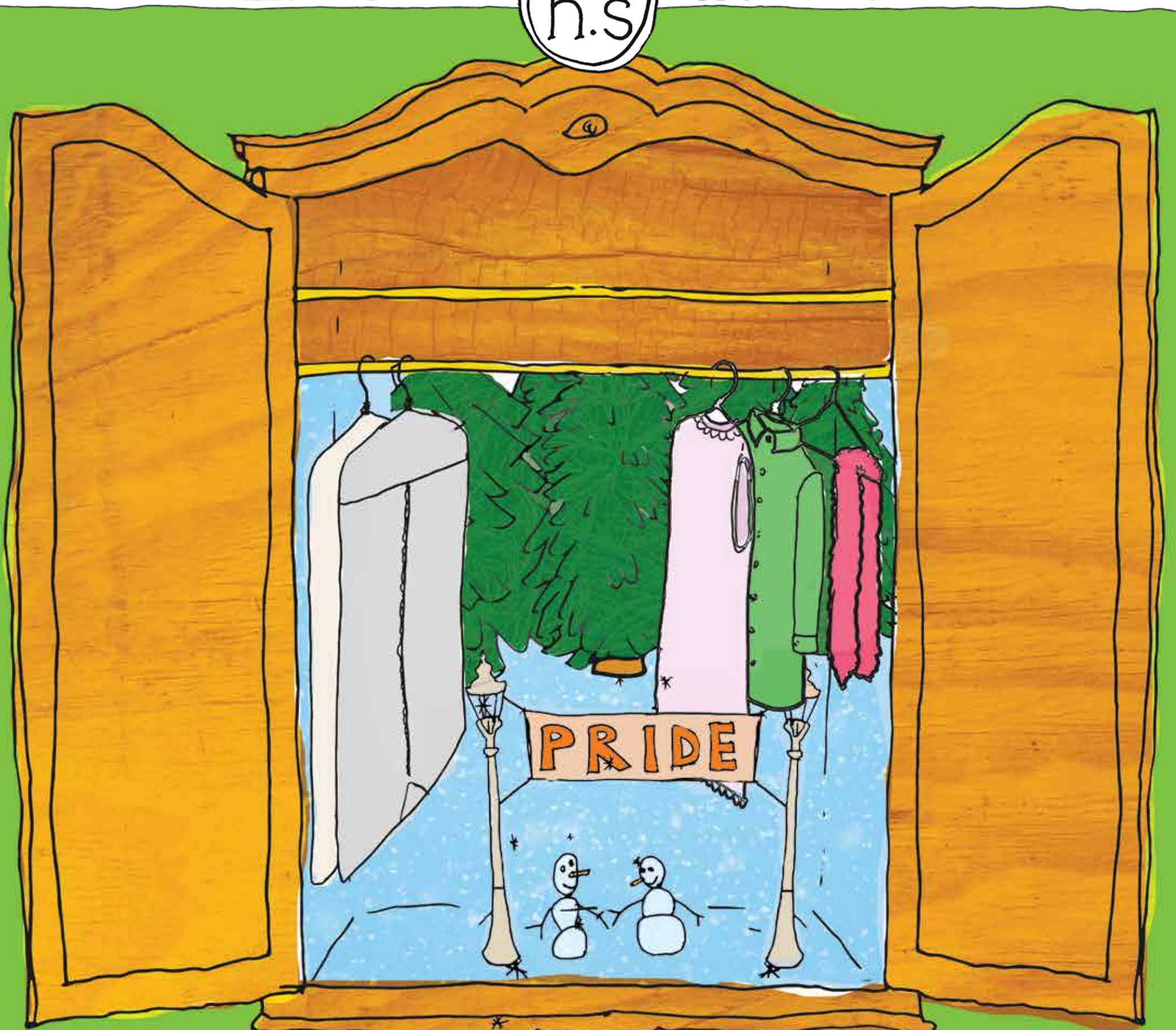
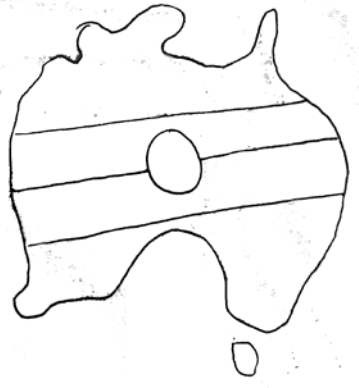


HONI SOIT



QUEER HONI SEMESTER TWO

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Acknowledgement

The editors of *Honi Soit* and the SRC acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. *Honi Soit* is written, printed, and distributed on Aboriginal land. If you are reading this, you are standing on Aboriginal land. Please recognise and respect this.

We acknowledge both our privilege and our obligation to redress the situation as best we can: to remember the mistakes of the past, act on the problems of today, and build a future for everyone who calls this place home, striving always for practical and meaningful reconciliation.



Editorial

This edition of *Honi* is a collection of contributions from some of the most diverse and marginalised students on campus. In particular, the articles represent opinions and perspectives from some of the most traditionally underrepresented groups in the queer community, with a feature spread on asexuality and multiple pieces on bisexual erasure and trans* experiences.

Exploration and celebrations of gender and sexuality through media and the arts is an important tradition to uphold in the queer community. Last week I had the privilege of performing alongside a number of incredibly talented people in Queer Revue. The show was a lighthearted and often self-deprecating take on many issues in queer culture, but maintained its mandate of educating the audience and flying in the face of the structures that oppress its cast. The band was the only one in recent memory that included no cis men. The show proved just how successful that model can be, with sold out shows every night.

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Thoughts, feelings and notices

This catering is just awful

Dear Nick Cater,

We would like to apologise profusely. We have all read your criticism of our work and have come to see the error in our narrow-minded ways. How downright oppressive of us to constrain your right to free speech, and hamper the emotional fortitude of the next generation with our "mental tyranny"! In acknowledgment of our many mistakes, we will take the time to respond to each of your well-founded, and definitely not hilariously defensive, claims.

The first "gotcha" moment was in your identification of the "paradox of minority politics" which, to quote your eloquent words in everyone's favourite conservative rag, The Australian, is one where "marginalised members of society form a comfortable majority." For years, we have mistakenly taken power to be more nuanced than the calculus of "how many white straight men versus everyone else". Foolishly, until the brilliance you espoused in your article, we considered structural barriers to distribute power in varied ways. We didn't realise that minority politics is actually about lumping together all the marginalised members of society into one homogenous, majority-forming mass, nor the fact that since women are a statistical majority, it must be the case that we hold 51% of the power. We can now see that the 95% male Liberal cabinet is a justified and considered political response to the rampant reverse sexism plaguing Australia.

Although we were in tears (true to form, as the victims we are) over the brilliance of the "paradox" you identified, it was when you so subversively turned our own language of privilege against us that we were brought to our knees in wide-eyed adoration. We simply didn't know that "victimhood in today's universities is a position replete with privilege and status." Now aware of the status that "victimhood" gives us, we promise to use it more respectfully. Instead of abusing it in sexual assault trials that have the lowest rate of conviction of any criminal offence, with 70% going unreported, or to gain sympathy when two women a week are killed in violent relationships as the government closes down access to shelters, we will act less vulnerably – as you clearly did when you bravely took a thousand words to articulate why the broad left is victimising you. You should be proud to carry on the tradition of fragile men taking to national media outlets to fight the plague of victimhood – here, we also spare a thought for Alan Jones, Fred Nile and Tony Abbott.

Unfortunately we could not sustain all your examples, so you started to look further afield to the other pitiful left wing sympathisers – Facebook and the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Gone are the days when we could enjoy graphic photos of lions mauling gazelles or consult a book of statistics without, god forbid, having to endure a one-sentence warning about offensive language. Vale, the Lucky Culture!

Most crushing is when you leave us with the image of a caged youth, bemoaning the days of "free range childhoods" that have been "shut down." It is the final imagery that pulled at our irrational, hysterical, easily offended, oestrogen-laden heart strings. You spoke of "peanut butter banned from school lunches" – damn those freedom-hating five year olds who suffer from anaphylaxis! – and the greatest loser of them all, "fast food stores" – the once-great multi-billion dollar transnational industry that has forever been strangled by the tyranny of small, student-run university groups.

Mr Cater, we are so sorry. It must be difficult to live in a world where no one will listen; to

be left shouting into the void with only the readership of one of Australia's top-selling papers to hear your voice; to live in a world where the whole world is being unknowingly crippled by the Sydney University Wom*n's Collective. We are sorry you feel we have more power than we ever could have hoped for, and that the kyriarchy keeps you up at night (it keeps us up too!). Know that we have read your concerns, we have listened, and we really do not care. You close with "discomfort drives education"; maybe you should channel the discomfort expressed in your article and go educate yourself? Try Celeste Liddle, bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Amy McQuire - literally anyone who does not write for The Australian with you (and before you ask, the Daily Telegraph doesn't count).

With love,
The University of Sydney Wom*n's Collective

Flawed analogies

Dear Honi,

Lamise Hamouda's recent opinion piece ("Linking Activism Across Settler-Colonial Nations") was a misguided use of Indigenous Australian imagery to draw parallels between British settlement in Australia and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

To equate the two is to simplify one of the most complicated and bitter conflicts of our time. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not simple, and attempts to present it as such only leads to ignorance and an inability to discuss it honestly, openly and critically.

Jewish presence in Israel is not a result of colonisation, nor exploitation. For Jews, there was no 'mother-country' equivalent to the British who landed on Australian shores. Israel was their native homeland from which they had been forcibly removed. For the Jews who arrived in Ottoman or Mandate Palestine, the move was not to exploit the resources of the land, nor to dispossess its Palestinian inhabitants, but to flee racial and religious persecution.

But by no means were they all European, nor white, as Hamouda's comparison implicitly implies. Almost half of Israel's population were Jews from Arab lands, forcibly expelled from their homes almost overnight after already living as second-class citizens, barred from representation in government and areas of employment.

I outline this historical persecution not to deny the suffering experienced by Palestinians, but to highlight the settler-colonial comparison as inaccurate and riddled with simplifications.

The conflict is one between two indigenous groups, both entitled to self-determination and freedom from persecution. The violence stemming from the conflict is not inflicted by, nor suffered by one group alone. Instead, Israelis and Palestinians are subjected to a cycle of violence; sometimes more, sometimes less, but ever-present and constantly looming until a peaceful compromise is reached.

It's sad that the images that Hamouda takes away are of tear gas and flattened homes, and I myself take away images of suicide bombings and rockets, but I would much rather think of efforts to promote genuine coexistence as the forces that shape our view of the situation. A history of violence should not be used to attribute blame to either group, as both sides

are simultaneously perpetrators and victims. Rather, it should be a platform to advocate for an end to conflict, and the promoting of a solution which will recognise the rights of both native peoples.

Ironically for Hamouda, Jews and Indigenous Australians share much in common regarding their native lands. Both groups place land at a focal point of their religions and mentalities, which were both developed whilst living upon it. Both Judaism and Aboriginal spiritualities make reference to specific natural landmarks, and value their land in general. It's offensive to suggest that Jews are foreign to Israel, and it's completely false.

