the Sydney protest organizer, as I do not assume everyone to know SALT’s usual practice). Copies of Red Flag in her hand were not necessary either.

The intention of our protest was to gather Hong Kong natives to discuss how we feel about our future and our worry about our friends and family being exposed to tear gas. We wanted to gather to talk about our appreciation for those individuals fighting for a democratic future under strong heat and tough rain.

Our current oppression and our future are not your toy to recruit more members or sell more copies of Red Flag. You can be aware of international affairs, educate yourselves and show a relative amount of support, but do not make it your own issue.

All I want to say is, this is just another example in a nutshell of how some groups or individuals in the Western world (or in a more specific context, right here on our campus at USyd) see minority cultures as disposable that they can pick up anytime.

Learn how to stay in your lane, it is not that hard.

Jay
Arts (Hons)

MY ANACONDA DON'T WANT NONE [OF YOUR SEXIST AND RACIST BULLSHIT, HUN.]

BY SHAREEKA HELALUDDIN



The release of Nicki Minaj’s “Anaconda” has been surrounded by as much hype as it has controversy. A glimpse at the comments on the YouTube video (now at 200 million views and counting) sees a disproportionate mix of either rap brilliance revelry, or outright racism and misogyny. The latter is too often at the dearth of creativity, and lacks any intelligent engagement with what Nicki and “Anaconda” represents: a manifestation of Nicki Minaj reclaiming otherwise commodified and hyper-sexualised bodies, and the appropriation of twerking laden in pop music over the last year (what up, Miley Cyrus and Iggy Azalea). It focuses on a nuanced representation of Black and Wom*n of Colour bodies, specifically within the framework of the White, Capitalist, Heteropatriarchal music industry that too often necessitates the objectification of the female body to achieve success. Nicki Minaj is decidedly sexy and exercises autonomy over her body and sexuality in a public sphere that persistently polices black wom*n’s expressions of sexuality.

Much of the commentary concerning “Anaconda” seems to be vested in deciding ‘is this empowering or not?’ and ‘Is this subversive or submissive?’ And further, ‘Is Nicki Minaj a feminist?’ Such hostility and speculation reifies the ‘politics of respectability’ that Minaj’s work seeks to explicitly undermine. Respectability politics itself originated as cultural, sexual, domestic, employment and artistic ‘guidelines’ or ‘rules’ for racially marginalised groups to follow in an effort to be viewed as ‘human.’ These politics are

dehumanising, along with being a justification for oppression. There’s a further gendered aspect here, in that the way sexism impacts White wom*n’s lives differs from the politics of respectability. While sexism in general includes domination and objectification for gender, it is not the same thing as the politics of respectability. It prescribes a morality that is specifically anti-black and sexist, and codifies how black wom*n and wom*n of colour should and shouldn’t ‘act.’ Specifically within hip-hop, it draws a binary between what is considered ‘conscientious’ or ‘progressive’ and ‘scandalous’ or ‘sex driven.’ It rigidly opposes sexuality with any form of political consciousness, as though a female rapper like Nicki Minaj cannot be afforded both. Wom*n of Colour - importantly and even more so, Black Wom*n - negotiate this along with a specific racialised double standard that has historically configured black and brown bodies as fetishised, excessive, sexually deviant or an awful combination of these.

This may seem irrelevant in a reading of “Anaconda,” but all the criticism of the video stems from a social pedagogy of racism and sexism that is constantly re-inscribed by music video culture and mainstream media. This is partly why it is ‘shocking’ or ‘controversial’ for someone like Nicki Minaj to be defiant and self-celebratory with her body, sexuality and her rapping. Investing in conservative respectability politics mitigates the subversive and radical potential of a work like “Anaconda” in forging Wom*n of Colour feminism and consciousness by unapologetically

rejecting assigned gender roles and White codes of beauty.

However, “Anaconda” is not a lone case: Minaj has never fit into assigned gender and sexual roles demanded of wom*n in the mainstream pop or the hip-hop industry. She is a self-determined and self-made artist. She appropriates the language and fervour of her male counterparts (or, ‘flips the script’) as a subversive tool to call out sexism and interrogate the masculine-designation in the hip-hop arena; and challenge the male power vested in musical and cultural spaces at large (in “Lookin’ Ass,” she literally shoots down the male gaze). She sings about sexy wom*n, sleeping with different guys, being ahead of the game and has a disregard for authority and hegemony that is as much empowering as it is self-affirming.

One of the most noticeable elements of the video (okay, aside from all the butts) is the distinct lack of men. The song describes - even objectifies - male characters. Her boy-toy Troy and the dude named Michael do not appear in the video, aside from Drake, who is a mere prop (note: not a collaborator or featured artist). Throughout the lap dance she gives to Drake, she is in complete control, expressing autonomous sexual desire. It genuinely seems as though Drizzy had no idea what was coming, which adds to the beauty of it all. This is a gem of flippin’ the script, where Drake is in the background, an accessory, and mostly

insignificant - a familiar trope often employed in male pop and hip-hop videos.

Nicki is not here to pander to the male gaze, nor the mainstream conservatism of White Feminism. “Anaconda” is an unabashed sex-positive statement about a woman being in control of her body and sexuality. The criticism centred on how the video submits to the male gaze, actually reprimands her for expressing herself with sexually charged images and videos; and are playing into the same dominant narratives about wom*n’s sexualities that perpetuate victim-blaming, slut-shaming, and the subordination of wom*n. It creates an unnecessary and unproductive binary between feminism and sexuality. Since when did the two become mutually exclusive?

“Anaconda” is an act of social media genius that simultaneously wields confrontational power and a conscientious aversion to respectability politics and patriarchy. Nicki Minaj is a feminist because she declares it through her work. Her refusal to be defined by narrow views of feminism and femininity commits to an ongoing dialogue of wom*n’s oppression and the potential of varied forms of resistance. She offers a spectrum for Wom*n of Colour sexuality in an otherwise dichotomous slut-virgin understanding of it. Whether you are into the song or not, surely there is an appreciation of the effusive cultural labour that Nicki enacts by presenting, confronting, pluralising, and empowering a myriad of female bodies and sexualities.

IN DEFENCE OF MINDY KALING, MY PROBLEMATIC BOO

BY AARTHIE RATNAKUMAR

It is a truth universally acknowledged that the people you love and respect will soon come to disappoint you. As People of Colour and as Women of Colour especially, this is a truth we very quickly learn, and I would argue, is a problem that is unique to our experience.

So, you’re a White person and your favourite actor/director/writer/musician is problematic? Yeah, it sucks, I know. But you have the privilege of discarding or calling out your faves with ease and minimal distress, because representation isn’t an issue for you. Film, literature, music, television, art – almost every aspect of society is White-dominated, and most importantly, is there for *you*. You will never see how your complexity as a human being is repeatedly reduced to racist stereotypes or peripheral characters, subordinate to the White protagonist who always represents ‘the human experience’, or even worse – there is a total absence of people that look like you on screen.

It is with this background that I write with conflicted emotions about my problematic boo. If you know me or have had the misfortune of adding me on Facebook, it is clear that I, Aarthie Ratnakumar, fucking *love* Mindy Kaling. At its most basic level, it’s because Mindy is just SO MUCH fun. On a deeper level, however, this love stems from my position as a Woman of Colour, from my need to see myself and others like me represented on screen, but also the dreams and possibilities that Kaling embodies by virtue of being a first.

Her enormous and unlikely success as an Indian-American comedian in White Hollywood reads like a fairy tale. At just 24, Kaling was the youngest and only female writer hired on *The Office*, rising to fame as the annoying and adorable Kelly Kapoor. Almost a decade later, Kaling is not only the lead actress on *The Mindy Project* (which is in itself remarkable), but is also the

creator, writer, executive producer and director of the show – essentially, holding almost total control over her own representation. Kaling’s portrayal of the loveable Dr. Mindy Lahiri never dapples in stereotypes of Indian women, affording Lahiri a complexity typically reserved for White characters. Her character is a smart, funny, sex-positive, boy-obsessed and at times insecure. But it’s also her unapologetic femininity, amazing style, and confidence in her appearance both on and off-screen that is so refreshing, and one reason why she is a role model for so many women. Kaling repeatedly defies the misguided view that loving clothes, boys and being girly is somehow incompatible with intelligence and feminism. Yet more significantly, it is Kaling’s position as a dark-skinned, curvy and confident Indian woman that Kaling’s self-love emerges as a highly political act; in a world where skinny White women define beauty and where Women of Colour are repeatedly told they’re worthless and ugly.

Despite the positives, the racial politics within *The Mindy Project* have seen the show come under fire (and rightfully so) by a wide range of critics, especially from fellow Women of Colour - this makes my love for Kaling a highly questionable affair. The most common critique leveled at the show is that of the fourteen men that Mindy Lahiri dates or sleeps with on the show, all happen to be White. The point is not about policing who Mindy Kaling personally dates or is attracted to. The point is that given the long history of Women of Colour being paired off with White men in television and movies (often as the fetishised ‘Other’), and of White men being positioned as superior and more physically attractive than Men of Colour, Kaling’s perpetuation of this representation is highly problematic and inexcusable.

The Mindy Project has also been criticised for a lack of diversity beyond love interests, in terms of cast and writing staff, who apart from Kaling are all White. Kaling appeared to address this criticism initially with news that

Black actress Xosha Roquemore would be joining the cast as the only other Woman of Colour, playing the character Tamra. That was before Roquemore actually appeared on the show, as quite possibly the most racist stereotype of a ‘ghetto’ Black woman that Kaling and her staff could have written in terms of accent, sassiness, and her initial portrayal as lazy, incompetent and a nurse who actually sang her one-liners like Beyonce. The ‘ghetto’ stereotype of Tamra is furthered through Ray-Ron, her inept rapper boyfriend who embodies various racist stereotypes of Black men: from his being lazy, stupid, uneducated, lower class and deadbeat (which the show tries to pass off through the fact that Ray-Ron is actually White). These are not human or complex portrayals, and these minor characters only exist as the punch line. Anti-Blackness in society exists on a spectrum, and there is no separation between ‘innocent’ stereotypes and actual anti-Black violence in society. All this coming from a non-Black Person of Colour like Kaling is disappointing, but sadly not surprising.

Personally however, what has been most frustrating is the response by Kaling herself. In a widely reported moment, a Woman of Colour in the audience at the SXSW panel this year asked Kaling about the lack of diversity on the show. Clearly after being asked it one too many times, Kaling responded: “I’m a fucking Indian woman who has her own fucking network television show, okay?” She went on to say that “No one asks any of the shows I adore... why no leads on their shows are Women of Colour, and I’m the one that gets lobbied about these things.” Kaling has repeatedly made statements in public expressing frustration at being constantly asked questions about diversity, and instead pursues a desire to talk only about her comedy.

Mindy’s critique at the, sometimes unfair, level of criticism hurled at her show is valid, so far as it is related to any White critic who chooses to call out *The Mindy Project* for diversity issues without calling out literally

every other White-dominated show on television too. But for the most part, this criticism has come from Women of Colour, and Kaling’s desire to move ‘beyond race’ repeatedly perpetuate the dangerous idea that we are living in a post-racial world, when this is clearly not the case. But more hurtfully, it delegitimises the genuine concerns from fellow Women of Colour who look up to Kaling.

Despite its serious flaws, there’s one reason why I just can’t stop supporting the show. I believe *The Mindy Project* is far more significant and far more radical than we have given it credit for (although the extent to which this is intended by Kaling is debatable). What I’m referring to is the show’s loving nod to the Patron Saint of romantic comedy, Nora Ephron. The pilot episode even opens with a shot of *When Harry Met Sally* playing on a television, with Kaling’s distinctive voice over, ‘*When I was a kid, all I did was watch romantic comedies and do my homework.*’

With its bubbly lead, its numerous rom-com clichés, and the fact that Danny and Mindy’s relationship is clearly based on Harry and Sally, it is easy to write off *The Mindy Project* as just another silly romantic comedy. But from my perspective, Kaling achieves much more than this. She is not merely derivative but is rather, in a radical and active way, inserting herself and by extension Women of Colour audiences into romantic narratives that have previously centred on the White female lead. It’s not Meg Ryan waiting at the top of the Empire State Building; it’s Mindy Kaling, in a world that she has total power over. Sure, it’s pure fantasy, but as a Women of Colour and especially as a South Asian woman, you have no idea how empowering that feels. However, I do realise for many Women of Colour this will not be enough, and that Kaling will always be a source of severe disappointment.

Mindy is far from perfect. I will always call her out because of the power she holds and also because I know she can do better. But for now she’s all we’ve got and, for me at least, that still means something.



SPARTANS IN SPEEDOS

BY MARCUS JAMES

Summer is around the corner and the mercury is already beginning to creep towards 30 degrees. That’s all that’s needed for the beaches to become packed. Flesh and bodies are everywhere, whether you want to see them or not. It’s loud, it’s sweaty and it’s gaudy. The beach is perhaps one of few things that actually captures that elusive notion of Australian-ness. And increasingly this is a multicultural experience.

Now stereotypes are bad and should never define people, but at Manly Beach where I live, stereotypes are a vibrant reality. On any busy day you can see an infinite number of Poms as red as boiled lobsters; big, happy extended families of Lebanese and Polynesian; Chinese tourists with their killer parasol and sun-visor combos; filthy rat-tailed, footy-shortened lads, and so on and so forth. To many locals, this is all a bit much. They feel encroached and threatened and mutters of “fucking westies” are not uncommon. A year or two ago, I ran over a “westie” when I was surfing. “That’ll teach them not to hog our beach,” I thought.