Undoubtedly, I agree with Hamouda that Australia needs to recognise its past to right historical wrongs. This however, won't be achieved by drawing parallels with a foreign conflict which possesses few relevant or helpful connections to the situation here. It only seeks to simplify and distort a complex issue which requires mutual understanding to achieve a peaceful outcome.

Mark Rapaport,
B Arts III

The debate is over

Dear Honi,

Michael Davis's letter against marriage equality should not have been published. As satisfying as it is to utter "free speech" and other buzzwords, it is common knowledge that free speech is a principle governing one's relationship with the government, not with a student newspaper. Anyone who disagrees on this point may direct their grievance to an encyclopaedia, because the term doesn't mean what they think it means.

To decline to publish someone would not be a violation of free speech, but to publish homophobia is a violation of Honi's duty to represent student interests. Honi should no more publish letters against marriage equality than it should publish letters advocating any sexist, racist, or ableist idea.

The agenda-setting power of media shouldn't be gainsaid. Channels 7 and 10, recognising this power, have both refused to air certain commercials against marriage equality. Honi is often critical of mainstream media, but for an allegedly progressive newspaper to assist in the dissemination of prejudice when even mainstream media corporations know better is immensely disappointing. All material on this issue either helps people or hurts them, and every editor is responsible for whether they publish helpfulness or hurt. I hope the editors of this newspaper take that responsibility more seriously in the future.

The rest of this letter I address directly to Davis.

I don't intend to convince you of the righteousness of the marriage equality campaign. Everybody knows your mind isn't changing. You're clearly aware of the reasons you're wrong as you allude to some of them. It would be futile to explain what you already know but don't care about. But I do intend to raise some concerns with your letter.

And I am deeply concerned by that disgusting letter. Phrases like "You can do it - we believe

in you!" are beyond condescending. And you - who advocates legal discrimination, who is on the wrong side of history, who tells us what rights we have while trying to keep our rights from us, who stubbornly rejects reason - you have no right to be condescending. That you would tell us how we should respond to our own victory against you, to attempt to dictate the terms of your own defeat, is astoundingly arrogant. You cannot tell us what opportunities to seize when you are the one who wants to deny us opportunities.

Yet hubris, as baffling as yours may be, is the least of your transgressions. You are haughty, but far worse you are homophobic. I will not, as you plead, give you "a little bit of credit for at least not meaning to be homophobic." How dare you ask for that? Whether you mean to or not, you are being homophobic. Whether you mean to or not, you make the lives of same sex attracted people worse. Whether you mean to or not, you exacerbate the suffering and indignity of people who have never wronged you. You don't get credit for not meaning to, you get an obligation to fix your mistakes.

You claim to want "to see same-sex couples enjoy meaningful, loving relationships without fear of reprisal." I don't believe you. I don't believe you because while you say that, you agitate against us. You support a status quo which devalues our relationships, which reasserts our inferior social position, and you align yourself with an anti-campaign which, whether you consider yourself homophobic or not, you are surely aware contains no small quantity of people who genuinely hate us.

And besides that, the campaign against marriage equality costs lives. Public messages against marriage equality are read by vulnerable, isolated, frightened children, children who are made to feel inferior and despised by the arguments put forward by you and people like you. And too many of these children kill themselves because of how you and your kind make them feel. And don't you dare tell me that children aren't hurt by the messages from your side, I know how they feel because I was one of them. So when you tell us to "minimize bad feelings" I am outraged because it's you and your ilk who are making people feel bad, not us. It's the epitome of hypocrisy and you should be ashamed. You might retort that being called a homophobe makes you feel bad, and I will retort that I don't care. You should feel bad for making people feel bad.

You see, this isn't a civil debate we're having, as much as the right wing likes to pretend it is. It's an attack. It's an attack on some of the most vulnerable people in our society and it has real consequences. There was a debate for a time, but it's over. The arguments have been made and, as you concede, we won. Most Australians support marriage equality. You know you can't win, you can only capitulate or prolong the suffering. And whether or not you change your mind, only one of those options is humane. So have a heart.

Yours sincerely,

William Edwards
Gay, Proud, and Mad as Hell

A Rose By Any Other Name Doesn't Smell As Sweet To Me

Andy Zephyr on preferred pronouns and navigating university life.

Given that students whose experiences of university are daunting and challenging are those most likely to drop out, I would have thought that the University of Sydney would want to provide those students with the greatest possible degree of support. But since enrolling at Sydney University, I've had a series of difficult interactions with the administration in trying to improve how it can engage with my gender identity, under my new name and pronouns. Transgender students such as myself are likely to be extremely frustrated when dealing with the university's apparently non-existent policy in relation to these issues.

After enrolling at USyd, I am given a whole bunch of information as to how the university has classified me. They ask me for my "gender", but only give me options for sex, ignoring the large gender spectrum and failing to give me correct options. They also do not give me the opportunity to skip or not provide an answer.

My UniKey and my university email address are both based off my legal name, which means that I will engage with people on Blackboard under my legal name, as well as submitting all my assignments under that name. The university asks you for your preferred title, and gives you over 20 titles to pick from,

"The university asks you for your preferred title, and gives you over 20 titles to pick from, including 'King', but no gender neutral options."

including "King", but no gender neutral options. Do we really have more Kings on campus than students who'd want to use a gender non-specific title? I call the University to question their online forms, but nothing comes back. I weep after hours spent at the Arts desk, trying to be patient and negotiate a middle-ground. The administrators do not budge.

At O-Week I get my ACCESS card. They ask me, "what name would you like on it?", and I am so touched that I am ready to cry. I am smiling in my ACCESS card photo. I begin to sign up to clubs with my name. I get a few confused looks, but have confidence and the legitimacy of my ACCESS card on my side. I get asked, "Is that your real name?" a few too many times. I remember the clubs that don't have people who ask this, or who ask for my preferred pronouns.

I go past the SRC stall, and sign up for collectives (like the Wom*n's Collective) that acknowledge the diversity of the

up at the end to talk to the tutor. They remind me this lesson counts as part of attendance. I try to remind them about respect for gender identity, but they feel the unease and awkward balance of power, and remember me as a problem student. I feel less confident about the second week of class.

The use of my pronouns is subject to the number of people who respect and have engaged with transgender people before. In some subjects I am lucky, like Gender Studies. In other subjects, I struggle to convince the tutor, let alone the students, to use my pronouns, rather than the ones they assume or want to assign to me. I see other students who get "X" gender markers on their passport, who change their legal names through Births, Deaths and Marriages, and I envy them. I hope for the financial situation where I can afford that.

To counter these difficulties, I attend the Queer Collective meetings religiously. It's running a campaign to try and get people to engage with this difficulty for transgender students. I hope that it works, because I want to get through my degree. Five to six years here means that I've got a lot of bullshit to face if university doesn't listen and engage with me on these issues.

I live on my own. I struggle for employment, because no one wants to hire someone who's transgender. I move across half the campus to use a bathroom that I know will be safe for me, rather than fearing embarrassment when cisgender people shoo me out of their bathrooms. I fear physical assault, which I've faced four times in my travels to and from university. I struggle with my mental health, the way society treats me, and whether or not I'm going insane—as well as my diagnosed illnesses.

I see how much little things affect my desire to stay at uni and continue my studies—little things like my name, and acknowledgement of my gender and pronouns. These things would make me more comfortable in classroom situations and in group work assignments. If the University would deal with these issues appropriately I would save a large amount of energy that I expend trying to fight them—energy that could go towards studying, or socialising, and being part of the university campus.

T. Kiya / Flickr /
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Baby bisexuality and me

'Queer Imposter Syndrome' is hurting the bisexual community, writes Grace Franki.

In 2014 I started uni as a baby baby bisexual: underage and only recently out of the closet. I had to wait a whole year before diving into my coming of age as a queer lady. This year I attended my first Girthling at Q Bar, my first SHADES party, and I am writing for my first *Queer Honi*. I'm learning more about gender politics, my identity and what it means to be out at university. And for the last year or so, I have been in a monoamorous, heterosexual relationship.

My sexual identity is at the core of my self-definition, but there is no normative pattern to which I can conform in order to be read as bisexual. While they are problematic, there are accepted scripts for dress, speech and behaviour we can conform to in order to be read as gay or straight. But I haven't yet found socks in the colours of the bisexual flag.

Performative indicators aside, the tendency to assume monosexuality means that even one's partner is usually an unreliable measure of their sexuality. Indeed, this problem for many bisexual folk is twofold. In exclusive relationships, we don't have a right to an identity that extends beyond the gender of our partners, but if we simultaneously express multiple facets of our identity, we confirm the biphobic opinions that we're all promiscuous, greedy or just experimenting.

These suspicions are pervasive: bisexual wom*n are edgy Gender Studies majors; bisexual men are afraid to come out as gay.

When I was single, it was easy to tell anyone who questioned the validity of my identity where to shove it. However, now that I'm in a long-term relationship with a cis man, I find it harder to correct the assumptions made by my friends and

family. It's not that I think they're right—far from it—it's more that the assumption that I'm straight is one from which I benefit.

As a cis white wom*n, I already have privilege in the queer community. The bisexual erasure I experience because of my boyfriend is infuriating. But it also means that I am often exempt from the same discrimination and oppression suffered by many others in the queer community because of their gender or the gender of their partners. I like feeling included in queer spaces, but at the same time I worry about taking up too much space.

Do I have a right to complain about a privilege? Doing so seems self-absorbed and unhelpful, taking up space in a discourse in which far more important issues are already crowded out.

My identity hasn't changed, but the queer imposter syndrome I experience means that I now feel like my opinions are less welcome, my experiences less valid. I am no longer perceived as an authentic representative of the B in the acronym.

Ultimately, though, the loss isn't only mine. The queer community is founded on diversity and acceptance. When we tacitly allow the exclusion or erasure of bisexual people we lose some of the very substance that makes our community powerful.

From The Block to Port Botany and beyond

Andy Mason on queer solidarity across activist movements.

If you're like me, a queer greenie-hippie-radical-commie-anarchist-lunatic, you probably went to see the movie *Pride* when it came out last year, and you probably cried your eyes out at the bit where all the coal miners turn up by the busload to march with the queer kids who've been supporting them through their bitter fight with the infamously conservative Thatcher government. The film certainly has its shortcomings—it ignores the role that queer and trans activists of colour have played in the movement and treats the very real issues of misogyny in queer organising in a rather patronising way. Despite this, the display of unlikely solidarity between groups as different as inner-city queer activists and regional coal communities is a moving and inspiring example of what can be achieved when we work together.

Something of this spirit has recently been realised in relationships between the queer community and other community campaigns in Sydney.

Young queer and trans people, including many USyd students, have been a crucial support base for the Redfern Aboriginal Tent Embassy (RATE) since it was established on the Block in Redfern last year. Reasons for supporting RATE are varied and personal but clearly young queer and trans people, who suffer

appalling rates of homelessness, can relate to Aboriginal people's struggle for secure and affordable housing. RATE has also provided a temporary home for many of us—Aunty Jenny Munro and the other activists at the Embassy are more than happy to have non-Aboriginal supporters at the camp as long as we're willing to contribute. Queer folks have helped by cooking meals, washing dishes, building tents, building a community garden, doing overnight security shifts, getting firewood and keeping the sacred fire burning. The

sacred fire is the symbolic embodiment at the Embassy of the continuing strength of Aboriginal culture in the face of colonisation, and was started with ashes from the fire at the first Tent Embassy established by iconic land rights activist Kevin Gilbert in 1972 on the lawns of Parliament House in Canberra. The fact that young queer and trans people have helped keep that fire going for the last 15 months symbolises the strength of the relationship between us and the Aboriginal activists with whom we've

connected through the Embassy. Queer students have also been supporting the 97 dockworkers down at Port Botany who were recently sacked via text message. The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) has been holding a community picket outside the port since the sacking, demanding that all the laid-off workers be reinstated. Queer students have made several trips down to the ports to support the workers, and also contributed several hundred dollars to the campaign.

Our solidarity with the MUA and RATE was repaid at a rally in Sydney for marriage equality a few weeks ago, when Aunty Jenny from RATE and Paul McAleer from the MUA spoke to the crowd to express the solidarity of Aboriginal people and the port workers with the struggle for equal recognition of same-sex relationships under the law. In an environment where the Abbott government openly refuses to do the right thing, and the Labor party can't be bothered either, we need all the allies we can get. We should work to build our relationships with Aboriginal activist groups, unions, and the rest of the community if we want to see a world without queerphobia.



Image: Georgia Kriz



Fuck 'normal', I'm queer!

Lucy Watson reflects on Gayby Baby and discussions on difference.

With all the uproar around the screenings of *Gayby Baby* last week, one thing to arise out of the debate that I found particularly interesting was this fixation on the idea of normality.

In the film, 12-year-old Ebony ponders whether she, and her family, are normal. In his column last Wednesday, notorious dickhead Piers Akerman used the dictionary to tell Ebony that no, she's not normal.

Later, we had Penny Sharpe deliver an impassioned speech to Parliament insisting that Ebony is normal, that Sharpe is normal, her kids are normal, we're all fucking normal.

But what's with the insistence on normality? Who wants to be normal?!

From a young age, we're taught that we're all different, no two people are alike. We're taught to celebrate that, to embrace our diversity. So why now do we want to be just like everybody else?

From a theoretical perspective, there are a whole host of issues with the

concept of normal. It's generally based on the idea that there is a particular state the majority of people should be in, and if they're not, they should desire to be. The concept is born from a medical perspective: that sick people are abnormal (or pathological), and healthy people are normal. But if you were to ask everyone in the room around you whether they had at least one ailment, of any sort, currently, I bet you'll find that the majority of people will say yes. So who's normal now?

An emphasis on normality implies that people who are not normal are lesser human beings. Are you worth less than I am because you have the flu and I don't? And herein lies the major issue: normal is an idea created by those in power, to tell those they oppress that they're not worth as much.

So why should I aspire to be normal, when in the past it's really just been a bunch of old white men telling me I'm not like them?

With movements like marriage equality, we're falling into step with

normality in order to be accepted. But we should be rejecting the idea that we should be treated differently if we're not normal, because normal is an invented concept that is rarely based in empirical fact, and just elevates the status of oppressors.

I get that it's easy to want to be like everyone else, because being different sucks. But it shouldn't be the way we go about achieving rights, because ultimately, it means that we've lost. Sure, in some ways, by including gay people in the definition of marriage, we've expanded the idea of normal relationships to include gay people, but at what cost?

By assimilating into normality, we leave out those who can't, or won't, and our movement, and community, is weakened as a result. Not only that, those who do assimilate face always being defined by the thing that makes them not quite normal. Because Akerman is kind of right: if normal is a majority thing, gay people will probably never be normal. Left handed people will never be normal. Twins will

never be normal. We might "appear" normal, but scratch the surface, you'll discover our abnormality, and we'll forever be pegged as the odd one out.

So if we're going to be the slightly odd one out, why not go the whole hog and reject the concept entirely?

There's nothing wrong with being queer, or with having queer parents. It doesn't make you normal, but Piers Akerman probably thinks he's normal, and who'd want to be in the same boat as him?!

As a community, we should spend more time celebrating our difference, rather than hiding it in order to fit in with the people who have spent most of living history telling us we're not like them, and, as a result, deserve to be punished.

Normal is boring, and oppressive. We can't assimilate into liberation. Liberation comes from embracing queerness, and celebrating difference.

5 Safe Sex Experiences From a Boring Queer Girl

Amelia Zolt brings you tales from the toilets of Zanzibar and the Queerspace.

1. I am losing my virginity to a long-term girlfriend in the toilets of Zanzibar because we both misunderstood whose house we were going back to. Neither of us know what kind of tool we are supposed to use to make this safe, but we are both horny virgins so we don't consider it to be a massive deal. We repeat this in the car one hour later with no extra safety except maybe one of us is wearing a seatbelt.

2. I am Googling one day and I find out that apparently when you put your mouth on someone's genitals you should have plastic, even if it's a vulva. They are called 'dental dams' which sounds like some kind of tool of torture. They are sold nowhere within a 50 kilometre radius of my house so that isn't going to happen. YouTube says it's SUPER EASY to make one out of a condom and I think that's very typical of YouTube with its penis and maybe YouTube should try eating out with a broken condom in its mouth before it says that.

3. I am having semi-regular casual sex with strangers and my friend who is studying Pharmacy tells me that my suburb has the highest rate of gonorrhoea in Sydney, but also I reject this because I misguidedly think that vulvas cannot give my mouth a disease, and dental dams feel like putting down a tarpaulin before sex in an episode of *Dexter*. I wonder what diseases I can get from thigh to genital contact. My pharmaceutical friend says that dental dams have been proven to be very ineffective and that gives me a further excuse not to use them. (Solid one, m8.)

4. I have sex with a penis for the first time. I have nothing to do with the safety—I consider it responsibility of the owner. I presume it works because I find no disease in the following weeks. By the way, sex with a penis is much more straightforward, which is apt, because straight people.

5. I go into Queerspace to heat up my lunch that my awesome dad made for me and I see that there are free dental dams and condoms and I think that I will come back. I come back later and the people inside giggle because I make a beeline for the sex stuff and then immediately leave. I accidentally only grab condoms so it's all been for nothing. I wonder if I'm really supposed to wear gloves while I finger people. That seems very clinical.



Artwork: Zita Walker



Survival is insufficient, trying isn't enough

Oliver Moore's experiences of transition and transphobia.

I show a draft of a coming out letter to my friend. "Why do you want to fight everyone all the time?" he asks.

Another transwoman is murdered in the United States. Her name is Tamara Dominguez. Her killers will likely never be brought to justice. "This is an epidemic," the trans community tells the media. I wonder if my gender will be respected at my funeral. I wonder if the epidemic will be over by then.

I start hormone replacement therapy. I have never been happier or more at home in my body. I think of all the time I spent hating it, hating myself, hating the nameless thing that was wrong with me throughout high school and wish I could show teenage me what I look like now. What I feel like now. That it does get better. A sea of strangers take it upon themselves to ferret out my "real gender". Anxiety starts to swell up in my chest every time I catch a sideways glance or have to wait at a crossing. A group of men corner me in a public bathroom I make the mistake of trying to use. I stop leaving the house.

Eventually, I go see a counsellor. She tells me the name on my birth certificate is beautiful, and asks why I would ever want to change it. Partway through our session she asks "do you wish you weren't transgender?"

Caitlyn Jenner comes out. A friend's girlfriend asks if I want to write an article about it for her

paper. I am the only trans person she knows.

I think about what it would be like to be stealth. (This is an improvement: I used to think about heading back into the closet.) To live out my life free of curious glances and unwanted questions. To be accepted for who I am without hesitation. I wonder what I'm going to look like when this winding journey of chemical modification has reached its peak. I look at real estate in cities on the other side of the world. I think about visibility. I think about hiding.

A friend tells me about a small child reading her as male in the supermarket. I research surgeons and bind my chest tighter.

At a restaurant, I ask where the bathroom is and am directed to the men's. A small seed of warmth swells in my chest, until I remember. I wait until I get home to pee.

I have an incredibly supportive group of friends, but am lonelier than I have ever been. There is something in my experiences that they never fully grasp, something I can't explain or name. Something that makes me quick to duck my head and avoid speaking, even now my voice is deeper. Someone suggests I spend more time with the queer community at large. I don't tell them I've been avoiding doing so because even with my slowly-changing body and many-gendered dating history, I don't feel "queer enough" to count.

I wonder if I'd been more involved, would I have had the courage to start transitioning earlier? I wonder if I had known about this when I was younger, if I might have been able to find this happiness sooner. I wonder this a lot. I scour high school health and PE syllabuses in search of the word "transgender". In most states, I'm lucky if I find "lesbian" or "gay". I worry about the confused kids out there. I hope they're doing better than I was.

I complain about an email from my unsupportive grandfather. "He's trying his best. He'll come around."

My friend is in a lecture on gender in education. A slide reads "Student A who previously identified as a boy, has confided in you that he is transgender and views himself as female." "Everyone is trying so hard," she says.

Why do I want to fight everyone all the time? I don't. But this is a fight that needs to be fought, so I will until things get better. It isn't enough to just try your best and make excuses for transphobia. It isn't enough to say "Caitlyn" and pat yourself on the back for being inclusive. It isn't enough to give your Facebook profile a rainbow filter and call that activism. It isn't enough to share an article supporting gay marriage as though that is the biggest issue facing the queer community. Survival is insufficient. Trying isn't enough.





I kissed a girl and you liked it

*Georgia Mantle
on queerness and
the male gaze.*

I don't remember the first time I kissed a girl. I would have been seven or eight years old, exploring the nature of intimacy rather than my own sexuality. Those encounters were never any reason for concern, so maybe that's why I don't remember them. What I do remember though, is the first time I was made to feel uncomfortable for kissing a girl.

This wasn't because of a sexuality crisis, or a homophobic attack—by this point I had long accepted my own queerness. What made me uncomfortable about this specific incident was that while I was kissing this amazing girl, we became the foreground of a photo shoot with men posing behind us. Come Monday morning at school, my main concern was just seeing the girl again. What I didn't expect was a friend showing me a stranger's Facebook profile picture, featuring me on this girl's lap.

The photo was met with an alarming number of likes. It seemed that no one else thought this was weird or inappropriate. I was upset, confused and embarrassed, which quickly turned into rage. How dare this random boy display that picture like it was an achievement! How dare he make me feel like my relationship and intimacy wasn't normal. Through this act, he turned it into something that everyone else was welcomed into, something that everyone could have a part in, something that everyone was allowed to enjoy at my own expense.