There are many reasons that show the absolute stupidity and vileness of this thought. Localism is simply invalid. Beaches are public property. Localism is often thinly veiled racism, and also leads to incidents like 2005’s Cronulla Riots: an event unjustifiable by anyone with

a brain and a moral compass. And then there is the question that must be asked. What exactly is the ideal beach?

The artist, Charles Meere, had a stab at answering this question in his 1940 painting *Australian Beach Pattern*. It is a heroic utopia of sun, sand and sculpted bodies. Men, women and children play on the sand and in the water, throwing beach balls and making sandcastles. It is as if Meere has painted these figures suspended in time, all of them frozen in action and pose with arms raised, legs forward, chests back and eyes gazing into the distance. If the painting wasn’t so plastic and inhuman, you could imagine that Meere’s scene would sound no different to today’s beach.

The work is often looked upon proudly as a symbol of national identity – the epitome of the happy island nation from a time when we were at war, ripe with Anzac spirit but still comfortably far from Europe. Fondly referred to as Spartans in Speedos, Meere’s Australia is young and virile, healthy and carefree. In fact, *Australian Beach Pattern* was so well-liked, it was paraded about at the opening ceremony of the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

Could the organisers have chosen a more embarrassing, let alone insulting representation of Australia than Meere’s beach? Probably not.

You see, *Australian Beach Pattern* is pretty much Nazi in its conception. The figures are blonde, straight-limbed Aryans. There is not a single dark-skinned or even dark-haired figure in the composition. You could well argue that this in fact was what Australia looked like in 1940, and maybe you’d be right but only because the White Australia Policy reigned back then. The painting itself bears resemblance with fascist art and propaganda at the time. Youthful bodies with chiselled physiques exemplify fascist obsessions of virility and health. Arms are raised as if in salute and direct our eye to the right of the painting facing out to the ocean. The figures either gaze or march towards it because they must protect their shores from any threat to Meere’s eugenic paradise.

With my mixed background, I am clearly not part of Meere’s vision. Nor are most people at the beach today part of this vision. If there is one lesson to be learnt from *Australian Beach Pattern* it is that no one should be able to impose their ideal of the beach onto anyone. Not even locals. While we may not find it pleasant that “our” local area gets overcrowded, well, tough titties. There is no ideal beach. The beach is the beach and it’s for everyone to enjoy.

TRIGGER WARNING:
RACIST SLURS
AND GRAPHIC
ACCOUNTS OF
RACIST VIOLENCE.

DRAPED IN A UNION JACK

BY TENAYA ALATTAS

As the daughter of a daisy chain-wearing barefoot contessa who wed a recently migrated Indonesian man estranged from his family, I did not grow up in an ethnically-bound cultural group like my peers. The Greeks, the Masos, the Lebs, the Maoris and Samoans, the Asians. I looked like them, but I was a mongrel kid. I could be with them, but without the Sunday School, Ramadan, shared language and culture. My parents emphasised on allowing my identity to be formed ‘for who I am.’ So I hung out with the “Aussies,” because they could have sleepovers.

Fast forward to December 4, 2005.

“Aussies: This Sunday every f---ing Aussie in the shire, get down to North Cronulla to help support Leb and Wog bashing day. Bring your mates down and let’s show them that this is our beach and their (sic) never welcome back”

I find myself wearing an Australian flag. I try to meld in between my white friends. I plea with my eyes, “I’m one of you.” I hear a shout, “there’s a Leb near northies!” Ashamed at my complicity, I feel something less than happiness in having evaded getting bashed. United around a union jack, not a swastika, I watched a stampede of 5,000 pissed White Australians reclaim the Cronulla shire. Leb and Wog bashing day fulfilled, I have not returned.

On December 4, 2005 I went to Cronulla. The same day that neo-Nazis came to claim its beaches for an Aryan Australia. As an Arab-Indonesian, this fact is often met with surprise. How did you escape without getting bashed? Why did you put yourself in a position where you could be bashed for the colour of your skin? Rest assured my feelings of stupidity for putting myself at risk are only matched by the shame of complicity for having draped an Australian flag around myself.

I just wanted to go to the beach.

SELFIES OF AN ARTIST AS A WOM*N OF COLOUR

BY TABITHA PRADO

Selfies are important. Not inherently so, but they’re a potent tool. Frida Kahlo knew, emphasising her facial hair and her own embodied self as the locus of her work, going on to inspire millions of Wom*n of Colour, Latin@ wom*n especially. Likewise, selfies for Wom*n of Colour often emphasise the things that diverge from eurocentric beauty standards, which does something powerful for the Wom*n of Colour community.

My advice to Wom*n of Colour: take photos of yourself like you would a loved one. Whether you keep your self-admiration private or fill your respective newsfeeds with your gorgeous face. Respect is due to the Wom*n of Colour who celebrate themselves. It’s invigorating to see. You deserve attention and admiration, from yourself and others. Take what is yours.

I’m a habitual selfie-taker but the light in my bedroom is lacking. Only good in the morning when my face is a puffball (‘I woke up like dis’), I often seek places out of the house to take selfies during the day. Here’s a guide to my favourite places to take selfies on Camperdown campus: suitable for shy mice like me. Note that these are mostly female bathrooms, which I acknowledge are not always accessible for all wom*n.

Female bathrooms, Level 2, Transient Building

5 stars

This bathroom is the holy grail of pseudo-public selfies – neutral background, plentiful natural light, and slim chance of being walked in on (and double doors as buffer). Honestly my favourite and most ethereal place to take selfies on campus.

Light: So natural

Chance of being caught: low

Extra points for: white fluffy clothing, “barely there” makeup, Glow by J. Lo fragrance.

Female bathrooms, Great Hall, The Quadrangle

3 ½ stars

While the brown and murky green could be improved upon, this bathroom has an excellent mirror set-up that allows for flexibility as well as documenting your full outfit. Great for group selfies and “me & my girls” shots.

Light: natural



Chance of being caught: medium-low

Extra points for: Odd floral decorations sometimes find themselves in there after functions in the Great Hall – feel free to include them in the shot.

New Law Building, Eastern Avenue

4 stars

This is a general recommendation for certain spots in this building that are doused in sunlight. The stark white background also acts to emphasise brownness which is a definite advantage. I’m too self-conscious around others to start taking blatant selfies on my phone so I take them on my laptop – I could very well be studying, I say to myself, whilst obviously posing (chin high, head tilted). I’ve done this shamelessly during tutes in this building with great results.

Light: natural, fluorescent.

Chance of being caught: medium-high

Extra points for: someone noticing Photobooth being open on your computer during class; forgetting to

mute your computer before you take a shot.

Female bathrooms, Level 2, R.C. Mills Building (adjacent to Schaeffer Library)

4 ½ stars

The mauve door is a good omen – this bathroom makes up for its lack of natural light with a muted colour scheme and a cute painting as backdrop. There’s a shelf to put your books while you strike a pose, and the ever-convenient separate toilet room to give you ample warning of a potential audience.

Light: fluorescent

Chance of being caught: medium

Extra points for: trench coat, chic hat, accessorising with textbooks, accessorising with art itself.

Female bathrooms, Ground level, Madsen Building

3 stars

If gold is your favourite colour, come here. This bathroom’s ochre walls

combined with the sunlight that drenches the room sets off brown skin nicely: as Beyoncé hath sayeth, “You can’t put blue light on a black girl.” However, not a bathroom on heavy rotation. Just for when I’m feeling a little sunkissed.

Light: natural

Chance of being caught: low-medium

Extra points for: gold jewellery and more gold jewellery, coconut-oiled skin.

Female bathrooms, Level 2, Physics Building

3 ½ stars

This bathroom gets a mention almost purely for the babyish pale pink and blue colour scheme. Comes across nicely in both natural light and fluorescent light! Good for feeling cute day and night.

Light: natural, fluorescent

Chance of being caught: low-medium

Extra points for: adding sparkles and lovehearts post-production.

WOE IS THE MUSLIM WOMAN: DITCHING THE PITY COMMITTEE

BY KAWSAR ALI

As an assertive and headstrong feminist, I can unfortunately say that to a degree, I can be stereotyped. In my case, as an Egyptian-Lebanese Muslim woman who has actively thrown herself into the feminist discourse, not only have I been limited to mere generalisations, but for a long time, been casted as the ‘Other’ in order to advance Western Supremacy.

“I don’t get it, how are you a feminist if you’re a Muslim? Doesn’t Islam thrive off of women being inferior?”

Honestly, myopic statements such as the one above used to really get to me. Now they just baffle me. After performing both primary and secondary research for two years on colonial feminism and Muslim women in western societies, I can speak on behalf of my sisters in Islam globally. I am confident when I say that our oppression is not our headscarves. Mainstream feminists will be reluctant to point out most Muslim women donning headscarves are not forced into wearing it. I think it is quite ironic that a piece of clothing is viewed as liberation, as if the sheer, silk or shawls covering our hair is something that makes or breaks our level of emancipation. Our tyranny is not our husbands. We do not need a case of “white women saving brown women from brown men”, to quote Gayatri Spivak. It is not our religion - Sharia law or cultured societies. Rather, the real oppression is the limiting views which portray us as ‘damsels in distress’ needing rescuing from the superior west.

Through analysing Edward Said’s ‘Orientalism’ theory, interviewing countless academics and professors from Australian Universities and reading over eighty academic solid resources on the topic, I like to think I am some sort of a young expert in this area. I have compiled extensive research on the topic and was recently awarded a medal of excellence for my proven hypothesis. That is that the ethnocentric nature of western feminism denies Muslim women an active role in feminism, limiting them to a victimised stereotype.

Through the years so-called mainstream feminists have failed to create an inclusive environment, one that caters for cultural differences that cannot be neatly packaged into a singular agenda.

This is much the case for Muslim women, whereby many Western feminists have actually reinforced stereotypes about Muslim women accentuating their ‘otherness’, resulting in the polarisation of feminism placing the possibility of female liberation solely in Western societies. Western feminism has long excluded Muslim women, imperialistically speaking on their behalf and has caused an identity conflict for Muslim women who regard themselves as feminists. Apparently Muslim women have to choose between their religion and their feminist ideals simply because some Western feminists think it is oxymoronic to be both.

One important feature of Islamophobia is to caricaturize Islam as misogynistic and oppressive to women and thus to advance imperialist hegemony. This is a truth clearly seen in the comparison of the Western woman in comparison to the Eastern woman, supported with Edward Said’s ‘Orientalism’ theory. Said argues binary oppositions of what the West and East entail have resulted in a division of characteristics associated with both sides. Said coined the word Orientalism to analyse the way that Western scholarship reflected a distorted image of the East. He argued that the work of imperialists was rooted in the limitations of their experiences of the East.

The Muslim woman represents the oppressed and backwards woman, who is undoing the work that has been done for her abroad. The quest is noble, for the Western woman to then help the Muslim woman out of her barbaric heritage and help liberate her. This patronizing rhetoric belittles Muslim woman, illustrating that they are unable to bring about their own emancipation without conforming to Western values – Muslim women will continue to face oppression from their own culture. This ethnocentric view supports the monoculture nature of feminism, which is to say that women’s liberation is only apparent in Western countries.

This ‘Othering’ in turn resulted in a deeply rooted belief that the Orientals (Muslim women) could progress, within their limited abilities, only if they looked to the Occident (Western women). Clearly Orientalism is not merely part of a forgotten past; it remains very much at the core of the current history of race and gender

in the West and current wars in the Middle East. Orientalism has led to a Western tendency of dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient, constructing Easterners as ‘other’ to justify conquest and colonialism for over two centuries. This is not new; Orientalism has been at the roots of colonisation for a long time.

In the discourse of othering Muslim women, Muslim women have been used as a measurement of progress of gender equality. Muslim women have been regarded as an oppressed minority, in comparison to Western women who are the ideal candidates in terms of female liberation. This rhetoric advances Western Supremacy, while ‘throwing Muslim women under the bus’, reinforcing oriental dichotomies of East = barbaric and West = advanced. Essentially, Muslim women have been homogenised as backward and in need of direction and intervention by Western powers. Many in the West denigrate and stereotype Islamic teachings and brand them as oppressive to women in order to establish “an essentialist bifurcation of ‘egalitarian West’ versus ‘oppressive Islam’”. This discourse characterises Islam as misogynistic, a feature that the liberated women of the West would

never entail.

This ignores that women were key figures in Islam – not just supporting characters but as independent women. It ignores that women in the Middle East have fought battles both against local cultures and customs, and against Western imperialism. This reaffirms that ignorance about women’s actual status in Islam is quite widespread. Islam brought radical changes regarding women and society, despite the deeply entrenched patriarchy of seventh-century Arabia. The Qur’ān (Islamic sacred text) provides women with explicit rights to inheritance, independent property, divorce and the right to testify in a court of law. It prohibits wanton violence towards women and girls and is against duress in marriage and community affairs. Women and men are equally required to fulfill all religious duties, and are equally eligible for punishment for misdemeanours.

Ultimately, oriental attitudes regarding ‘saving Muslim women’ robs them of their agency, relegates them to caricatures and justifies imperial policies that continue their subjugation.

The idea of a Muslim feminist is not oxymoronic – it is tangible and real.

“This patronizing rhetoric belittles Muslim woman, illustrating that they are unable to bring about their own emancipation without conforming to western values.”