Sadly, this was not the last time my queerness would be fetishised by straight men. Throughout high school I would hear boys jeering at women to kiss each other. If they were 'lucky' enough to see two (or more) women kiss, it would be met with a chorus of cheers and high fives. I quickly became reluctant to tell male friends or potential partners about my sexuality, after it was greeted with "that's hot" far too many times.

Television and movies had prepared me for homophobic attacks and had given me an arsenal of quick-witted responses. But there was nothing to yell at the leering men who apparently weren't homophobic, because they simply revelled in the sight of two women kissing. The problem only worsened after I turned 18 and began frequenting pubs and clubs. It was at this point that the fetishisation became violent and aggressive.

On one Friday night at the beginning of the year I was at my local having a girls' night, and dancing with a female friend. A man I have never met grabbed the back of my head and pushed it into my friend's face, in an attempt to make us

kiss. I remember feeling so angry, but I couldn't do anything about it. This stranger made me feel so vulnerable. I began to think that maybe I shouldn't dance so close to girls, even if they were just friends, and that maybe if I got a girlfriend I wouldn't be able to bring her here.

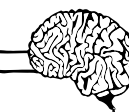
It was my personal growth and newly discovered badass attitude that resulted in me eventually fighting back. I recently gave a group of men the finger and told them to fuck off as they chanted in drunken voices for me and a friend to kiss in Kings Cross. Deep

down though, they got to me; they reminded me that every time I go out as a woman and as a queer person, I am there for some man's enjoyment. I realised that many men still expect me and other women to act in a way that will please them. They seemed shocked that I was so angry with them for suggesting that I make a show out of kissing my friend.

This was probably the first time that these men been told no; I sure hope it won't be the last.



Artwork: Zita Walker



5 homophobes who were about a million times worse than "the gays" they were afraid of

Cam Smith pens the saddest listicle in the world.

We all know and see minor acts of homo- and transphobia on a daily basis—from uneducated uses of the word 'gay' to describe Tony Abbott, to that recently unfriended individual with strong opinions on whether they would ever sleep with Caitlyn Jenner, but sometimes you come across an example of homophobia so outrageously stupid that you just have to write a last minute article for *Queer Honi* to fill space on page nine. And these are some of those cases.

Number 5: Russia's Police

It's an easy goal to start an article about homophobia with Russia, because god knows they're one of the world's leading producers of the stuff. But Russia sometimes does things that are so over the top in their insanity that even Evangelical Republicans are left thanking their lucky stars that they're not as bad as those right-wing nutters. Such was the case when some unfortunate fitness junkies in the Kaliningrad region of Russia were beaten and arrested by police back in 2012 after the authorities mistook their event to promote fitness, jogging and Russian national pride for a pride parade of a different kind. Police explained after the fact that they mistook the black, yellow and white flags of Imperial Russia to be some kind of homosexual propaganda signs, and that a large gathering of fit attractive men must be some kind of gay rally—a Freudian mistake if ever we've heard one.

Number 4: President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, otherwise known as FDR

It's strangely unknown that before Franklin Roosevelt became the iconic first wheelchair-bound president of the US of A, he almost destroyed his entire career by overseeing what has got to be both the most X-rated, and most under-rated political scandal in America's history. The year was 1919, and the US Navy had a problem. It seemed that a job requiring men to spend months on a secluded ship surrounded exclusively by other men was not attracting the upstanding heterosexual sorts the navy was hoping to recruit for a watery grave. Something had to be done.

In a secret meeting of the navy's administrators led by FDR, it was decided that the best way to find and expel the growing number of gay infiltrators was to go about gay baiting their sailors and then court-martialing the offenders. And who better to task with the job of "engineering a gay situation" than the fresh-faced summer interns from the local town? Up to this point this all seems fairly innocent. A simple bit of flirting shouldn't be too problematic, right? The only problem was that the navy wanted to be able to prove beyond a doubt that these sailors were the dreaded gays, meaning they had to, and I quote, "complete the act".

You read that right. The US Navy literally recruited teenagers to homosexuality. TO PREVENT HOMOSEXUALITY.

All this eventually ended up the subject of a Congressional enquiry when one of the baiters got a little too eager and 'engaged' a local priest, mistaking him for an off-duty naval officer. When the priest was called before the naval jury to answer for his lewd conduct, the church stepped in, Congress got involved, and at that point shit well and truly hit the fan. In a lucky turn for FDR's future presidential career, the media at the time decided that the entire affair was basically unprintable, meaning Franklin got off relatively scot-free for a presidential candidate caught out running a secret ring of gay teenage prostitutes.

Number 3: Delta Airlines

When one of Delta Airline's passenger planes went down in 1986 killing everyone on board, Delta opted to take the slightly unconventional route of tasking private investigators to dig up dirt on the people they had just killed, rather than just saying "woops, my bad, sorry everyone". Discovering that one of their deceased passengers, Scott Ageloff, was secretly gay, Delta rubbed their hands together with glee and decided to pay a respectful visit to his parents. During this visit, the airline not only outed their dead son, but then had the gumption to explain that the company would now be paying less compensation for Scott's life compared to other passengers because he was gay, meaning he "probably would have died of AIDS" if they hadn't, you know, just killed him.

Number 2: Motor Registries Everywhere

It's a little known medical fact that gay people can't drive. At least this was apparently the thinking of a Connecticut motor registry in 1972 which denied a driver's licence to a Mr John Tynan on account of Tynan being "an admitted homosexual". This wasn't the last time that happened. The Italian ministry of transport refused a gay man a licence in 2004 on the grounds that he suffered 'from a serious condition which could affect the safety of his driving', otherwise known as 'too gay to function'. And this happened again in Italy 2011. And AGAIN in Nebraska in 20-freaking-14. And, because Russia is never to be outdone when it comes to batshit discrimination, the Russian Federation also decided to outlaw trans people from obtaining driver's licences at the start of 2015, because the number of traffic accidents was too high, and the number of bizarre mental leaps in the country were apparently getting dangerously low.

Number 1: The Island of Lesbos

Without question the number one case of a homophobe being about a million times more of a monster than those homosexual boogymen under their beds would have to be the three Greek men who decided to take lesbians everywhere to court for defiling the name of their hometown, the Island of Lesbos. The man spearheading the case, Dimitris Lambrou, claimed that use of the word lesbian around the world to refer to lesbians "violates the human rights of the islanders", presumably except for the lesbian ones.

After a protracted case in which Dimitris continually made a public idiot of himself for the world's media, the court unsurprisingly ruled that nobody's rights were being violated, with a ruling that strongly hinting that perhaps Dimitris should find himself a hobby. Dimitris went on to claim that he was not a homophobe in any way, and had plenty of gay friends ('had' being the operative word). He even kindly offered an alternative name for lesbian that he suggested they take up: "Tribades." Dimitris kindly explained that this was a much more appropriate word for lesbians, as it referred to "people who rub themselves". Very classy Dimitris.

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Asexuality: A Primer

Not to be confused with asexual microbes, “an asexual person is a person who does not experience sexual attraction” (this definition is what the Asexual Visibility and Education Network (AVEN) website displays on its home page). Asexuality is another facet of the gender and sexual minority community and labels a group of people with this shared sexual orientation.

Romance

Being asexual does not mean that you don't want to form deeper bonds with other people. Like sexuals, asexual people (or aces) want human company and understanding just as much as the next person.

This definition of romance (as distinct from sexual attraction) can be somewhat confusing. By considering sexual and romantic attraction as separate things, aces are still able to differentiate their preference of partners based on gender.

Does this mean that all aces like holding hands, candlelit dinners, and long walks on the beach? No. Some asexual (and some sexual) people describe themselves as being aromantic, which means that they don't feel romantically attracted to other human beings. This is simply another part of the complex human condition.

Sex

The attitudes towards sex within the asexual community sit, as you would expect, on a spectrum. It ranges from those who have tried sex and found that it didn't

live up to their expectations, through those who are indifferent about sex, to those who find sex utterly repulsive. This being said, many asexual people who are in a relationship with a sexual person will have sex if it makes their partner happy.

This raises another point. If asexual people do not experience sexual attraction, how are they even able to have sex? Sexual attraction and the physiological ability to have sex are two different things. Some aces do not find sex very enjoyable at all and others do have intense libidos.

Not all asexual people feel that they never experience sexual attraction. Aces may choose to further subdivide themselves into the categories of gray-asexual (sexually attracted to others only under specific circumstances), demi-sexual (only sexually attracted to those they form a strong emotional bond with), or exclusively asexual (never experiences sexual attraction).

Masturbation

Some, if not most, asexual people also masturbate regularly. A six-part series on asexuality published by the *Huffington Post* quoted Lori Brotto of the University of British Columbia's Sexual Health Laboratory as saying “...masturbation is not inherently sexual. [Asexuals cite] boredom, stress reduction, helping them to get to sleep, etc., as reasons behind masturbation.” The same article quoted another asexual man as saying that “it's like an itch you have to scratch”.

An asexual who masturbates doesn't need to think about having sex with another person to do so. Some aces talk about how their mind goes blank and they consider only how the stimulation feels. Others think about holidays, exams, or plans for the rest of the day when masturbating.

The other thing that might be confusing is the how of masturbating. Some forms of masturbation, like anal and vaginal, are penetrative and it's hard to get around the ‘So you are sexually attracted to men?’ argument. Just as homosexual women might use a dildo for penetrative vaginal sex or a heterosexual man may receive anal penetration from his partner, aces can enjoy penetrative masturbation even if their toy of choice is shaped like a penis.

Seen within this lens it is understandable that someone who masturbates for physiological reasons doesn't necessarily have to want sex. On the other hand, it begs the question: do asexual people use pornography? Does this change their orientation?

Yes, some (but not all) aces use pornography. No, it doesn't mean they aren't asexual. The Asexuality Archive, a website dedicated to explaining asexuality in layman's terms, offers this explanation: “[the participants] seem to be enjoying what they're doing... and I bet that feels good...I want to feel good.” The sex of the participants in pornography one views has absolutely no bearing on sexual orientation. After all, pornography isn't representative of real

*Kip Blakk
runs through the
A-Z of ace.*

life anyway.

Community

Asexuals are a minority inside of another minority and this can be difficult to process. As the LGBTQIA community frequently omits the A (without intention), asexual people often feel as if they don't belong to a larger group.

LGBTQIA will never cease growing as an acronym. It also doesn't account for those people who are aromantic or polyamorous, nor does it acknowledge identities that haven't been termed yet. I myself have started using the phrase ‘gender and sexual minorities’ (GSM) in an effort to use a broader umbrella term to describe this community.

Faced with this kind of confusion, an asexual person could feel as if they don't fit in. If after reading this article you feel you identify a little with the asexual community (or indeed, identify with any sexual orientation after reading any article in this magazine), the best thing you can do to begin with is doubt. When I say doubt I don't mean self-deprecate. I mean think critically and become well informed. Critical thinking and research is fundamental to any quest of sexual discovery and forces us to assess how we really view the world, as opposed to how we think others want us to view it. To those aces reading this I say remember: you are not broken, you are not alone.