DEAR WHITE FEMINIST II

BY BRIDGET HARILAOU

Dear White Feminist,

It was brought to my attention that you thought my first letter was offensive, insulting, rude, an over-generalisation and extremely unhelpful in communicating how you can make feminism more inclusive for Wom*n of Colour.

I would like to clarify that my original letter’s main purpose was actually to acknowledge the struggles and experiences of Wom*n of Colour and to give validity and solidarity to them.

With a title like, “Dear White Feminist,” I can see how this may have confused you, but let me be clear.

That letter was not really for you. It was for Wom*n of Colour to finally have their voices heard in how they feel in feminist spaces and to say loudly and unapologetically that THIS REALLY HAPPENS. OUR INTERSECTIONAL OPPRESSIONS ARE REAL.

Finally having this written down, has been beautiful for so many of us.

Dear White Feminist,

If you knew how many Wom*n of Colour messaged me, commented, understood and felt visible for the first time because their struggles were actually being acknowledged by what

I wrote, maybe you wouldn’t feel so insulted.

If you realised that, “I’m not racist,” and “Not all White Feminists” are exactly the same as men saying “Not all men,” maybe you wouldn’t throw the same rhetoric back at Wom*n of Colour.

If you identify with, understand and appreciate the movement of “#YesAllWomen” then maybe you can liken it to how Wom*n of Colour feel, because YES ALL WOM*N OF COLOUR experience oppression on the basis of race or ethnicity in feminist spaces because of your White privilege.

Dear White Feminist,

If you thought “Not All White Feminists” or “But I’m Not Racist” after reading it, then you need to think about your privilege, how it functions and the effect it has on silencing issues of racism.

As a person who has White privilege, you cannot tell if you’re racist or not, because race does not affect your every interaction.

It doesn’t oppress you every day, it doesn’t dictate your job prospects and how people police your behaviour and your body.

Chances are you never actually notice

if you’ve been racist, because you’re unaware of it.

In fact, because you don’t know what it feels like to be institutionally, systematically and personally oppressed by hundreds of years of disadvantage, a history of colonialism, a life-time of racism – you aren’t paying attention to race 100% of the time, and that means you slip up and are unintentionally hurtful.

You probably need People of Colour to let you know when you’ve said something racist, because as a result of your White Privilege, you didn’t even know what you were saying was racially charged.

The definition of privilege is that because it’s not a problem for you, you think there is no problem.

Dear White Feminist,

This letter *was* for you, and I hope I was clear.

Thank you to my two best White Feminist friends, who helped me articulate myself, I could not have written this without you.

I hope more of you are willing to listen and learn, so that we can create a world where wom*n of all backgrounds can feel included and safe.



ILLUSTRATION BY EMILY JOHNSON

NOT YOUR ASIAN FETISH

BY ADA LEE

“I’ve always had a thing for Asian women,” a British man writes to me on Tinder.

“I’ve always dreamed of sleeping with an Asian woman – will you be my first?” a French guy writes.

On Tinder, and life generally, any woman is bound to be subject to feeble sexual propositions. But these racialised gems tend to be saved for women from minority groups. There is nothing more empowering than knowing someone is attracted to you because of your race. As I told the second guy, it is every girl’s dream to be objectified and fetishised for her race.

Not.

Online dating studies of heterosexual interactions have found Asian women are one of the most popular groups - while Black women tend to rank the lowest. Conversely, White men are the most popular group among women, while Asian men rank the lowest. It’s easy to simplify these findings to mere

physical preferences. After all, you can’t help who you’re attracted to.

But, after watching a cringe-inducing episode of *SBS Insight*, I’ve started to realise that our preferences are often shaped by power dynamics and gender stereotypes.

It’s not uncommon to hear of the middle-aged Aussie bloke who travels to Bali or Thailand to find a (significantly younger) wife. John Carroll sits in the *SBS Insight* studio with his Filipino wife, explaining why he prefers Asian women: they’re “very attentive,” he coos. “One of the stereotypes is Asian women treat Western men better than a white woman. Yes, I believe that to be true,” he says. Thanks for the seal of approval pal.

He’s not the only one. At an Asian women speed-dating event, one guy admires how “Asian women definitely look after the partner.” Australian expats in Bali with Indonesian wives tell *The Australian* how, “Asian women treat men like men.” One 44-year-

old explains the difficulties of dating Western women: “It’s because of the independence, the nagging – they’re high maintenance. It’s much easier with an Asian girl”.

According to sociology expert, Jennifer Lundquist, there is a desire among some Western men to find women who come from more family traditional cultures and who subscribe to more conservative gender roles.

The attitudes of these men reflect Patriarchal assumptions that Asian women are domestic and docile. But don’t worry, John Carroll is here to defend us from the misguided stereotype. Peering over at his wife with a fawning grin, he says, “as far as Asian women being docile, I’m sorry to disappoint you but they’re not docile, they’re definitely not.” I’d rather not imagine what he means by this.

In the arena of stereotypes, the Western conception of ‘Tarzan masculinity’ is defeating quiet Asian masculinity while docile Asian

femininity is winning against loud Black femininity.

I’m not saying every guy who’s dating an Asian girl has some Patriarchal complex. Nor am I saying every guy who’s dating a black girl is looking for his own Beyoncé fantasy. There is nothing wrong with interracial couples or being attracted to certain attributes. But there is a fine line between appreciating difference and fetishising someone for their race.

Most of us aren’t from a generation where the fantastical ‘Other’ exists only on some remote, exotic island. More than ever, we have grown up alongside different cultures and from this, we’ve learnt to respect and embrace diversity. Still, it remains important that we question the historical power dynamics and gender stereotypes that shape our attraction towards some and our exclusion of others.

BLACK, WHITE, ASIAN, OTHER

BY EDEN CACEDA

A few weeks ago I was walking down the street with a close friend when we came across a promotional poster for comedian Gabriel Iglesias on the side of a building. His face stretched across the gluey paper in a glorious display of his buzzcut and trademark handlebar moustache and beard – my friend turned to me and jokingly remarked, “Wow, look at that guy! Could you look anymore Mexican?”

Though it was meant simply to be a passing joke about his looks (which isn’t exactly cool either), I immediately retorted, “Wow, look at that girl over here. How Asian is she? And that White guy! Look at his blonde hair! Could you look anymore White?”

Racial ambiguity is something that is not incredibly common in Australia; everyday pedestrians more often than not fall into the categories Black, White or Asian. Unfortunately, in my case, being Latin American, I don’t fit into any of these categories, and in fact, am incorrectly assumed to be Asian or Black. But unlike Gabriel Iglesias, I was not the “stereotypical looking” Latin American that is too often perpetuated in response to racial ambiguity.

With people of Latin American ethnicity making up only 0.91% of the Australian population (2006 Census), there are certain misinformed assumptions and expectations of what Latin American people – from South America, Central America and the Caribbean – should look like, and in this case, much like Iglesias. Regrettably a common issue with having so few Latin American residents in Australia gives way to tokenism and casual racism.

Though considered merely harmless gags, or ‘slip-of-the-tongue’ commentary, casual racism appears to be rife in most if not all kinds of social settings in Australia. One of its most commonly forgiven forms is the trivialization of race and how it can be disguised as unintentionally offensive humour. Because of small numbers of Latin American people in our

community, the comparisons are drawn from the countless “stereotypical” Latin American characters on television and in movies, played by the likes of Danny Trejo, Sophia Vegara and Michele Rodriguez seriously distorting the realities of the people of this race.

Unbeknownst to my friend, her ignorant passing statement is only one in thousands made daily that further perpetuate the misguided social idea of the Latin American image. Indeed, not all of us look like Gabriel Iglesias and by asking if he could “look anymore Mexican”, she seemed to assume that the individuals who look most stereotypically Mexican are they ones that truly represent the culture.

For twenty years I have been confused as Middle Eastern, Sri Lankan, Indian, Native American, African American, the list goes on, all because people can’t distinguish what I look like. When I eventually tell people I’m Latin American, I often get an unhappy face and get told that “I don’t look it”, as if there is some stereotypical way all Latin Americans are meant to look like.

I don’t eat Tacos everyday for lunch nor do I wear a poncho around the house, and unfortunately these are the kinds of stereotypes that I get pushed into because that’s all South American people are “known” as in Australian society. Because there are so few of us, we as a race are unable to dispel these myths and reconstruct our identity within the community. Years of anti-racism activism have shown the public that there are many different-looking types of Black, White and Asian people. However, again, because of our relative obscurity in the populace, we aren’t able to represent the vast assortment of Latin American people and actually show that we can all look different, just like Black, White and Asian people have.

Binding together race and image is something that ethnic communities struggle with across the world. Assuming that race can be discerned from image contributes to



ILLUSTRATION BY WHITNEY DUAN

discrimination and makes expectations of what people look like. Those of us in the “Other” box are still struggling to craft our image in relation to race and typecasting or complete disregard that we exist in the media (looking at you *Home And Away*) isn’t assisting us in doing so. People like me, ethnically ambiguous people, should be appearing in the public eye and diffusing the idea that if you are not Black, White or Asian, you are all the same in the “Other” box.

Unable to fit into any particular “known ethnicity”, people are constantly preoccupied by my race rather than deeper aspects of my character. What is even worse than already being excluded because of my non-White skin colour, was not being accepted by fellow ethnicities and continuously being pointed out for being not Black, White or Asian – the other in an already separated class of others.

In the modern age of globalization and multiculturalism, what we as a society need to do is strive to break down characterization of race and ethnicity. Particularly in Australia, with higher rates of interracial marriage than most

other nations, we need to strive to stop using race as an explanatory and descriptive term. Rather than comment on an individual and immediately attributing them to their race or refer to someone by their ethnicity, it is necessary to break down racial boundaries.


Gabriel Iglesias isn’t anymore Latino than I am, though our visual (racial) features may indicate otherwise. In Australia, we recognize that not all Black, White or Asian people look the same and no one “looks” more “real” than another. However, this needs to translate over to those of us in the Other box. There are variation in looks among Middle Eastern, African and Latin American people and calling someone out for “looking Mexican” or “not looking Mexican enough” only reinforces the idea that race and image are explicitly tied and cannot be broken. It should not be just Black, White or Asian but Black, White, Asian, Latino, Middle Eastern, Indian and all those in between. I may not look Latino, but I am, and no one person should “look” it more than another because of ignorant expectations of image in connection to race.



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TW: RACIST SLURS RACISM: IT STOPS WITH YOU

BY ANONYMOUS

“No one came to our defence... It was a very lonely moment.”

On the evening of September 25, 2014, I went home and saw that my mother’s eyes were red. She told me that random strangers on the street had verbally abused her about her culture and religion earlier that day. A couple of years ago, she began to wear a hijab (of her own volition!); now, not only was she a Woman of Colour in a predominantly Anglo-White society, but also visibly a Muslim (as is her right to be).

Although my mother was targeted because of her religious beliefs that day, racist attacks play out in a similar fashion: a person minding their own business is abused by random strangers in a public space or workplace.

I myself was racially abused a couple of months ago. I was on the train home late one night, when a White man approached me and said, “your people need to be more Australian.” My “people” of course being all dark-skinned people.

Putting aside the problematic notions raised of collective punishment and the dubious call to an “Australian” identity

that no one seems to be able to define, this was not the first time I had been a victim of racial abuse. I’ve been called a “Black c*nt” and been told to go back to my own country, amongst other things.

However, what truly upset me that day, and similarly upset my mother recently, was the fact that no one intervened on our behalf. No one came to our defence. None of the people (other White men) who were in my carriage on the train that night said a comforting word, let alone a protective one. It was a very lonely moment. I felt worthless. But I spoke up for myself; I engaged the man in conversation, and just before he got off the train he said to me, “you’re alright.” That wasn’t all he said (he proceeded to make another generalization about my “people”), but it was the most important part.

By challenging this perpetrator of racial abuse, I was signaling to him that his actions are not without consequences. If I, as a victim, can challenge the perpetrator, then you, as a bystander, also possess the courage to defend the vulnerable.

I’M ALL GREEK TO YOU

BY LUKE DASSAKLIS

I am of Greek heritage. All four of my grandparents left their respective lives in mountains or islands to come to Australia. Fifty something years since they arrived, and a quick glance at their lives would reveal that yes, they have achieved a better standard of living. A look at the lives of their descendants shows that although their lives may be of a higher standard than those who stayed ‘in the village,’ they are no longer really all that Greek.

Throughout school I was able to blend in as White, because I mostly am. I look and act like a White person now. And that sucks. I look up to my grandparents, the food they cook, the dances they dance, the customs they continue to relish in and I can recognize, with jealousy, all the culture I have lost.

I went to school in the inner west of Sydney, which is commonly regarded as a very multicultural area. I was able to pass myself off as a White person for most of my school career, and so was able to play the system to the best of my ability. I remember the first two years of school however, when my

pidgin Grenglish did not sit well with the other, whiter kids in the class. Occasionally I would say a Greek word in an English sentence, purely because I didn’t know any better. The perplexed, judgmental looks are something I still remember vividly. They are looks that turned me away from my grandparents’ culture, and towards a homogenous White one. I was forced to go to Greek school for much of primary school. I detested it, partly because there was grass to be run on, and balls to be kicked, but also because every Thursday afternoon it was a tedious two-hour reminder that I wasn’t White.

This is not an unusual story. There were many students of Sri Lankan descent at my high school that were more than happy to swap their delicious homemade curries for a measly cheese and vegemite sandwich.

Sydney lacks a sense of welcoming and well-being to People of Colour. In order to fit into a schoolyard, to feel popular, you need to conform to a White standard. You lose your culture. This is something that I regret immensely. Of my 12 cousins, I am the only one

But how? What can you do to intervene and support the victim?

Here is a practical guide you can use if you are witness to an act of racial abuse:

1. If the racial attack is an act of physical violence and/or the situation is unsafe, call 000 (or press the ‘Help’ button on a train for example)
2. If it is safe to do so, record the attack on a mobile phone or similarly capable device and present the evidence to authorities (you may also choose to upload any footage to Facebook, YouTube, etc.)
3. Speak up in defense of the victim(s). You don’t have to be aggressive; it can be something as simple as, “leave that person alone.”
4. Comfort the victim(s) and let them know that they are not alone
5. Sometimes, a seemingly safe situation can turn unsafe for you once you’ve intervened. In these situations, realise that the victim is grateful for any attempt you’ve made to support them.
6. Have a little bit of courage. As Adam Goodes, the 2014 Australian of the

Year said, “...if you say nothing or do nothing, nothing changes. So take a stand.”

However, what if YOU are the racist? What if you believe that a person should be abused because of the colour of their skin or their ethnic or religious background (or indeed their gender, sexual orientation/preferences, etc.)?

Here is a practical guide you can use if you feel like racially abusing someone:

1. Keep your racist opinions to yourself and do not abuse or harass anyone with said opinions
 2. Quietly vacate the immediate area so that you can distance yourself from whoever/whatever has stirred up your racist sentiments
 3. Reflect on why you have racist views and what might be causing them.
 4. Make a commitment to yourself to stop being a racist. Do your own independent research and seek help from support groups.
- So, remember, if you see or hear something, then say something. You might not know it, but your intervention could make all the difference in the world to the victim(s).



ILLUSTRATION BY
JENNIFER YI

* based on current retail price and depending on edition and condition of the book.



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KNOW YOUR PLACE IN A RENTED SHARE HOUSE.

BY NED CUTCHER, POLICY OFFICER, NSW TENANTS' UNION

Until a couple of years ago, renting laws in New South Wales did a pretty poor job of giving share house residents straight answers about their rights.

The law only properly recognised rental relationships between a single landlord and tenant. However, there is a spectrum of rental relationships, and share housing offers up some of the most complicated types.

In the past, a problem between housemates could be extremely difficult to resolve, especially if it boiled down to a dispute over legal rights and duties. The Residential Tenancies Act 2010 has gone some way towards changing that – some answers are clearer than others. But you have to know how it works in order to make the most of it.

The first thing to consider is where your rights and duties actually come from. In a rented share house, your legal status will depend upon a number of possibilities:

- If you are named on the residential tenancy agreement along with one or more others, then you are a co-tenant. Your rights are equal and several, so you could

be held liable for the actions of your housemates.

- If you are named on the residential tenancy agreement but your housemates are not, then you are a head-tenant. You've transferred part of your right to occupy the premises to your housemates and you act as their landlord. Your obligations to your housemates will depend on the nature of your agreements with them.

- If you are not named on the residential tenancy agreement, but you have a written agreement with the head-tenant, then you might be a sub-tenant with rights and obligations covered by the Residential Tenancies Act. But if your agreement is a 'lodging agreement' you'll be covered by the common law or (less likely) the Boarding Houses Act.

- If you are not named on the residential tenancy agreement and have no written agreement with the head-tenant, then you could be a sub-tenant with no rights under the Act, or a boarder or lodger. Your share house could be a 'registrable boarding house' subject to the Boarding Houses Act 2012, and you could have an

'occupancy agreement' under that law. A number of criteria must be met for that to be true – it's more likely that your rights will derive from the common law of lodging, which is not ideal. (If your head tenant resides elsewhere, you may have rights under the Residential Tenancies Act).

The Tenants' Union argues that all renters who are not covered by the Residential Tenancies Act should have an automatic right to the kind of occupancy agreements the Boarding Houses Act provides. This would be very easy for the NSW Government to achieve. It would ensure all renters in NSW have basic occupancy rights and access to affordable, independent dispute resolution.

A final word of caution – if you live in a share house that has seen a number of occupants coming and going over time, you may not know who is named on the residential tenancy agreement. It's possible that you are a sub-tenant without rights under the Act, and your head-tenant is the unknown person who signed the original agreement. Your relationship to the landlord, and your right to occupy the premises, may be tenuous and in need of some care. But other things are possible, too. It's

a good idea for your household to get to the bottom of this, to make sure everyone knows where they stand. Speak to your local Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service to find out what to do.



Talk to your housemates about getting your house in order:

- Decide whether you want to be co-tenants, or head-tenant/sub-tenant.

- Get more info at tenants.org.au/factsheet-15-share-housing

- If you are a head-tenant/sub-tenant, write up your agreement. Download an example at tenants.org.au/share-housing-agreement

YOUR ASSESSMENT AND APPEAL RIGHTS

As a University of Sydney student you have many assessment rights. Policies entitle all students to full information about course goals and requirements and this information must be given to you before the end of the first week of a course. Information you are entitled to includes:

- assessment criteria
- attendance and class requirements
- weighting – breakdown and calculation of assessment marks
- explanation of policies regarding 'legitimate co-operation, plagiarism and cheating', special consideration and academic appeals procedures
- early and clear statement of sanctions and penalties that may bring your mark down, and fair application of these penalties
- balanced and relevant assessment tasks
- fair and consistent assessment with appropriate workloads and deadlines
- written consultation before the halfway point of the unit if assessment requirements need to change
- changes must not disadvantage students

- adequate arrangements to cater for disabilities and other requirements
- access to staff out of class time at reasonable hours
- fair and relevant marking procedures
- anonymous posting of results (or arguably de-identified at least)
- timely return of assessments
- helpful feedback
- access to exams up to four months after the result
- the right to appeal up to three months after an academic decision
- enough time for remedial learning when there is reassessment

Appeals - University Procedures

If you believe a mark or University decision is wrong and you want to appeal you must lodge an appeal within 15 working days.

The first step is to talk to the person who made the decision – often your lecturer. See if you can go through the assessment and discuss your performance with them. Make sure you know how the mark was worked out – including any scaling or marks deducted or changed for reasons not directly related to that particular assessment.

Your questions and concerns may be resolved at this stage, helping you understand how you can improve in the future. Alternatively, you may feel the matter is still unresolved and wish to continue with your appeal.

- Make your appeal in writing and make sure it is easy for other people to understand
- Listen to or read staff comments and reasons for a decision closely. Keep these in mind when you write your appeal letter.
- Base an appeal on a process matter rather than an academic judgement.
- Know your desired outcome
- Familiarise yourself with the relevant policies
- Know who you are appealing to: Lecturer/Unit of study Coordinator; someone higher in the appeal chain within the Faculty; and then the University Student Appeals Body (Academic decisions only, and only where there has been a breach of process); You must be given reasons

for each person's decision.

7. If you cannot resolve appeals internally, you may be able to approach external bodies eg. NSW Ombudsman, the Anti-Discrimination Board etc.

Administrative decisions made outside of the Faculty have appeals to different people. Speak to the SRC for advice.

Your Appeal Rights

According to University policy, appeals should be dealt with:

- in a timely manner
- with in confidence
- impartially and not disadvantage you in the future
- procedural fairness
- free access to all documents concerning your appeal

For help drafting your appeal talk to an SRC caseworker.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT [USU.EDU.AU/VERGE](http://usu.edu.au/verge)

X-MEN: SECOND CLASS

BY JUSTIN PEN & SHIRAN ILLANPERUMA

“If mutants are an analogue for people of colour, the lesson to be learnt is that we must be vigilant in policing our communities and deferential to those who hold power.”

The stories of the X-Men franchise are fables of oppression and resistance, and 2014’s *X-Men: Days of the Future Past (DOFP)* is no exception. Co-created by two young working-class Jews, Stanley Lieber and Jack Kurtzberg, the comic book series chronicles the adventures of super-powered ‘mutants’ and the oppression they face from regular humans. Though initially conceived as an allegory for anti-Black racism, the franchise has since proven to be a highly-adaptable template capable of addressing a myriad of oppressions, including queerphobia, sexism, and anti-semitism.

However, at its core, X-Men cannot be dislodged from the social context of its inception: its release in September 1963 was preceded by Martin Luther King’s iconic “I Have A Dream” speech in August and pre-empted Malcolm X’s “Message to The Grassroots” in November – during the height of the Civil Rights movement.

Despite their best intentions, Stan Lee and Jack Kirby’s interpretation of black resistance was, and continues to be, grossly out of step with the realities of the movement. These inaccuracies have only been amplified over time. The most egregious of these is the mythological binary created between the “violent” Malcolm X and the “non-violent” Doctor King. Though the franchise is fictional, its allegorical politics could not be clearer: there is a “good” and respectful way to protest one’s lot in life, and a “bad” and antagonistic form of resistance.

* * *

Magneto, the at-times anti-hero, at-times antagonist of the X-Men film franchise, is the ideological prosecutor for the case of mutant supremacy. The chief inspiration for the character’s tactics and ideology draws from Civil Rights activist Malcolm X.

Comparisons between Magneto and Malcolm X are rife within the series, often implied and sometimes explicit. Biographical minutiae reveal traumatic and violent childhoods.

In 1926, a year after his birth, Malcolm X’s family fled Omaha, Nebraska under threat from the Klu Klux Klan. Early

scenes of Magneto in X-Men (2000) and X-Men: First Class (2011) depict a childhood as a Jewish test subject in a Nazi concentration camp. Both men, too, renounced their birth names: in 1952 Malcolm X, born Malcolm Little, rejected his slave name, just as Magneto, born Erik Lensherr, repudiates his birth name for a mutant handle at the end of First Class.

Though these characteristics are common enough tropes within the genre – harrowing upbringings and gaudy pseudonyms – Magneto makes clear the connection by lifting one of Malcolm X’s most famous lines in the franchise’s first film, gravely telling Xavier over a game of chess: “The war is still coming, Charles. And I intend to fight it, by any means necessary.”

“We want freedom by any means necessary. We want justice by any means necessary. We want equality by any means necessary.” These words, first uttered by Malcolm X in 1964, have since become a manifesto for radical separatist resistance: a position that has, at best, been misunderstood, and at worst, willfully distorted to transform the minister and human rights activist into a terrorist and strawman.

In one of the few sympathetic scenes afforded to him, Magneto justifies his actions against humankind, by bellowing the names of fallen mutants: “Angel. Azazel. Emma. Banshee. We were supposed to protect them! Where were you Charles? You abandoned us all!” Any logic or legitimacy in Magneto’s actions begin and end with this scene. Past this point, Magneto’s agenda is depicted as contradictory (attempting to assassinate fellow mutant and lover, Mystique) and downright absurd (dropping a football stadium on the White House).

In a 1965 radio interview, Malcolm X articulated his stance on violence: “We are nonviolent only with nonviolent people. I’m nonviolent as long as somebody else is nonviolent – as soon as they get violent they nullify my nonviolence.” It echoes earlier statements, which establish the role he perceives violence must play in resistance: where government is “either unable or unwilling to protect the lives and property of our people…

our people are within our rights to protect themselves by whatever means necessary.”

On politics, Malcolm agitated against supporting either the Democrats or the Republicans, arguing: “Both of them have sold us out; both parties have sold us out. Both parties are racist.” On education, he said: “If you’re surrounded by schools, go to that school.” On economics, he advocated for an autonomous market: “[The Black Community] should own and operate and control the economy of our community.” On the issue of autonomy itself, Malcolm once stated: “I, for one, will join in with anyone – I don’t care what colour you are – as long as you want to change this miserable condition that exists on this earth.” Conspicuously absent from Magneto – and white-liberal revisions of Malcolm – is this nuance. By writing Magneto as myopically vengeful the X-Men’s Civil Rights allegory renders Malcolm’s radical black politics into a lazy J. Edgar Hoover-esque revision.

* * *

Charles Xavier is the pacifist protagonist of the X-Men franchise – its moral crux. As King’s fictional stand-in, Xavier espouses a familiar political praxis: integration through nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience. In the comic book canon, Xavier’s goal of harmonious integration is referred to as ‘Xavier’s Dream’, an obvious nod to King’s iconic ‘I Have A Dream’ speech.

Xavier’s privileged childhood on a Mansion estate parallels King’s own life of relative economic privilege, growing up in a middle-class neighbourhood in Atlanta with access to tertiary education. Despite his Oxford Tory upbringing Xavier channels his resources to found Xavier’s School for Gifted Youngsters – an autonomous shelter and educational centre with an emphasis on self-defence and self-love.

The plot device recalls King’s Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and its involvement with ‘Citizenship Schools’, a program for adult literacy that covertly educated its students in social issues and political organisation. Like Xavier – whose original team consisted of inexperienced teenagers – King was criticised for putting the lives

of young students at risk in the struggle for equality.

The mandate of Xavier’s mutants is frequently stated to be “to protect a world that fears and hates them”, ostensibly in the hopes that defending the oppressor will relieve their oppression. This neutering of King’s radicalism is a blatant advocacy for the politics of respectability: a praxis, which requires members of a marginalised group to demonstrate their consistency and compatibility with the status quo, rather than challenging the status quo to accept difference.