Puzzling through

Sexual attraction is messy. There's a multitude of things that complicate it, turning the mere act of wanting someone into a minefield. Naturally, the assumption is that since asexuality is defined as the lack of sexual attraction, it is easy.

There is nothing easy about asexuality.

My experiences are nowhere near a definitive guide to asexuality, however I truly do hope that they help shed some light on why asexuality should be wholeheartedly recognised and accepted as part of the LGBTQIA+ community.

I like sex. I like the idea of sex, watching sex, reading sex. I like sex up until the point where it concerns me, because then it gets weird. Then I don't like sex, the same way I don't like raw tomatoes. It's not up for discussion. When I say I don't like raw tomato people usually just leave it. We all have preferences, after all. It's no-one's business that I avoid some foods.

When I say I don't like sex, suddenly it becomes people's business very quickly. I've been told I haven't found the right person, as if a wave of someone's magic dick will change me. I've had people look sadly at me, lamenting how I'm missing out on a wonderful experience. Since sex is about as appetising to me as a raw tomato, you can see why this sentiment is tiresome. I'm hardly missing out on something if I couldn't care less about it.

Then there's the people who have the audacity to tell me I will never have a normal relationship, that I'm selfish. These are my least favourite kind of asshole, because I adore being in a relationship. I love being kissed and held and taken through the whirlwind experience that is romantic attraction. I love it so much that I am unequivocally terrified of fucking it up with my inability to want sex like a “normal person”.

I don't appreciate being told that I will, due to my unchangeable sexuality, destroy any potential relationship. It's a ridiculous notion, but it's pervasive. It's pervasive

because it's easier to say that since I'm sexually untouchable, I must be unloveable. Sex without love seems common enough, but love without sex? Endlessly scandalous.

It was for this reason that I felt like a liar for the entirety of my last date. What if she wanted more than kissing? I couldn't do more than kissing. She really liked me, I really liked her, but what if after this everything was ruined and messy? Each time she kissed me I felt like I had cemented my fate, as if sharing saliva automatically equalled sex. It doesn't, but it doesn't help that society emphasises every relationship as ending up in bed together. I know it doesn't, but what if nobody else does? Their expectations shape my own and it makes for a very tedious cycle.

Being asexual is difficult. I navigate a sexualised world, one that pressures me to conform in order to replicate a strict formula on what a relationship should be. Sexual attraction is by no means easy, but not experiencing it and not wanting sex are just as unique and troublesome to puzzle through.

One by one the knots we tie will come undone

Joseph Severino on walking between labels.

Mike Iamele wrote an article titled, “I'm an otherwise straight man (who fell in love with his best friend)”, in which the content is self-explanatory. However, amidst all the “no-homo” inferences, the author comes to a progressive enlightenment: we are not as simple as they want us to be. I You We Us should not be reduced to a static generalization. The sum of the parts don't have to constitute the whole.

I'm mildly annoyed that it took a straight man's fear of identifying as Queer to develop and articulate an ontological epiphany.

A great extent of my sexual identity had been thrust upon me by a societal imperative, with a focus on sex-positivity and binary. Reductionist checklists pervade any relevant discourse, and I felt stuck in words that just weren't me.

The process of discovering my sexual identity was a series of false hopes. I was either straight or gay. The first one was easier to traverse. However, the parcelisation of the latter left me utterly bewildered.

It took me realising that I was gay to figure out that, actually, I am not.

You are introduced to so many labels. So many situations and circumstances in which your body can extend into pure definiteness. But you're also given just as many situations and circumstances in which you don't fit and where you can't prescribe. There are so many deal breakers and fine print.

The structures of heteronormativity within me had supposedly been broken down, but the pillars and stones of queerness were too weak to lift me back up again. I was in the limbo of sexuality, with constant reassurance that “I'll figure myself out eventually!” I didn't quite belong to any which letter in any which acronym, and I was not able to articulate myself in the one way I could be straight, or the fifty-four ways I could be queer.

Mike Iamele's article states “we're defined by who we choose to be in this very moment”, a sentiment shared by Angel Haze in her cover of ‘Same Love’: “I am living today as someone I had not yet become yesterday... I am whoever I am when I am it.” There's a great reactionary sentiment against structural queerness.

We do not first see, and then define, we define first and then we see. – Walter Lippmann.

This is why I felt the queer community did not represent me to any large extent. Its external expectations and social norms were (are?) constricting and can represent many barriers.

All of those labels, all of those names... they're just external ideals about who we should be, which I think is a sure-fire way to getting to unhappy. I think the only way we can feel content is if we let our emotions, our feelings, and our internal ideals create our external reality. – Courtney Act.

For years I had apathetically defaulted with ‘gay’, even though I was not comfortable using that term. Why should I have an hour long conversation with every single person who asked me just because there was no other way to explain myself clearly?

The otherwise straight man ends up confessing his love to his best friend and is more-or-less reassured that his feelings are reciprocated. This dependency on ‘the other’ is what scared me the most about my sexuality. ‘The other’ generates a need for these labels. It is ‘the other’ who validates your identity. How can ‘the other’ accept me when I am not even sure what I am?

Is the possibility of my other discarded without a firm basis on which to define him against?

And so I walked between labels, because how could somebody begin to find me if I didn't even appear on the map.

Fast forward two years and I get an adequate statement from Mariana Podesta-Diverio, (“Enforced sex positivity and the need for self-reflection within the queer community”, Archer, 29/7/15) that elucidates my confusion: “While it might be understood that an openly asexual person is not interested in types of sexual encounters, people who do not fit

neatly into this sexual/asexual binary do not, for all discursive intents and purposes, exist.”

As an anecdotal aside, two of my friends made similar comments after hearing I had a boyfriend that essentially boiled down to “I'm glad you've found who you are/you are no longer asexual”.

From my experience, this situation is born out of normalised sex-positivity rhetoric, which negatively impacts the LGBTQIA+ community. Observed by a friend Dylan Rowan, there is no recourse to access queer spaces that are not inherently sexual, alcoholic, and/or online.

Embarrassment is conceptualised as a product of a repressive hetero regime; drunken hookups conceptualised as a fun tool to express a new found autonomy of sexuality. Sex is the marker of liberalisation.

And I don't want sex. Nor do I feel liberated. This isn't a correlation.

I'm tired of feeling like the prude. I'm tired of being asked why I look uncomfortable or unhappy. It's unfair that I am cannot attend a queer party without feeling

an immense uncertainty on when the fun, tipsy dancing turns into drunk and raging communal displays of liberation. When I have a miasmic atmosphere tapping its watch impatiently as if I have a deadline to be drunk by, less I have to come out as asexual with a tinge of guilt. I feel inauthentic. That I am lying to these people just by being present, like I'm the ‘unfun’ person with a boyfriend who ‘wasted your time’ and ‘should have told you sooner’.

Couple this with a sexuality that, if I have to find a word that closest describes it, is ‘grey-asexual’, you're left with one big mess of conflicting stereotypes and soft-whispers behind your back. People don't know where or how to put you. You yourself still have no idea where you belong. My liminal identity within the discourse of binary situates me simultaneously on both ends of the spectrum and nowhere in between.

And so, again, I walk between labels—but this time without my permission. Because how can anybody begin to understand me if they and I cannot articulate who I am.



Artwork: Zita Walker



Commuters

Have a great week, you said,
Because that's how long you thought we'd be apart
Before you saw me again tangled in your
Unkempt sheets and in your
Unkempt feet.

Maybe you should've told me to have a great year
Instead.

One year and one day,
At the station where two men smoked
Wisps of vapour that haloed around your
Unkempt hair
Where have you been, you said,
Crisp with suspicion
Tense with condition.

On the train your eyes tell me that I,
I was the monster beneath your bed
That you checked for nightly,
Lamp faced towards the door to safeguard from intruders
Or was I the floral shirt and the navy trousers strewn beneath your bed?
Discarded; Disregarded; Disdained.

From the window factories blur
Less than romantic
As your fingers tap a Circadian Rhythm onto metal handholds, subtle semantics

Of the Tortured Poet, the Unkempt Artist you claimed to be.
But were you ever realised?
Questions linger
Metal on finger.
And you continue tapping

The beat of two summers ago.
Glossy 2 by 3's,
The paper remnants of a humid February.
Polaroids fleshy and pink with skin—
The lighting looks nice, you said,
Polaroid flash against my exposed torso
Blue and white briefs brushing against blue and white sheets.

And now you step off
A lone figure on the concourse
As we fall through entropy I spy your freckled face
Half-submerged in the viscous fluid of a womb
You are a physicist and I, an unknown discovery;

I had a great year.

Michael Sun



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sometimes I forget how to speak
and when I say that I mean
words don't flow freely like they should
and conversations are just words mused by loud winds
between two people stuck on either side
of a mountain range.

I don't know how to tell you that I cannot let someone touch me
even for an instant

because my body feels like a mountain range
vast and unmapped and terrifying
but I want to tell you that I'd learn to move mountains just to feel your weathered hands drag new landscapes across my body
that I'd learn twenty more languages just so I could ask you *are you sure this body is fine?*
and just so that I could hear you say
yes.

I'm going to keep forgetting how to speak
because words still honey themselves stuck to the back of my throat
but I promise I'll keep every note you ever write
and fold each one into tiny squares to keep inside my pockets
and then I'll wash them
over

and over
and when they become lint I will hold them in my hands, soft and bursting, like the words you can pluck effortlessly from your throat

and I'll crumble them
and swallow them
planting small comforts inside me
remembering how you said *yes*
yes, you are boy.

Zombies

There are zombies
Zombies and pain and fathers finding their sons bleeding out
And my mother winces when she sees them lifting special effects gore to their makeup
painted lips
But she doesn't turn away
My father calls a boy brave when I mention it in passing
My mother says it must be easier for him
Easier than it is for others
I ask why
And I tell them what I know

Hypothetically

So I hear

It falls from my lips when I've had too much to drink

And I didn't want this party to be about me

But suddenly the people are around me

A circle of polite intrigue

And my mouth is moving

But I don't really know what I'm saying

What do my friends think

It's stupid

I know

I shouldn't worry

But I do

I tell them to watch

I tell them it's beautiful and heartbreaking and better than anything else they'll watch

And we watch together

And in this world we watch the zombies become human and the humans become mon-

sters

We watch real life played out in fantasy

Segregation

Phobia

And they love it

So I tell them to watch season 2

My mother knows

I haven't told her, but I think she knows

I don't think my father knows

My brother doesn't know

My best friend lies beside me and we talk

And I tell her my fears

I don't know what to feel

She tells me I have nothing to be ashamed of

And I'm not ashamed

It's Mardi Gras and I want to go to the parade

We're at a party

We leave the party

The parade is over

Just the remains of what was the parade

We walk the streets and bitter disappointment coats my teeth

We walk home and a boy asks me why I'm so disappointed

I tell him

And he's surprised but he does the polite thing and changes the topic

I tell people

But I haven't told my family

We watch season 2

It's darker, staked higher

The zombies who are human start to kill

The humans who are monsters start to kill

We watch history play out on screen

We watch subjugation and discrimination and zombies

My brother stays when a father stabs his son behind the ear and leaves him dull eyed in

his lover's driveway

He stays when a man begs them to stop ripping his insides out

He stays

But when two boys kiss

He walks out

He leaves and I call after him with a laugh

What that's where you draw the line?