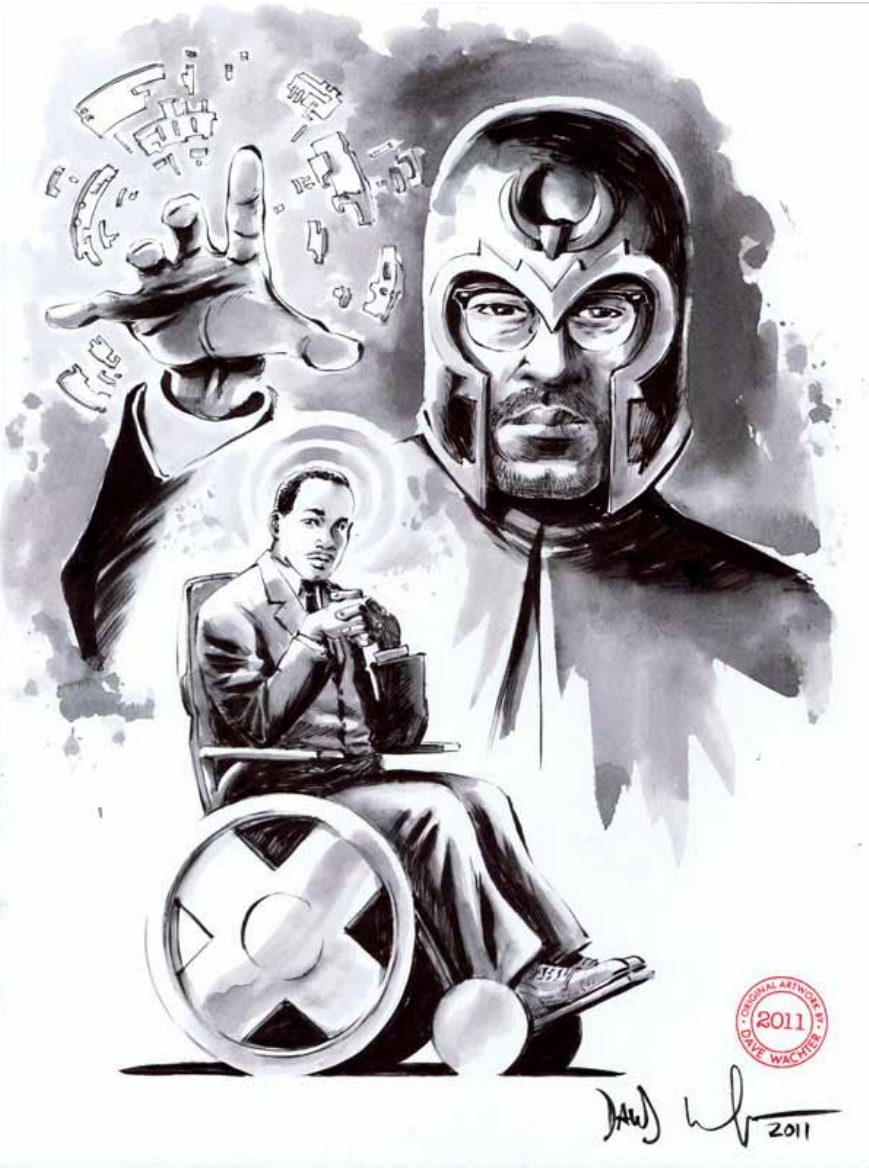
Throughout much of the X-Men film franchise, we see Xavier’s students do woefully little in terms of direct action towards the betterment of mutants. Instead, their efforts are directed towards suppressing the more radical within their community.

The plot of DOFP hinges upon the X-Men preventing the assassination of Bolivar Trask, a bigoted military industrialist who advocates mutant genocide through Sentinels – robotic drones equipped with genetic profiling technology and powers derived from inhumane experimentation on mutants. Suffice it to say Trask is an unsavoury fellow, yet the film contrives to convince its audience that the eradication of Trask through an act of armed resistance would only serve to exacerbate the oppression of mutants worldwide. In the climactic scene, as Mystique points a gun at Trask, Xavier implores: “This will make us the enemy”, to which she, retorts, “look around you, we already are!” By Xavier’s terms, mutants must “prove themselves” to justify their right to an equitable life. Some would perhaps argue that Martin himself would agree.

In a 1965 interview with NBC, he said: “When one breaks the law that conscience tells him is unjust, he must do it openly, he must do it cheerfully, he must do it lovingly, he must do it civilly not uncivilly and he must do it with a willingness to accept the penalty.” This advocacy of “redemptive unearned suffering” has been criticised as being bourgeois and inconsiderate of the everyday violence subjected to Black women and working class Black men. However in the



By B. Egan (uncannyphantom @ deviantart)



By David Wachter

same interview King asserts: “where there is injustice and frustration, the potentialities for violence are greater... the more we find individuals facing conditions of frustration, conditions of disappointment and seething despair... the more it will be possible for violence to interfere”.

This is the King we do not see in Xavier. Contrary to popular depictions, Martin was not a starry-eyed idealist but a pragmatic man capable of tactically mobilising ideologies for the liberation of his people. Though remembered as a staunch proponent of integration, in his final days Martin was quoted saying: “I fear I may have integrated my people into a burning house”. The uncomfortable truth is that there is no neat line that separates Martin from the so-called ‘extremism’ of Malcolm.

* * *

So why do we – a pair of middle-class, brown students at Sydney University – care about these ideological anachronisms in a franchise we otherwise adore and will undoubtedly continue to consume?

Well, as geeky young men of colour, the X-Men are touchstones of our childhood. Arguably one of the most diverse superhero franchises in existence, and one of the few to tackle immense themes such as structural oppression and genocide, the X-Men

influenced our politics from an early age. However, for all its good intentions we cannot remain silent on its countless misreadings of black history and resistance, which, at this point, should either be taken as deliberate conservative revisionism or worse, ‘post-race’ white liberalism.

Representations of the Civil Rights movement, which portray “good” and “bad” modes of resistance, have a lasting impact on how society reacts to anti-racist resistance at the fault lines. If mutants are an analogue for people of colour, the lesson to be learnt is that we must be vigilant in policing our communities and deferential to those who hold power.

The hard binary of peaceful and violent protest is regularly dispatched to delegitimise displays of resistance. Ten years ago in Redfern, T.J. Hickey, a 17-year-old Indigenous boy, was impaled on a fence, and died, as a result of a police pursuit. The ensuing community protests, dubbed the Redfern Riots by the mainstream press, called for nonviolence from Indigenous residents. However, no masthead sought to condemn the violence – literal or structural – committed by the police and the state. Indeed, media critic John Budarick criticised both the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* for focussing on “events rather than processes”.

“The uncomfortable truth is that there is no neat line that separates Martin from the so-called ‘extremism’ of Malcolm.”

Similar failings emerged in the reportage of Ferguson, Missouri. “Chaos in Ferguson...”, “Out of Control” and “Hell Breaks Loose” were some of the more sensational headlines deployed against the Black community’s response to the killing of Michael Brown. As in Redfern, these headlines indicate a gross expectation for black people to sit tight and expect justice from the very system that kills their community. Moreover, the media’s focus on petty issues such as looting and property damage over the culture of impunity surrounding extra-judicial killings of people of colour reflects an inability to process the gravity of structural violence and oppression.

* * *

The hard binary of good and evil, of Xavier and Magneto, and Martin and Malcolm, paints a distorted image of black resistance. The contents of the film, though hermetically sealed in the 1960s, are not baubles of the past; in fact, they are just as much products of the present. Reactions to the protests

in Ferguson, Missouri reveal the debate over black resistance remains a live issue for the United States – and the countless, global spectators who followed the rolling coverage. To be clear: any attempt to isolate Malcolm X’s “radical” politics from Martin Luther King’s “moderate” posturing is categorically false. We strongly refute this notion that there is a “right” and a “wrong” way to resist and any assertion that the oppressed must appease their oppressors and integrate into the dominant culture.

Of course, the franchise does not directly graft ideas of violence and nonviolence on to its audiences. Indeed, it’s unlikely reading X-Men comics and watching the films will transform you into a ‘race-blind’ bigot. Rather, it may deter a critical examination of race and power – and reduce police and protestors, in Ferguson and Redfern, into black-and-white heroes and villains.

HOLDING YOUR TONGUE: DIALECTS OF POWER

BY BIBEK GURUNG

There was a video that went viral a few weeks ago. In the constellation of the so-called viral videos that sprout and immediately die seemingly every week, it's hard to keep track of these dubious gems. I'll refresh your memory. The video in question was very helpfully titled *Black Lady Describes How Speaking Properly Shouldn't Be Viewed As "Talking White."* That's what it was. No bells or whistles; just a video of a Black American woman speaking to the camera for two minutes and nineteen seconds. It was viewed tens of thousands of times and reposted with similar vigour. Her thesis begins thusly – 'There's no such thing as talking white...' I was cautiously on board with what she had to say but I had a sinking feeling. As she continued, my fears were confirmed. 'It's actually called speaking fluently.'

We all know what this woman is talking about. Black people in America speak a certain way; that way of speaking is seen as uneducated; and it would be better if Black people started talking in a way that sounded more educated. That way of speaking is known by many names – broken English, Ghetto talk, Ebonics. Linguists know it as African-American Vernacular English (AAVE).

Further into the video she continues 'I don't know how we got to a place where as a culture, as a race, if you sound as if you have more than fifth grade education it's a bad thing.' At that point, I knew where this was going.

This brings us to why we're talking about this video. Why is this being talked about so much at all? To be fair, the woman's views are valid to her experiences, and a product of the prejudices and issues she has had to face. But it's no secret that this video is being used because it gives racists the opportunity to say 'Hey, look! A black person is saying what we think, so we're allowed to say it!' What was a unique point of view is being used as a universalised justification for the bigotry of the narrow-minded who have an axe to grind.

A library of videos and statements have been made in the past that parrot the aforementioned sentiment and were received enthusiastically by lots of people whose dialects coincidentally happen to sound educated, you know who I mean. An example is this statement by Bill Cosby, seen as King-Pope authority on Black people (by racists): 'They're standing on the corner and they can't speak English. I can't even talk the way these people talk:

Why you ain't, Where you is, What he drive, Where he stay, Where he work, Who you be...' He continues to lament the fact that Black people speak AAVE and argues that it is directly a result of rejecting education and higher thought.

But this reveals a deep lack of understanding of language and the place that it has in communities. AAVE is categorically not broken English. It's not an imperfect imitation of a 'proper' way of speaking. AAVE is a dialect on its own that has very consistent rules on grammar and how words are formed. A lot of well meaning people refuse to recognise that there is a way of 'talking Black' but that's just as harmful. To explain, let me go into some examples of AAVE that parents complain about their kids using.

One is a how a lot of black people pronounce 'ask' as 'ax.' This is not a corruption or a bastardisation or any patronising term you want to use. Both forms have been in use for about the same length of time and are descended from an ancestral word – acsian. Even fucking Chaucer, the most English of Engs used 'ax.' That's right, languages aren't handed down fully formed

by some grammarian deity, they're evolving entities that reflect the growth and vibrancy of the individual groups that use them to communicate.

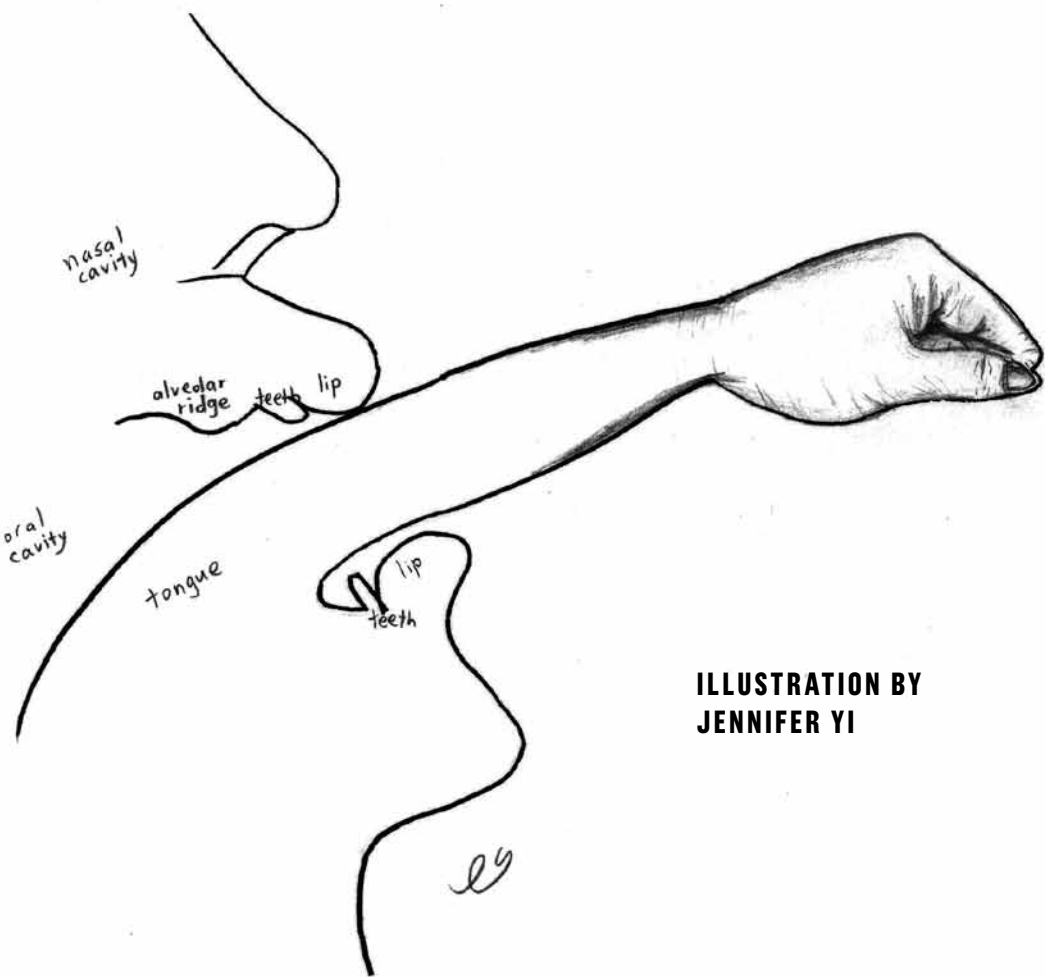
Another example is the word 'be' as in 'He be going to the store.' This does not translate to 'He is going to the store' but is a completely different grammatical construct called the habitual. The sentence actually means 'He often goes to the store, but not necessarily right now.' An experiment by the University of Massachusetts showed some Black children a video of Elmo eating cookies and Cookie monster just chilling. They were asked 'Who be eating cookies?' and the children chose Cookie Monster because he's the one that eats cookies habitually.

There are also a number of features of AAVE that are actually from the ancestral dialect of the 1600s but don't exist in most American dialects. That's beside the point. Black people have always been looked down upon for speaking their dialect because it's a convenient marker of their position in society. Condemning their dialect is a tool of oppression.

This kind of treatment also applies to other communities that are historically oppressed or from a lower socio-economic background. Aboriginal Australians have been discouraged from using greetings like 'which way,' working class Australians are told not to say 'youse.' In every country there exists a prestige dialect, one that has the most social capital and belongs to the people who wield the most power. Anything that strays from this is therefore 'undesirable' and 'uneducated.'

But all people are able to code switch between the prestige dialect and their own depending on the circumstances. As Dave Chappelle says 'Every Black American is bilingual. We speak street vernacular and we speak job interview.'

People will continue to use their own dialects because language isn't just about communicating information. It's a bond between people who have similar experiences, face the same challenges. It allows people to say 'I have never met you but I know we are family.' The ignorant may try to destroy that but community has always been stronger than bigotry.



SILENT AND INVISIBLE

BY ALEX CACEDA

“At social events people were often reluctant to engage in conversation, until they heard me speak ‘Aussie’ English.”

I was pigeon-holed into one of the migrant stereotypes, but because the Latin American community in Australia was so small in the late 70's, people often relied on the American manufactured stereotypes of uneducated drug-dealers and domestic workers to form preconceived notions of my identity.

Learning English from scratch as a child, I have a better grasp of the language than most – yet I am made to prove this continually in an offensive and humiliating rituals on the grounds that my ability to write and speak 'correctly' are contingent on my skin colour.

I am fortunate and tremendously proud to defy my racial stereotype and exceed the offensive and ultimately oppressive expectations of Australia. However, the struggle is for those who look and sound just like me, but have been robbed of an opportunity to succeed by silent and invisible discrimination that manifests in stereotypes and casual racism.

I stand with these fellow People of Colour, who are judged by our skin, nationality and names, and not by our abilities. We are not uneducated or unintelligent and we do not have to prove ourselves to Australia again and again.

Often assumed to have been educated in another country though I had done a majority of my schooling here in Australia. By the time I started working, proof-reading documents in my job, my managers were always surprised I could correct their poor grammar. Couldn't they expect from my good grades at school and uni that I would have a good command of the language?

At social events people were often reluctant to engage in conversation, until they heard me speak "Aussie" English. On one occasion I was even described as 'exotic.' People couldn't tell that I was a well-educated, socially capable person just like them and I didn't understand why.

It was many years later that I realized that while I was fortunate not to have experienced open racism unlike most migrants to this country, the answer to all those questions resided in a more sophisticated and sinister form of discrimination that was silent and invisible.

Having arrived in this country 40 years ago as a child, my family settled in a highly diversified neighbourhood in Western Sydney, surrounded by people of many nationalities. My school friends were Australian-born Italians, Lebanese, Maltese, Chinese and Catholic-Irish kids. I was the overseas-born oddball. No one could work out where from. I didn't look Italian or Lebanese or Maltese, and whilst I was Catholic I was definitely not Irish. Couldn't anyone tell I was Latin American?

As a young child, I had never realized that my mother – who was of European descent – was indeed, white, whilst my father with dark skin, was described as a Black man. I was a strange mix between the two. As my mother struggled with English, I often became her translator and people would ask me to "translate this for the lady." Couldn't people tell this "lady" was my mother?

Unknown to me, I had a slightly unusual and indistinguishable accent so I was often asked if I was from South Africa, or lived in the UK. I was

REGIONS OF RACISM

BY ANDREA YONG

It's not everyday I'm given the opportunity to write about my experiences regarding racism. And so, I would like to share my experience growing up as an Australian-born, Chinese-Indonesian person in regional NSW and how it compares to my current living status in Sydney.

The first decade and a half of my life consisted of very little interaction with anyone except Anglo-Australians. In primary school, I was the only person of colour in my grade. High school was more culturally diverse, however I still managed to land myself the status of 'token Asian' within my group of friends. I didn't feel as though this was an issue back then, but I had always sort of wondered why I felt uneasy whenever a passing joke was made about my ethnicity (and it was only until I moved to Sydney and was introduced to the idea of social justice, that I realised why). Moreover, the region of the Illawarra wasn't just generally racist towards Asians, but rather quite specifically anti-Chinese, and because of this I was uncomfortable disclosing the fact that I had a Chinese background when people would ask.

“The Illawarra wasn’t just generally racist towards Asians, but rather quite specifically anti-Chinese.”

In the midst of these years, I received a lot of racial discrimination on the street, grew up hearing these 'jokes' and formed a lot of internalised racism. My most memorable moment was when a man was harassing my two friends, saying extremely vile and sexist things, and as I intervened, he stopped

and turned to me to say, "Did you miss your boat?"

Now hang on. Not am I only a person of colour, I am a woman. *WHY NOT HARASS ME ABOUT THAT?* But the colour of my skin overrides everything - that I am female, that I have a

personality, and that I am Australian. How do you even call out full-blown, blatant racists?

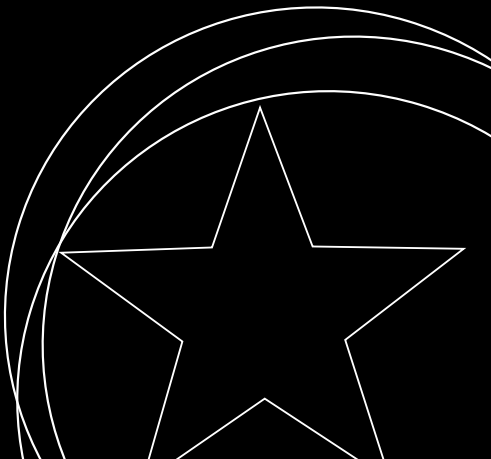
This is what I feel is the striking difference between living in a regional area of Australia and living in a culturally diverse city that is Sydney. No doubt there is still racism in Sydney, but I feel like it's often in the form of subtle racial prejudice. However, there are other people of colour that you can stand in solidarity with, and the colour of your skin is not more apparent and salient to the people around you than you as a person, and that I feel is the important thing.



ELECTIONS 2014

Electoral Officer's Report

Students' Representative Council



I declare the following persons elected:

PRESIDENT: Kyol Blakeney

HONI SOIT: Heist for Honi

NUS DELEGATES: 7

7 Delegates in order of election:

- Kyol Blakeney
- Amy Knox
- Declan Waddell
- Alisha Aitken-Radburn
- Nina Pearson
- Jennifer Light
- Cameron Caccamo

STUDENT'S REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL: 33 to be Elected

Those elected are listed below by the Ticket Order on the Ballot Paper

2014 CANDIDATES STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

A Grassroots for SCA
Luke Sands **

B Switch for Student Jobs
Zoe Zaczek

D Legalise Weed!
Harry Stratton

E Stand Up! for Multiculturalism
Christopher Donovan

F Grassroots for Progress
Daniel Bird Ergas

I Switch for Actual Change
Paul Douglas Harrison

M Switch for Arts
Alison Xiao

O Stand Up! for Social Justice
Ivana Radix

P Students for Palestine
Fahad Ali **

Z Grassroots for Mental Health
Maxwell Hall **

AA Stand Up! for Mental Health
Chris Warren

AB Grassroots for Student Welfare
Chiara Alessia Angeloni

AD Stand Up! for SRC
Amy Knox **
Jesse Seton **

AF Stand Up! for Women
Georgia Kriz

AH Grassroots for Recognition
Madison Mclvor

AL Switch for International Students
He Lu

AU Grassroots against liberal cuts
Liam Carrigan

AV Left Action for Free Education
Ridah Hassan **

AZ Grassroots for Wom*n's Refuges
Suzzane Nassif

BD Stand Up! for Science
Arin Harman

BF Stand Up! for Student Rights
Alisha Aitken-Radburn

BH Stand Up! for Fair Education!
Jack Whitney **

BI Grassroots for SRC
Kyol Blakeney **
Georgia Elizabeth Carr **
Laura Webster

BN Stand Up! for Student Housing
Michael Elliott

BO Switch for Wom*n
Subeta Vimalarajah

BQ Stand Up! for Intl Students
Jun Li

BU Up the Colleges
Tim Sullivan **

BV #CumboRepresent for SRC
Fiona Lieu **
Elizabeth Li **
Julie Anh Pham **

Those names marked with an ** were elected with a full quota.

REFERENDA:

This year the following referenda was held on fossil fuels, the results are:

Should Sydney University stop investing, via its shareholdings, in companies whose primary business is the extraction, processing and transportation of coal, oil and gas (fossil fuels)?

YES = 2974

NO = 759

Paulene Graham.

Authorised by P. Graham, SRC Electoral Officer 2014.
Students' Representative Council, The University of Sydney
Phone: 02 9660 5222 | www.src.usyd.edu.au



THE 'HAFU' EXPERIENCE

BY MARCUS JAMES

Quite a while back, the University of Sydney screened the Australian premiere of *Hafu* – the mixed race experience of Japan. The brainchild of directors Megumi Nishikara and Lara Perez Takagi, this documentary followed the lives of young, mixed race Japanese in the infamously monocultural Japan, presenting the film under the catchphrase “Japan is changing”.

As a half Japanese Australian, I almost felt obliged to watch *Hafu* as if I had some duty to nurture the more neglected side of my background. Yet after the screening as I walked to a mate's for the State of Origin, it occurred to me that watching the film had not made me feel any more Japanese nor any more inclined to explore that part of my family and culture. Rather, I realised my identity as a 'hafu' or what many in Australia call 'halfie'. The individuals in *Hafu* were like me. They were *my* people.

Now this may seem a predicament - some warped notion of mongrel nationalism where I parade my Eurasian-ness like a badge of honour. Certainly racial exclusivity should have absolutely no role in modern Australian society. Equally, race should not dictate who I perceive myself to be, and indeed it does not. I am Australian.

But it would be misleading to say that the connection I felt to *Hafu* has nothing to do with race. I wish it wasn't. The unfortunate fact is that racial categorisation has shaped the experiences I share with the hafus in the film, particularly the sense of exclusion and discrimination from the different sides to my background and the resulting ambiguity in navigating my position in this.

One of the hafus documented in the film was 27 year old born and bred

Sydney-sider, Sophia. In a poignant interview she recalls opening up her o-bento lunchbox prepared by her Japanese mother, only to be derided by schoolmates and have a teacher tell her, “you're in Australia now”. As a schoolkid growing up in the Northern Beaches I had identical experiences, and just as Sophia recalled her mother's censure, my own mother packed Nutella sandwiches to stop me getting bullied. While Australia has progressed far from the 1990s schoolyard, these experiences underline the precarious situation of being mixed-race.

Both Sophia and I are part European. But to Anglo-Australia, we were Other.

Yet that mould of the Other which was designated to us by White Australia did not fit either. I might look Asian, but really I am not. This was made clear to me during high school, where the great majority of the students were from a migrant background. My allegiance to being white or yellow was the topic of speculation, and one student pointed out that I belonged to neither and that I was a “dirty half-blood”.

So then what about our supposed motherland? In the film, Sophia lives a year in Japan to learn Japanese from scratch, reconnect with her culture, and ultimately try to piece together her conflicted identity as a hafu. While she does not expect to be completely accepted as Japanese, Sophia underestimates the stigma of being of mixed-race in Japan. Almost perversely, hafus in Japan are either revered as models and television stars or simply relegated from mainstream Japan whether or not they are Japanese or foreigners like Sophia and myself.

My most vivid memory of Japan was along the neon-lit, blaring streets of Shibuya, Tokyo, where two locals watched me as the butt of their joke.

One would say “*Nihonjin*” (Japanese) while the other said “*Gaijin*” (foreigner), and they repeated this exchange until I walked past speaking English to my friend. Upon hearing me, the man saying “*Gaijin*” shouted it out and laughed at the other in victory.

Ultimately, I identify as an Australian youth and I am very happy about this. It is extremely rare that I am subject to racial discrimination. Yet the hafu experience is something different. It is where both sides of your background expect and frame you to be the other. Where does that place you? Nowhere, really. This is no longer the case for me, but I have experienced a sense of disillusionment as a result of being excluded from both 'sides' of me. It is precisely because of this that I so enjoyed watching *Hafu* and also why I have raised the issue faced by mixed-

race people.

Understanding the hafu experience is crucial going forward, especially given Australia's increasing identification as part of Asia rather than some isolated outpost of the Western world. The utopic, multicultural face of future Australia will be that of a mixed-race child. Is there not then a need to better understand the issues and identity of hafus?