And he shakes his head

And he says it's not right

And my father changes the channel

And my mother watches with morbid fascination

And I correct them as best I can

I do what I can

But I don't tell them

Genderfluid

Robin M. Eames

I try to catch my gender in my hands but it slips through my fingers. My gender spills across the floor. I take a step but find no purchase. I trip and slide on my gender. I smear my gender all over my clothes. My gender is stubborn and won't come out in the wash.

I swim in my gender. It is everywhere. I can't breathe; my gender closes over my head. I choke on my gender, I drown in it. My gender fills my lungs. It tastes like seaweed and old cigarette butts.

I thirst for my gender. I drink it in. My gender is life-giving. I drink too much of my gender and feel nauseous. I drink too little and I feel dizzy. My gender is carbonated.

I cut my hands on the pages of Jack Halberstam, of Audre Lorde, of Susan Stryker, and my gender beads up and stains the paper. My gender is red and hot.

My body is 60% gender. Gender wells up in my stomach, acidic, from my pores, salty, in my mouth, syrupy and wet. I kiss my lover's neck and leave damp marks of my gender on their skin.

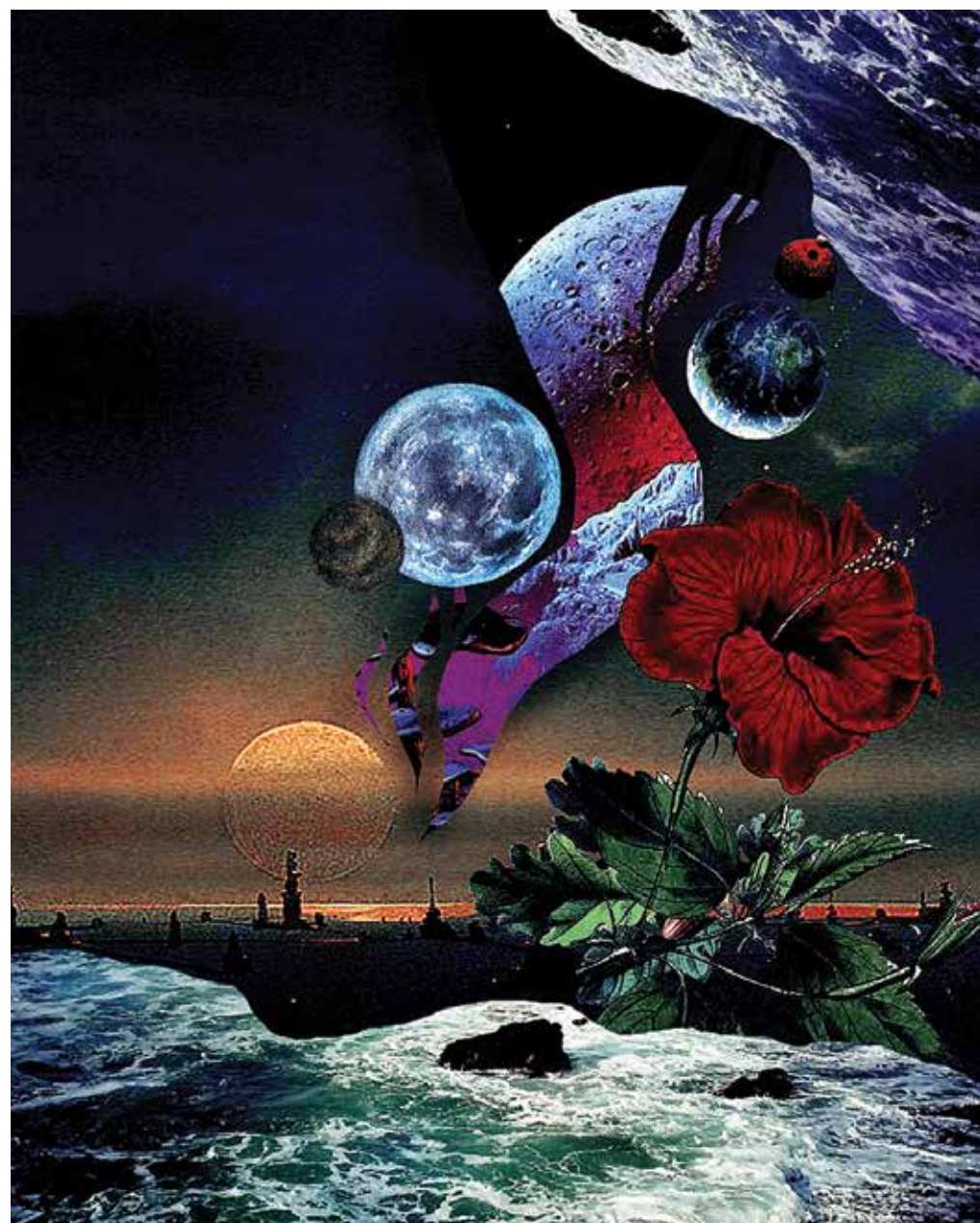
My gender is a limited resource. In the summer the grass turns brown and I save up my gender, letting it out only in the evening between the hours of 5 and 7. There's a brief but violent summer storm in the morning. I don't have an umbrella. My gender sloshes in my shoes.

"Hi ladies." I don't correct her. "She—I mean, they..." A man on the street calls me a dyke. "Is it Miss or Mrs?" It's Mx. "Ladies and gentlemen..." The dreaded notes of my old name slip from someone's mouth. They don't notice. "It." I am tired. My gender clings to my eyelashes.

It is dawn, and the clouds are pale pink, limned with lavender. My bare feet sink into the sand. The beach is empty.

My gender stretches out to the horizon.

Artwork: Zita Walker



Blackout poetry

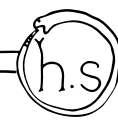
Emma Balfour



----- Original message -----
 From: Emma Balfour
 Date: 04/03/2015 10:31 AM (GMT+10:00)
 To: James Balfour
 Subject: Boston Update/Important news

Dad
 I'm [redacted] sharing [redacted]
 [redacted] a girl.
 [redacted] mother [redacted] considers bisexuality a [redacted]
 [redacted] Bridle [redacted]
 Regardless, [redacted] have a family"
 [redacted]
 [redacted] I am happy. [redacted] and cool [redacted]
 [redacted]
 [redacted] The snow is starting to melt.

Blake Lawrence



In-flight entertainment

Jim Clifford endured an unwanted international Q&A.

Flights are always risky. There's so much you can't control. Some people worry about crashing from twelve kilometres up. Some worry about terrorists or government germs in the touch down quarantine spray. I personally believe the biggest threat is the horrifying lucky-dip of who you sit next to.

Enter Philippines Airlines, Sydney to Manila, July 2015. No screens on the back of headrests. No TV hanging from the ceiling. But my boyfriend and I are hopeful; pre-departure is almost over, and no one has interrupted the miraculous gift of a three-seater shared between two.

But of course, someone arrives. A small, middle-aged woman. Headphones in. No hellos, no nonsense. This is good news. We can just eat our food in silence, face forward, and get on with the business of passing time.

But no. Part way through take off, the woman turns to us and asks, "So... what is the relationship here? Are you siblings? Friends?"

By this point, the seat divide between me and my boyfriend is already up. I am holding his hand (he is pretending to be afraid), and his head is resting on my shoulder. We would make excellent, intimate friends. Maybe too intimate for siblings.

I tell her, no, we are partners. She nods, tightens her brow in concentration and faces forward.

...

The plane is flying steady. The seatbelt sign is off. I take this opportunity to squeeze passed her and go to the bathroom.

When I arrive back, she is leaning across the middle seat, talking to my boyfriend.

"So, were your parents angry when they found out?"

"Oh, no, they were pretty okay about, um, it," he says to both of us, smiling just a little.

I push through again, and she goes quiet. I wonder: did she wait until I was gone to ask him? He does look a lot younger than me, but he's actually three years older. Does she think I abducted him? Or corrupted him? Are his parents angry?

We don't talk much through the rest of the seven-hour flight. She's passing the time by flicking through endless photos of herself on her iPad. Some selfies, most taken by others. Many in front of public monuments; the Eiffel Tower, Buckingham Palace. Some just of her face. There is never anyone else in the shot. I wonder who took them for her. A sibling? A friend?

...

Just before we land, she turns to us for a final time.

"I have a gay friend in London," she says, looking with significance at each of us. "His parents don't know. He's too afraid to tell them. He thinks they'll get angry. And he's almost forty. Don't you think

that's sad?"

I weigh up whether it'd be rude to ask her why she is telling us this. But then I realise. Maybe she's been amassing courage this whole time, watching us from under her hair, flicking through photos of herself for affirmation and resolve. Maybe she isn't a straight woman with opinions to express. Maybe she's an adult baby queer, searching for counsel and community.

I turn to her, smiling: "tell him he can do whatever he wants—there's no one way to be queer. And it's not a race."

She looks blank, confused.

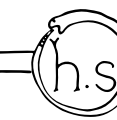
"Well, I think it's sad," she says, and returns to scrolling through her photos.

We land. No goodbyes are shared.

Whenever you are, brief companion, I hope you are happy.



Image by Zita Walker



Content Warning: Sexual Assault

LGBTQIA+ survivors and sexual assault on campus.

Anonymous explains how members of the student community can support sexual assault survivors.

If you know someone you'd describe as "rapey", or someone you know has sexually harassed or abused someone, you're very obligated to tell others around you. Particularly me, a survivor of previous events. Here's some tips on how YOU can support us without knowing our names, through a queer lens.

My credentials: I've been sexually assaulted three times in my life, twice by queer men and once by a trans woman. I did not ask any of these people to sexually engage, humiliate me, tie me up, put their genitals near me or in me.

They deserve to rot in isolation, but instead society has ignored their wrongdoing and put me in the dark, to doubt and to scratch my own skin off to write these words.

Here are some stupid questions I've been asked when talking about sexual assault in queer spaces.

1. Isn't this gossiping?

As with everything you end up doing in this western, racist, cisgender, heteropatriarchal capitalist society, it's the lesser of two evils argument.

Do you tell your survivor friends, your close friends, your collective members, your political factional members, your revue friends, your club executive, your classmates; warning them of the potential behaviours of person(s), subsequently allowing people to not live with potential lifelong trauma...

...or are you known as a gossip? Wear that label with pride because you've spoken about the things regularly kept silent. It's better than being silent and your friends knowing they can't talk to you about these things.