I was somewhat troubled that there were so few young people at *Hafu*'s screening, let alone any hafus. Is it because we don't care enough? Or is it because we are educated and moral enough to accept people for who they are and not expect a person of mixed-race to 'pick sides'? I hope it's the latter.



IT'S A STRUGGLE, BUT THAT'S WHY WE EXIST

BY KUHEN DEVAN

“It's a struggle, but that's why we exist, so that another generation of Lesbians of color will not have to invent themselves, or their history, all over again.” ~ Audre Lorde

I don't have a sense of there being a living gay People of Colour scene in Sydney. If one exists, it's well hidden. Gay People of Colour only exist to be absorbed and diluted into the mainstream gay culture, which

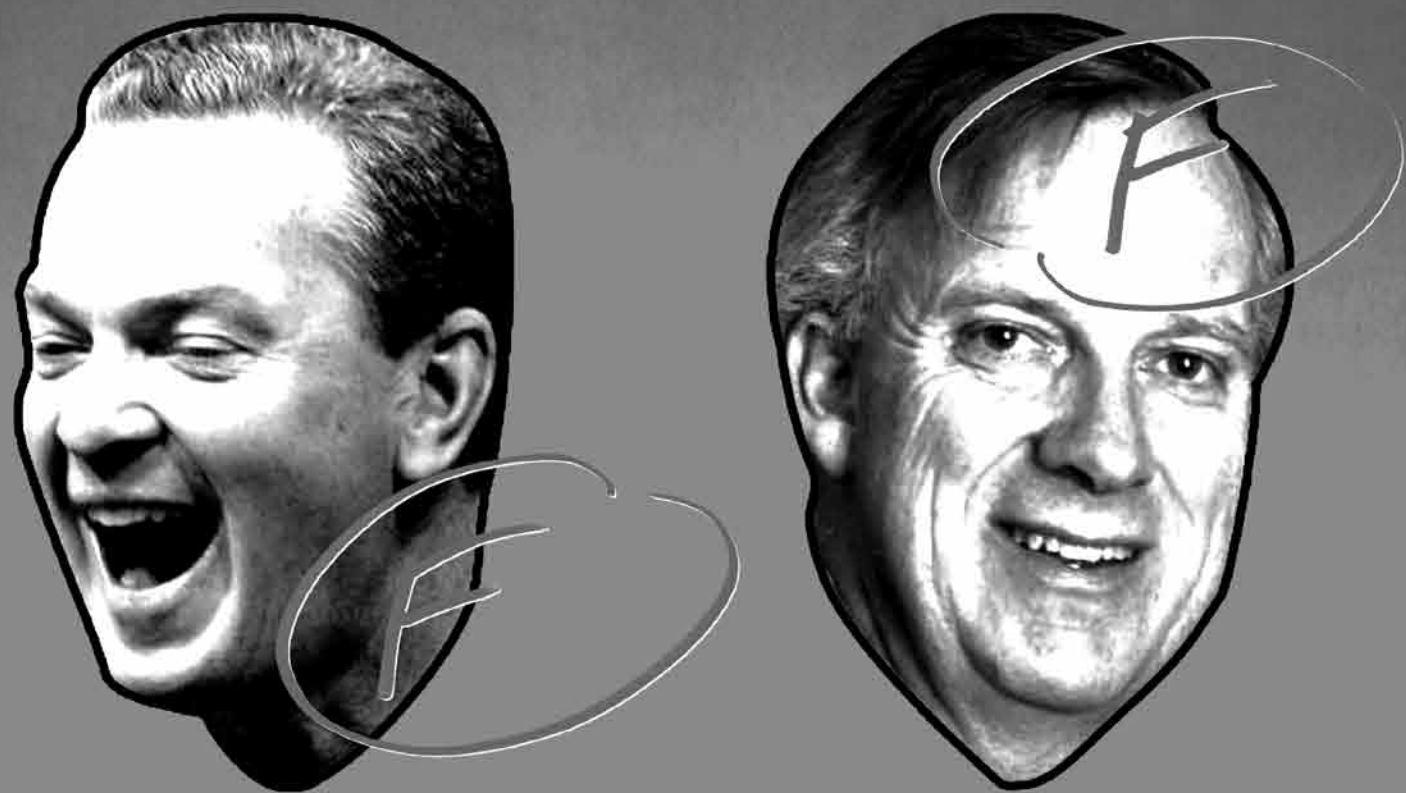
means allowing white gay people to define us - their ideas stereotypes, preferences, tastes, visions, fetishes, of what Asian black brown spice rice migrant - should be. If you don't want to live in their boxes, you have to make a new space for yourself and stitch your own identity anew, taking bits and pieces from whatever feels right, and experimenting until you find your own culture.

I wish I knew other politically aware gay People of Colour who wrestled with all their competing labels and identities, and refused to let one label swallow the others. I wish I'd had a mentor or someone to show me what to do. I had to learn the things I do now by making mistakes and gaining my own experience. Maybe in the future gay boys who are black and brown, and thinking about what that means to them in a majority white world, will

find something I wrote useful and say, 'Hey, we're all trying to navigate new paths and forge new identities... maybe we could work on them together in an organised way and learn from each other, instead of each having to remake a new lonely path on our own...'

“If I didn't define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people's fantasies for me and eaten alive.” ~ Audre Lorde

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RACISM, APPARENTLY SOMETHING POLITICAL

BY MARIAM GEORGE

"I'm not the token non-White female. I chose to join the Liberal Party of my own accord."

I'm writing as a Person of Colour (PoC), which unfortunately appears to be racist, as it is a way in which society has labelled me, and is not an indication of my true identity in any sense. Many argue the importance of self-identification and self-determination, but perhaps unknowingly, deprive others of such rights. Being non-white, female, a member of the Liberal Party, and on the executive of my Young Liberal Branch and the Sydney University Conservative Club, I have experienced racism from those who, to a large extent, define my Party as racist.

Those of the political Left call me "Tory Scum" and "a member of the Taliban" (a unique way in which the Right are defined in NSW). These are an insulting and misleading label of who I am. The fact is, though, I'm a dual citizen. My parents moved to Australia from Egypt with my brother and me in 1995, when I was one year old. I'm not White. I'm female, bilingual and I have strong religious beliefs. I also attended a Coptic Orthodox School, so never really saw the apparent negativity which some attributes of my identity may impose.

When I started my degree at the University of Sydney in 2012, I was labelled as a minority by many. To me, I self-identified as an Egyptian-born Australian who loves and belongs to Australia and could not possibly live in any other country. Yet, alongside the Australian within me, I embrace the Egyptian culture of my upbringing. People on Eastern Avenue have bombarded me with the importance of embracing different cultures and allowing people to have their own identity; they claim to be people who fight for 'the minority' and I have been identified to be part of this minority. At that time, I was not affiliated with any political party (nor a member of any club or society which advocated any political beliefs), and little did I know that once I signed up to the Liberals, I would be identified to be "identity confused" and "a contradiction."

Upon running for Undergraduate Fellow of Senate in my second semester of first year, people started knowing who I was and understanding my beliefs. Screenshots of my Facebook posts were sent off to *Honi*, only for me to receive phone calls on Sunday afternoons with questions about my

posts. None of those posts were ever published in *Honi*, and I still question why. I continued to express my beliefs, and in turn, I experienced further racism. Walking down Eastern Avenue and being approached by members of the Socialist Alternative (SALT) became some of the most insulting confrontations. SALT members, who I did not know, would speak to me, and when I pointed out that I was a Liberal and refused to continue listening to them, they would say, "but we stand up for people like you!" Implying that the Liberals don't stand up for people like me, also implying that I'm different and that I'm not like everyone else.

People started confronting me with the idea that I'm contradicting myself. Apparently, as a member of the Liberal party, I am affiliating myself with people who are nothing but "a racist bunch." I have never experienced racism around people of the Liberal Party, and rarely ever do around anyone of the Australian population. But it seems to be different around politically active members of the Left who oppose the Liberal Party. On a side note, one person who I worked with in my Local Council (who holds opposing views to mine) once answered a question of mine with, "Mariam, are you even Australian?!" Talk about racism!

I get all sorts of comments about my apparent contradiction, but the one which stood out to me most is something from only a week ago. "Are you the token Black female Liberal who can argue that you Liberals aren't racist? Especially because you're Middle Eastern, and White people consider all Middle Easterners, Arab." I will not name the person who offered this highly insulting remark. Having said that, I will point out that this person does not share any of my personal beliefs. This statement insults many Middle Easterners and Arabs as it classifies them as one and eliminates their own self-defined identity (not all Middle Easterners are Arab, Egyptians – also known as Copts, Persians, Kurds, Turks, Assyrians and – are some of the many distinct ethnicities in the Middle-East). This person also insults all 'White people' through a generalisation which implies ignorance and a lack of knowledge.

I'm not the token non-White female. I chose to join the Liberal Party of my

own accord, and do not advocate any beliefs other than those which are wholly mine. Finally, I would like to state one important thing to all those who take the initiative to classify all members of the Liberal Party as racist. The Liberal Party does not need a "token Black female Liberal" to "argue that Liberals aren't racist," because the Party's values, beliefs and members have proven it long ago. The Liberal Party is the party of the individual and accepts people of all ethnic identities as individuals; it does not distinguish between its members based on any factor apart from merit and values. Nonetheless, it appears as though this is the sole reason we're classified as racists. I say this because I'm a member and have self lived experiences.

Society should stop defining people and groups according to their own

labels. It is ridiculous that those who say they advocate for equality, self-identification, and self-determination, are the very people who create inequality and attempt to deprive others of their right to self-identify and self-determine. People with such actions, are hypocrites.

So as a female 'PoC' who has personal experiences of racism due to her political affiliation, I ask that people think before they speak, think about the consequences of their words. If you advocate for something, you need to recognise that a person who shares different views, is not an exception. I'm proud of who I am, as a human with melanin, as a successful woman, and as a Liberal who people call "Tory."

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AND SO I MADE MYSELF, IN MY OWN IMAGE

BY SUVARNA VARIYAR

I am about eight years old when I make my first alternate me; a dream concoction in the forefront of my brain. Me but better, without the endless bullying and the lunchtimes spent roaming aimlessly around the schoolyard.

She has ivory-white skin and straight, glossy auburn-brown hair. She was blue-eyed and fought evil with a shining sword.

She is perfect.

~

Racism is ingrained in the fabric of modern society. It's evolved with science and culture; drawing from movements and schools of thought as late as Darwinism. It entwined with religious prejudice to give us the Holocaust; the rise of Islamophobia.

But perhaps most cruelly, it's given rise to a generation of people who hate themselves.

~

The eyes become green, then purple, over six years. Her hair relaxes into soft curls, darkened into midnight black. She exchanges the sword for magic, invoked from deep within her soul, and she wreaks havoc with pain that echoes in her dulling eyes.

But though the skin tans – though it gains and loses scars and lines of stress – it takes another two years for it to darken.

I'm nineteen years old, and she's still only a light mocha to whatever I am.

~

The population of India accounts for almost 18% of the world population. *Glee*, which claims to be a representation of diversity, has not a single person of Indian descent among the eighteen main characters over the first three seasons. They do, however, have two people of Jewish descent (the Jewish population accounts for 0.2% of the world population).

Even accounting for the fact that the show is American – people of Indian origin form 1% of the American population. Jewish people form 1.73% of it.

~

The first time I force myself to bend over and really look at my genital area, I've already watched porn (out of curiosity more than anything).

I shudder in disgust and never do it again.

The colours are all wrong, is all I can think, *all dirty and gross*.

It's still strange to receive oral. I feel like I'm waiting for someone to tell me that; that I'm the wrong colour, that I'm half-baked or wrong.

~

In *Wheel of Time*, the protagonists fight for the Light against the Dark One to save the



ILLUSTRATION BY JEN YI

world. I was one of the Aes Sedai in my head, studying in the White Tower to take down the darkness.

In *Star Wars*, Luke struggles not only to defeat the Dark Side, but to stop himself from turning to it.

All the fictional characters that I fall in and out of love with are beautiful and strong and pale.

I want to be beautiful and strong and pale.

I'm first called "exotic-looking" when I'm fifteen and I wonder why I can't just be pretty.

~

I used to love winter, despite the fact that I hate the cold.

In winter, my tan fades away, and I can almost pretend.

~

It's a common trend when people see someone who looks different, to base evaluation and opinion on their appearance.

My French teacher suggests I am speaking French with an Indian accent because of the type of "r" I am using. I pointed out that this is a regional idiosyncrasy of the South of France, where I went on exchange. She blinks in surprise and says "of course," like she was a fool not to realise.

I tell people my degree and they ask why I'm not doing Law or Medicine.

They exclaim that my parents must be disappointed in me when I say that I want to be a screenwriter.

I shrug and smile and don't tell them that, despite everything, my parents couldn't be prouder.

HANDS THAT CARVE

BY ANONYMOUS

I am an unearthed possibility.

a ragged portrait of parents' youth.

streaked chestnut with mother's hair and red with father's politics.

I am a homemade surprise of surmised, enterprising, equitable talents.

It's like inertia, and you my charging force, a Morse code of predetermined race and class. A farce.

a citizenship inebriation.

Ragged portraits have consequences so I am almost ESL, but hell, so are we.

a happy collateral

our intent unilateral, channelled, fanatical

into a lifetime host

boasting a grandfather's watery eyes that's

the apex of nothing. I am in love with manual cartography.