If you're not a survivor, you'll quickly learn who believes you and who doesn't, and this'll help you whittle down your friends into people you can trust and cannot trust. You'll also experience some shit from punching up the power systems set out in society, and being called a gossip is the least of your worries.

2. But they're X identity! That's impossible for them to have power over you!

Hearing I've been raped by a trans woman is confusing for others, and every subsequent conversation ends up with me feeling less believed, less genderqueer, or with less friends. She sits at a few

intersectional oppressions, and faces some horrible shit from society which has absolutely nothing to do with the fact she's sexually abused me. Anyone can be raped. Anyone can rape. The statistics we gather are whitewashed and ciswashed. Was I given the ability to give my gender identity instead of being read (and disbelieved) as a male sexual assault survivor? Do Women of Colour have good relations with police and reporting systems? Do people often believe men who've been raped?

Separate your identity politics from personal experiences of rape. My identity doesn't matter, their identity doesn't matter. I just need you to keep them away from me.

3. Political spaces are better at dealing with these problems.

Fuck you StuPol hacks. All of you cover up these attacks on people's bodies to protect your future involvement in government, in NGOs, in social movements. Liberal, Labor, Greens, Independents, or unaligned.

Don't get involved in a group that isn't upfront about having a policy regarding abuse; physical, mental or emotional. I've studied at a few campuses, done the StuPol thing and honestly this is the only rule I've been able to hold on to, to keep me safe.

Clubs, the USU, the SRC, the University should have their policy and procedures written on the side of buildings in the university. Instead, they are hidden online. If you're a student in a position of power you should be putting out media and statuses fighting this silence. #BreakTheSilence or be part of the gross rape culture that puts serial abusers in more positions of power and more situations to abuse others.

4. The Survivor is in danger if I say anything.

Do you know what makes me the most upset? Knowing all my rapists have gone on to rape others. It's what burns me the most inside, knowing I did nothing because I had to protect myself before saving others.

If you know someone who's a rapist you need to say something AND protect survivors. Stop thinking that you can do one or the other. I've had enough of binaries, and I've had enough of silence. If you know a survivor who doesn't want

to speak, that's fucking legitimate. But you need to find the place where they are going to be okay, and you're going to be able to fight this abuser. Unless we are fighting against this behaviour we are condoning it, allowing it, and promoting it in our society.

Since being involved in survivor groups, this is the question we always come down to. I am happy to say that my survivors know the people they can't trust because I can name these people in those spaces. That their friends know, and so on, and so on.

If I had the money I'd pay for the billboard at the UTS end of Broadway and put their faces and names on it. I don't want anyone else to suffer (except them) what I've had to go through.

5. Survivors are to blame.

I've never hurt someone physically that hasn't been self-defence, but this makes me want to rip someone's stomach out when they say this. It'd help them understand exactly how I feel in that moment.

6. We'll never know the full story, so I can't do anything.

Perhaps worse than above. It's people who are trying to be left-wing or juggle their morals whilst not wanting to engage with a situation that's fucked from the beginning. If someone comes out to you as gay, there is a celebration. It should be no different if someone's a survivor.

YOU SURVIVED. YOU ARE RESILIENT AND TOUGH AND FABULOUS! YOU DON'T DESERVE THIS SHITTY SOCIETY BUT RIGHT NOW WE CAN BE HAPPY AND TRUTHFUL WITH EACH OTHER!

7. Survivors can't have sex.

I still frequently make a bit of cash on the side through sex work. I still enjoy myself during sex—from vanilla sex, to kinky, squelchy sex. The difference is that it's all consensual. I value the enjoyment I can get from sexual experiences when there is consent.

I'm not comparing it to those experiences in my head unless I'm unsure there is consent. I don't think about how I was tied up and raped when I'm tied up and fucked if I've consented to it.

8. Survivors are attention seeking for their own benefit.

I won't deny I am seeking attention. I want people to be engaged about how horrible sexual assault is every day of their lives. It's 100% not for my benefit though, save for the idea that I don't want to be sexually assaulted again by my abuser(s).

But I could attempt to do that without being vocal. That'd be selfish of me, from my perspective. If I didn't tell people they shouldn't be in a room alone with someone who's abused me, then who knows what could happen to them? Could it have been something that changed if they knew?

My aim is to prevent this from happening to anyone else.

9. Doesn't empowering survivors makes them targets?

I was asked this by a once-best friend, when I wanted their help in coming out to our friend group. Needless to say, if you believe that being more in the public light makes you a bigger target for rapists, you should realise it's got nothing to do with who's in the spotlight or who isn't.

Celebrities have been molested, assaulted and raped, as well as countless working women, poor people, transgender folks in countries you can't pronounce, and some of your closest friends. If we had more power we'd be able to prevent more rape by naming and shaming those who do so.

10. Things are getting better and cultural change is slow.

Our society can be changed tomorrow if everyone who read this article spoke to one person a day (within their limits) about sexual assault. Sit in front of Google. Look up statistics. Write on an A4 piece of paper and stick it on a wall. Spray paint it on your local train station.

It's only as slow as you're making it happen. My rapes are your responsibility now, and can be shared and talked about. You don't have to pretend you've got nothing to say about it now. You don't have to get it right. You don't have to be perfect. You just have to do something.

We need to #BreakTheSilence and if you can afford that billboard at the end of Broadway that's where I would start.

Reflections on relationships and changing identities

Ollie Moore
and
Ellie Rogers

Relationships are never straightforward, especially when you're queer. A lot gets written about how to handle arguments and breakups, but there isn't really a how-to guide for what to do if you or your partner's identity changes during your relationship. In case you were hoping for that guide, sorry, we're just as clueless as you, but we thought we'd reflect on how it all played out, in case that's of any use to anyone else.

Ollie: My name is Ollie. I'm a genderqueer transmasculine person and I use they/them or he/him pronouns. At the very beginning I was a small confused person, who had told about three people about their identity feels and was zero percent comfortable making it a thing. But I was definitely bisexual and had mostly dated boys.

Ellie: My name's Ellie. I'm a cis girl, I use she/her pronouns, and I'm like...fucking who knows in terms of sexuality. Ollie and I used to be dating—at the beginning of our relationship I was a lesbian who had only dated girls.

Ollie: We dated for just shy of a year. I seem to have a habit of very long relationships, so this doesn't seem like that long, but it's been a wild year.

Ellie: I first met Ollie when I was working as a cashier. He would semi-regularly come in, trade some bants, and buy some \$2.90 wine. I found myself looking forward to him showing up.

Ollie: I did find myself making excuses to buy wine more and more often, and attempting to look like my life was in order when I got to the register. Some Facebook stalking, a SHADES event, and Ellie's completely unsubtle message, "I hope you know that coffee date was homo intended", later we had cemented a potential interest in each other.

Ellie: I met Ollie when he used they/them pronouns, and

had started presenting more "masculine"-ly. Perhaps his transition would have been too much for me if I had met him while he still had long blonde hair, but every spiritual, emotional and physical change has seemed 'right' to me, whatever that means. Every 'change' is more fitting and that's exciting to see. So perhaps if Ollie hadn't already been presenting as 'not feminine' I wouldn't have been as comfortable with his transition.

Personally, I had already been through 'coming out', and I'm pretty ok with identity and confidence and that sort of thing. I suppose the benefit of having not experienced transitioning at all was that I could just listen to Ollie rather than trying to guide him or something. And that was a big difference from my previous relationships and how I've related to people in the past, it was really helpful to sort of mutually learn with experience.

Ollie: My feelings about my identity definitely changed over the course of our relationship, and that definitely had an impact on how I interacted with the world.

A lot of negotiation and shifting happened when we first got together. I remember a time that Ellie stayed over, and we were making out and she was like "Hey, is it chill if I take off your bra or like is that a problem?". That was the first time someone I'd had a sexual relationship with had made an effort to work gender into the bedroom.

Ellie: With sex I was obviously deeply uncertain about what to do, so mostly had to ask. But I also wanted to 'get' this sort of thing intuitively, and it was a bit difficult for me for that that wasn't the case. I wanted to help verify gender things for Ollie, but also had no idea how to do that. One time I called Ollie 'handsome' in bed because I wanted to tell him how nice he looked and also wanted to be like 'look, valid gender', but that came off as hell a inorganic to me.

Ollie: I remember when we first started seeing each other we were talking about past partners and stuff one night, and I guess I hadn't really realised that Ellie had basically exclusively dated women until then and I remember thinking "Oh God, I hope she knows I'm Not A Woman".

Ellie: I had literally only dated women. I would definitely have confidently said I was a lesbian. And then I was watching *Dead Poets Society* recently thinking 'Dude, these guys are really cute', which I hadn't thought that until then, because the last time I watched it I had been a lesbian. It was like I hadn't been looking or something. I feel like my perspective has changed enough that I actually 'consider' guys now. I could just date girls, but that would not my sexual preference.

Ollie: Dating Ellie became a vehicle through which I could talk openly about my queerness. I'd been pretty hesitant to join queer groups on campus until that point, because my previous relationship had been with a straight cis guy and I felt like I wasn't "queer enough" to qualify (which was totally an internal struggle that had absolutely nothing to do with reality). I'm also a pretty shy person, so identifying my partner as a woman while still mostly looking like one became an opportunity to be vocal about queerness.

Because I was being more vocal about queerness I actually ended up coming out to my parents, which isn't something I'd ever thought I'd do. They weren't great about it, which is probably best summarised by this quote from my aunt at Christmas: "She wants to change her gender and become a lesbian." That said, it was great to be more open about who I am and people are slowly coming around to the idea.

Ellie: We didn't break up because of gender, so much as a ton of other things.

Ollie: My previous partner Patty and I broke up after I started identifying as non-binary, but before I had started transitioning.

Patty: We broke up because we were mates. The nature and dynamic of our relationship had changed quite organically and so we just stopped dating, I guess. I don't think that's inherently linked to [Ollie's] changing identity, because at the time they were very much in the "generic queer" category, which I figured was kind of their business. But I guess if they had started transitioning while we were dating that probably would have led to us breaking up anyway.

Ollie: Did my transition make you question your identity at all? Did you ever wonder if maybe you were pansexual or whatever?

Patty: I've never questioned my sexuality. I've never even thought about it. I've made out with people of a variety of genders, but the people I've wanted to fuck have all been people I had initially read as female, and hence I describe myself as a heterosexual. My sexuality wasn't challenged by you or something because there wasn't anything to challenge.

Ollie: What did you learn from our relationship?

Patty: I actually learnt a lot about myself. When we started dating I was really nervous/anxious/worried about myself and my identity, and didn't really have a space to be open about it. So it was nice to get that space, especially with someone who was supportive and working through it with me. I suppose what I really learnt was confidence, and a pleasant bonus from that was that I think I've gotten better at admitting I'm wrong and being able to look critically at myself. Or maybe I haven't and I'm just deluding myself, who knows.

It's still OK to be a twink

Robert Grigor on bodytypes in vogue.