And absolved of tension,

dissolved itself in two parts ("but where are you from originally?"), but a heart's

lungs mapped with hospital charts

can coexist and one day

breathe alone

our squinting venture into parenthood.

we leave behind a person, its composite parts, so

dreams are tamed,

our flags, inflamed,

return a final time:

the damp earth from whence we came.

READING TO LEARN

BY ANONYMOUS

Dad read me paperbacks in his accent at night, and eventually I mouthed the words as he spoke them. I plucked his chest hair when he was reading sometimes and his pained yelps brought eternal giggles. Paying attention was never my strength. He was always a good sport.

I started reading before I was out of night-time nappies. I'm not sure if that's prodigious or alarming. I had highly developed compulsive rituals by the time I was 5, and sometimes I'd force myself to read a sentence multiple times before turning the page. And then read it backwards. And cross my eyes. And uncross. Four times. Eight times. Sixteen times.

--You screwed up. Start again.

Why?

Because I said so.

But I can't.

Yes you can. You have to. Don't tell anyone about me because they won't believe you. Only you can see me.--

From an outsider's perspective, obsessive compulsions probably look like a really quirky kid. I sat alone at lunchtime.

The first book I read was pink. The Runaway Pig, a paperback about a pig

who, unexpectedly, ran away. It was in the impulse buy section, next to the candy bars and lollipops. I discerned my vices at a young age.

I exchanged swear words with my friends who spoke Tagalog and Bengali. I'll give you poo if you give me bum. Or fart. Together, we were invincible. A giddy gang of tiny miscreants, drunk on power and apple juice boxes. Almost all of the teachers were White.

--Now try translating. Switch between the two. No one will believe that you think in Spanish.

But I do.

Just do it.

Si, yes. Hola, hello. Tengo que ir al baño. I have to go to the bathroom. Tengo que hacer esta cosa... I have to do this thing. Where I.. Pero lo tengo que hacer. But I have to do it. It like someone's forcing me to...

Stop that. What did I tell you?--

In 1998, my hand slipped and I pushed a pencil up my nose. The chunky kind they give to school kids whose fingers are too small to clasp a normal-sized HB. The teacher saw me and his accent was invented because only people on TV spoke like he did, so why was he pretending?

"Why did you do that? Did you slip?"

"Yeah. It hurts."

"Be careful. You could really hurt yourself."

Four hundred Boeing 747 engines at top speed could not have stopped me from doing what I did next.

--But he's watching.

No he's not.

But he will think I did it on purpose the first time.

Just do it. You have to.

But...

Go.--

Fake America Man was two students over, distracted. I picked up the pencil to make things even. I had to. I jabbed tip into my other nostril. Instant relief.

"HEY. I saw that. Why are you doing that?"

"I slipped."

A cold stare. He knows.

Oh no, oh no, he knows.

WHAT IF THEY WERE WHITE?

BY SURABI ALAUDDIN

What if a civil war broke out in New Zealand? What if White families from New Zealand faced persecution, human rights abuses, violence and uncertainty? What if their safety could not be assured if they stayed put? What if these families felt that they did not have a viable future in their home country?

What if these White families decided that they wanted to seek peace, safety and security? What if they decided to jump on boats and travel to Tasmania seeking asylum? What if in the chaos, violence and fear some did not bring their identity documents with them?

What if these White asylum seekers were Christian, spoke perfect English and had blonde hair and blue eyes?

Would these White, Christian asylum seekers be accused of being economic migrants, criminals, illegals or queue-jumpers?

Would these White Christian men, women and children be locked up

in offshore detention centres to be 'processed'?

Would they be detained indefinitely for years and years in unbearable conditions without adequate shelter, healthcare, water, sanitation or access to legal representation?

Would Australia expect White people to live in tents on Manus Island and Nauru in stifling heat and overcrowded conditions?

Would Australia send White people to a place where health services are so insufficient that a cut can lead to death?

Would Australia make White children and pregnant women queue for hours for food under the hot sun?

Would Australia give White asylum seekers less than 500ml of water to drink per person per day?

Would these White people have to struggle to gain telephone access so they can contact their families back in New Zealand?

Would Australia send White LGBT people to places where they will be persecuted for their sexuality?

Would Australia be OK with White men and women sewing their lips up? Going on hunger strikes?

Would the images of pretty blonde, blue-eyed children behind bars produce apathy among the Australian population?

Would Australia accept White children being told by guards they must expose their bodies in order to be allowed to shower for longer than two minutes?

If boat people were like 'us' and not 'different' would there even be an issue?

What if the 'issue' is as simple as a matter of race and religion?

If boat people were White and Christian, rather than people of colour and Muslim, would they be treated like they are now?

What if Australia's refugee policy is actually based on racism, prejudice and fear; rather than reasoned policy designed to save lives?

What if we are too afraid to admit that this is the case?

TW: VIOLENCE.

PLEASE LIBERATE ME

BY KUHEN DEVAN

Please liberate me.

Save me from my strict Indian parents, who love me and want what's best for me, who saved and worked hard and sacrificed everything, to bring me to a country where I could have a better life

Liberate me from my traditional ethnic upbringing. I'm blind to see the ties of culture and family, are shackles holding me back. Unbind my feet, tear off my headscarf.

I need a Western hero to show me how to live. Free me from my patriarchal society

I'm an Indian man, I only know how to rape women. "Get back in the kitchen, Indian woman! Know your place!"

I don't want to be like this, I want to be civilised like White people. I'm a poor Indian boy whose parents demand I get straight As and don't tell me they love me.

We all raise our kids the same way, and we all look the same too. I abort my female children. And stone them. And stop them from going out. And hack at their genitals. And marry them off. And disown them for being gay Teach me human rights. Take my sons and daughters away to give them a better life.

Why do you hesitate, Leftist? Is it political correctness? Or multiculturalism gone mad that stops you from condemning me? Why are you afraid to say that Western culture is better? Will you let me suffer when I need rescuing?

Brainwashed and broken, I don't know what's best for me. Teach me to be free. Liberate me.

You can't free other people, or tell them what's best for them. Paternalism is another kind of prison. I can only be freed by my own hand. The only kind of liberation worth having is the kind you make for yourself, choose for yourself, create for yourself. Anything else is a cage made by well-meaning people.

I can liberate myself.

But me who will liberate from you ?



YOU DON'T SPEAK ENGLISH: 4 THINGS INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW

BIBEK GURUNG HAS HANDY TIPS FOR ALL YOU 'CASH MONEY' INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OUT THERE.

Welcome! Or should I say Namaste and Ni Hao! Maybe there are other countries out there but I'm sure that about covers most of them. As an international student myself, let me just say to you – Congratulations! Either through stunning academic achievements or industrial strength bribery you've managed to join one of the top ten universities in Camperdown! Now, as that famous Russian guy said, "Unhappy families are all different and happy families are the same," or something. Whatever, I don't read. So to make sure your time in USYD is a happy one, here are some pieces of advice.

Saving money? Don't worry about it!

Being an international student comes with tremendous privileges. You get to contribute to the beautification of this great institution by paying at least \$16,000 (Australian dollars) per semester! And since many of you will be failing, you'll get to pay for a lot of those! Of course, this is no problem as we are all obviously children of oil tycoons so can pay these amounts without blinking. Which is great because you don't get student discounts, like concession pricing for public transport. What, are you really going to ride on the train like a peasant?! Don't make me laugh into my jewel encrusted handkerchief.

You don't speak English

So you grew up in a British colony in Asia that has been speaking English since before Captain Cook set foot on Australia? Not good enough, mate. You won't be speaking the right kind of English (for example, you should only say the word 'but' at the end of sentences). I can't count the number of times I've

had people come up to me and say 'Your English is really good!' (Which is weird since Asians are good at counting, amirite?) Since I've been practicing speaking English for the last two decades, it's wonderful to have this affirmation from people who are the experts.

You'll have diverse collaborations

It's amazing the kind of people you'll get to work with - anyone from a Taiwanese to Shanghaniese. Obviously, coming to a new country where you have zero social networks, a completely different cultural reference pool, and knowledge of a completely different set of cultural norms is hard. So you may be surprised to learn that the onus is on YOU to reach out to others. After all, if domestic students who already come to university with friends they've known for years are able to, why can't you? And even though there may be people of similar backgrounds that you can relate to, associating with them means you're being 'unapproachable' and 'isolationist.' After all, you haven't succeeded socially until you've made White domestic friends.

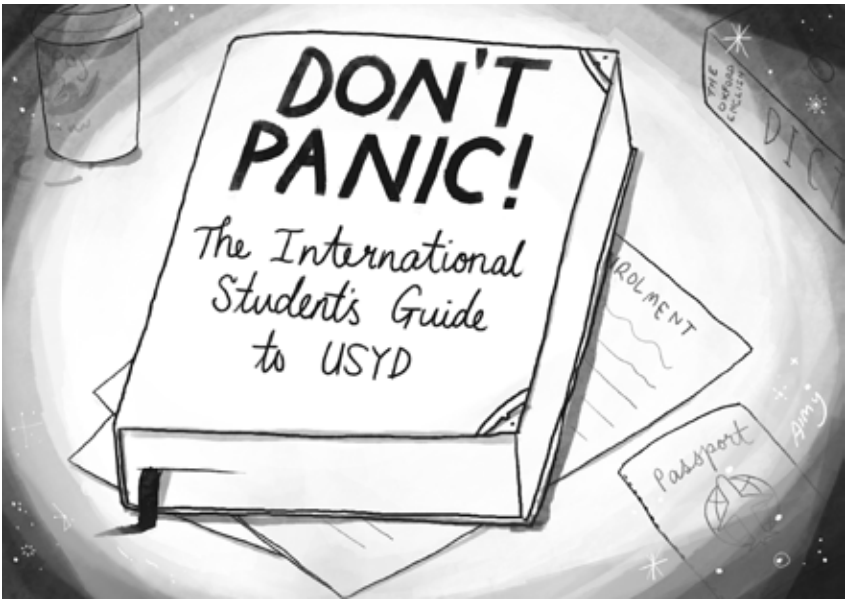


ILLUSTRATION BY AIMY NGUYEN

Get ready for an exciting love life (especially if you're a woman)

You get to be showered with words like 'exotic' or praised for having 'lovely almond shaped eyes' (men, you will also get that a lot, which is GREAT...). It's especially fulfilling if you like being pursued by people who treat you as an object of tokenised sexual fetishisation. It really doesn't matter where you come from or how you look. As long as you look *different*, you'll always get to be someone's kink. And at least in that, there's something for everyone.

WHITE FEMALE COMEDIAN USES GENDER CARD TO MAKE RACIST JOKES

CONNIE YE DIDN'T LAUGH OUT LOUD.

In a shocking turn of events at Tuesday night's open-mic night, comedian Jane Summers faced an overwhelmingly hostile crowd at the local RSL when she played her popular gender card to embark upon a series of highly charged racial rants.

Topics included 'Those Refugees', 'Immigrants' and 'Solutions to the Middle East', each alleged joke being prefaced with the disclaimer "As a strong independent woman". After the disastrous performance was received with stunned silence, Ms Summers gave an unsolicited interview backstage.

"I don't understand, my personal experiences of marginalization should automatically make all my

bigoted observations hilarious," she said.

"My liberal childhood upbringing in an all white suburb gives me the perfect platform to champion the disadvantages of people who may not look like me, sound like me, think like me or live like me, right?" she wondered.

However, comedy-goers were none too pleased at Ms Summers' choice of material.

"Critics call her edgy, we call her a fucking idiot," one regular noted.

DERAILMENT BINGO

I have [insert ethnicity] friend	Not all white people!	Learn to take a joke.	FREEDOM OF SPEECH!!!!	I'm sorry you were offended.
Stop being so emotional and oversensitive.	You have a victim complex.	There are more important issues.	You just hate all white people.	Stop playing the race card.
That's reverse racism!	That happened ages ago.		I'm 1/16th [insert ethnicity]	Get over it!
I can't be racist, I'm not white.	I don't see race.	Why are you so obsessed with race?	I'm [insert non-racial minority], I can't be racist.	We live in a post-racial society.
It's racist to talk about racism.	If you don't educate me, how can I learn?	If you weren't so angry, people would listen to you.	But that happens to me too.	I haven't had it easy either, you know.



IN OTHER NEWS

BY 'ETHNIC GORL COLLECTIVE': CONNIE YE, AARUSHI SAHORE & ASTHA RAJVANSHI

Mixed Race Law Student Joins Prestigious Law Firm; Gets Stung by WASPs

White Student Trying On Friend's Headscarf Accidentally Co-Opted Onto University Brochure

Indian Girl On Tindr Narrowly Avoids Being Asked If She Can 'Bend It Like Beckham'

White Man visits Taj Mahal; Finds Himself

Member of White Australia Party Asks Refugee to Meet Him Halfway; Literally

White Grandmother Rents 'The Minority Report' for Cultural Awareness Week

White Schoolboy Trades In Token Black Friend for Extra Tokens

White Actors from 'Best Exotic Brown-People-As-Servants Hotel' Win Multiple Oscars

Key Proponents Of Section 18C Repeal Revealed: Cosmetic Companies "It's not viable to cater for that many colours, that's only a lipstick thing"

Andrew Bolt Questions Legitimacy of Asylum Seeker Claims: "If I can't see your persecution you've obviously made it up"

White Boy Contracts Jungle Fever; Compulsively Dates South Asians



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ILLUSTRATION BY WANYI XIN (CABBAGE)