Last month, I got laser hair removal on my entire pubic region. As a long time lover of a full male Brazilian wax, I thought that in the long term it would be an efficient and cost-effective solution to what I suppose I considered a problem: body hair. Yet laser hair removal seems like a pretty drastic—permanent—option, so I couldn't help but express a hint of concern before the procedure.

"It's more of a hair reduction than hair removal, really," the technician assured me. "The hair is definitely going to come back, at least after the first time. It will just be a lot thinner." Despite the fact that getting rid of the hair was exactly what I was paying for, I felt a strange sense of relief that it would be back. Throughout my teenage years, gay media, such as *DNA* magazines or episodes of *Queer as Folk*, had convinced me that the ideal body type in the gay world was young, smooth and hairless. It was probably the reason I started getting Brazilian waxes in the first place—so why did the idea of permanently being rid of that hair suddenly seem so terrifying?

Flash forward a week later to a guy telling me that "shaving your asshole is such a 19 year old thing to do", and I think the cumulative signs all finally hit home—the twink aesthetic is well and truly going out of fashion. For someone who has been capitalising

on being so naturally hairless for so long, it's a tough truth to come to terms with, but it's one that I can't overlook anymore. Throughout gay mainstream media, we're starting to see a lot of stockier, more mature men, who have chests covered with a scruffy fuzz that would have been razored off and left on the bathroom floor five or ten years ago. Now, as someone who has always appreciated the aesthetic of a rugged, older gentleman, I certainly won't blame anyone for this shift in attention, but I think the issue goes a little further than our preferences in men. It's about the images that are being celebrated by gay mainstream media, and for the first time in my life I'm experiencing what it feels like to not belong in the category of the most idolised body type.

When I was living in Berlin, I shaved my armpits, at the strong suggestion of a Slovakian friend whom I had recently met. "Your armpit hair is so long! It's gross," he'd told me, rather frankly. I protested, but he assured me that shaving them was actually a very common thing in Europe. So I followed his advice, and while in all honesty I don't think many men even noticed—potentially due to my lack of hair everywhere else—I couldn't help but grill them on their opinions of my supple pits. Upon relaying the words of my Slovakian friend, most of them assured me that he wasn't

a spokesperson for their continent, and that they actually enjoyed a little bit of fuzz in the underarms.

Ironically, though, I found I enjoyed my armpits being as hairless as my junk, so I continued to shave them even after returning to Sydney. Even though it's more work than just embracing the natural look, it almost feels like a bit of a statement against this growing trend towards hair appreciation—not that I have anything against hair on other people, though. Perhaps I'm just some screaming twink who just can't let it go.

The truth is, in all likelihood, I'm probably subconsciously pretty jealous. My pathetic excuse for facial hair is literally laughable, and while I've never had to contend with hair on my back or shoulders, the wispy patch snuggled into the centre of my chest is one of the few visible signs I actually went through puberty. Well, my shoulders have grown a little broader since I started pole dancing (setting a twink like me up for far more sexual innuendo than I know what to do with), but without a beard I am unable to jump on the most prominent bandwagon in men's fashion. I mean, when you think about it, these new mainstream benchmarks for sex appeal are in some cases just as unattainable as the trends they usurped: at least a hairy

guy could still get a full body wax—what am I supposed to do? Magically sprout body hair to achieve the "natural" manly look?

In the end, trends come and go, and the body type of the poster boy for gay mainstream culture is no exception. Maybe it was finally time for the twinks to step down, and while it may seem like it, I'm honestly not complaining. Nothing gets me going more than those hot and hairy hunks! I should also note that just because the media isn't frothing over hairless men as much as it used to, it doesn't mean that guys aren't still doing so in real life.

I'm not ignorant to the privilege of my position, and I'm not claiming or lamenting that the twink aesthetic is now completely undesirable. However, some of these experiences have forced me to consider the ways in which the bodies celebrated in the media have more effects on the bodies that we strive to have, rather than the bodies we want to be with. Previously, I'd been lucky enough to automatically fit into the celebrated body type, but I've since learned that even when society is telling you that beards and body hair are the hot new thing, it's still okay to blast your hair follicles into oblivion. It's still okay to be a twink.



Jason Pier / Flickr / CC BY-NC 2.0



Winding your watch back one hour (and twenty-five years)

Jack Nairn examines a worrying report from the Australian Human Rights Commission on LGBTIQ+ welfare in Australia.

A recent report by the Human Rights Commission inquired into the status of LGBTIQ+ Australians in 2015. The results weren't all that flash. Seventy-one percent of LGBTIQ+ Australians were the victims of attacks, bullying and harassment on the basis of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

While the report identified a number of factors that contribute to the culturally ingrained victimisation of LGBTIQ+ Australians, statutory provisions were found to be a substantial cause of discrimination, constructing the ways in which the law and the community interact with the LGBTIQ+ community.

Queensland is widely regarded as a conservative state. This was made evident when MP Bob Katter, a political hero in large parts of regional Queensland, had an altercation with comedian Josh Thomas on national television as part of a Q&A panel. Bruce Scott, the member for Maranoa, which covers almost half (42%) of Queensland, said he believed the majority of his electorate was against marriage equality. The report complements these perceptions, revealing that Queensland's laws contain the most discriminatory and damaging policies towards LGBTIQ+ Australians.

Despite media emphasis on the legal,

social and political breakthroughs in LGBTIQ+ rights in places like Ireland and the United States, LGBTIQ+ developments in Australia's own federal parliament have been stalled and dodged continuously, with the government leadership using every trick in the book to do so. Nevertheless, the Marriage Equality movement continues to gain followers throughout the nation.

Arguments against reforming the Marriage Act 1969 (Cth) focus on areas such as the rights of children and the religious sanctity of marriage. While these views are easily critiqued, what is often forgotten by the media is that the legal definition of marriage is not a three and a half thousand-year-old tradition. The term 'marriage' was only legally defined in 2004, by the Howard Government. The political relationship between the former and current prime ministers is more than likely the basis for the latter's rejection to any reform.

Returning to Queensland, the LGBTIQ+ community in that state faces deeply ingrained social exclusion fostered by statutory provisions, long since removed by the other states and territories (with the exception of South Australia).

Perhaps the best example is the age of consent for anal sex in Queensland, an

area where Queensland stands separate to the other states. As a result of a long period of legal reforms across Australia, the uniform age for sexual consent became either 16 years of age (in NSW, Vic, ACT, NT and WA) or 17 years (in Tas and SA), regardless of sex. Conversely, in Queensland, there is explicit discrimination of sexual acts between hetero and homosexual partners. The age of consent for anal sex, amazingly still referred to as sodomy, remains 18 years. This makes old conservative Queensland the only Australian jurisdiction to explicitly discriminate between forms of sexual activity.

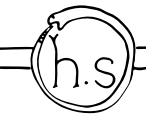
It may be argued that Queensland is not bad in comparison to other states. South Australia also retains the "gay panic" defence to assault in its criminal laws. The Attorney-General of South Australia has ordered an inquiry "as a matter of urgency" into reforming this clause, and the South Australian Greens have introduced the Criminal Law Consolidation (Provocation) Amendment Bill, in order to remove this part of the criminal legislation.

Another of the AHRC Report's key findings was that mental health issues are disproportionately prevalent amongst the LGBTIQ+ community, compared

with most Australians. In 'Contributing lives, thriving communities: Report of the National Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services', the National Mental Health Commission observed that "[v]iolence and discrimination are the key risk factors for the relatively poorer health of [LGBTIQ+] people". Research clearly reveals that LGBTIQ+ people are at increased risk of a range of mental health problems, including depression, anxiety disorders, self-harm and suicide.

The AHRC Report recommended that the federal definition of 'marriage' is amended to "recognise the partnership of two adult persons regardless of the gender of the partners"; that Queensland and South Australia legislate to abolish the homosexual advance defence; and that, "[i]n the interests of promoting public health and ensuring testing for sexually transmitted infections, blood borne viruses and HIV, Queensland amend the age of consent to ensure the equal treatment of teenage gay males".

For more information on the issues surrounding the AHRC Report, it can be downloaded at www.humanrights.gov.au. Next time you travel to Movieworld, Dreamworld or Wet n' Wild, wind your watch back one hour, and an additional twenty-five years.



Where are the bi men on TV?

Bisexual characters remains chronically underrepresented on on the small-screen, writes Eden Caceda.

There is absolutely no denying that television shows and films have begun to feature more diverse LGBTIQ+ characters in recent years, and thank god for that. However, as audiences are increasingly more exposed to representations of different sexualities and varied queer experiences, it becomes clear that bisexuality lacks representation on the small screen, both domestically and internationally.

In what is being described as the golden age of television, gay and lesbian characters are as culturally diverse and complex as ever, but bisexual characters still rare, particularly men. According to the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)'s annual "Where We Are on TV" report, in the 2014-2015 American television season, there were just 12 bisexual characters on broadcast television, with only 2 of them male. American cable television is somewhat better, with 21 bisexual characters, but still only 10 of them are men. And Australian television isn't doing much better, with few bisexual characters on our channels, let alone any male bisexual characters.

Indeed, overall GLAAD reported an increase in the percentage of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans characters on television, but in the face of all this, portrayals of bisexual men and women continue to be unrealistic and perpetuate seriously harmful stereotypes. Still, it is important to remind oneself that the quality of bisexual television characters is in fact improving, though at a pace that some consider glacial.

Asking friends and acquaintances about recognisable bisexual characters resulted in a shopping list of many (problematic) female bisexual examples. Kalida Sharma from *The Good Wife*, Piper Chapman from *Orange Is The New Black*, Calli Torres from *Grey's Anatomy*, Amy Raudenfed from *Faking It*, Brittany S. Pierce from *Glee*, and the list went on. Certainly many of the characters are shown engaging in

bisexual activities, but many times their sexual preferences are portrayed as an aphrodisiac for men, an extra hurdle for men pursuing them or simply as a character trait like "smart" or "rich", intending it to cause conflict or spice up a story. These representation are even worse when bisexual women are seen in casual relationships, implying that bisexuality and polyamory are conflated.

Depictions of bisexual men are few are far between. Instead, gay characters are shown as briefly experimenting with women before returning to their single-gendered sexuality. And while there are discussions about characters such as Gob from *Arrested Development*, Tony from *Skins* and Spike from *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*, among other being bisexual portrayals, so many show-runners and TV producers are afraid to name their characters as bi or consistently represent them as such. Instead, they avoid the situation by making bisexual interactions a one time thing and never having frank discussions about sexuality in the series. It is also part of a bigger bisexual erasure in television, whereby TV producers refuse to acknowledge bisexuality, but perpetuate the idea that bisexuals are just confused straight people or closeted homosexuals.

Revenge's Nolan Ross, played by Gabriel Mann, is one of few representations of bisexual men on television. Ross, a rich software investor and confidante of the main character Emily (always the supporting character, never the main), is depicted as having serious and casual relationships with both men and women in the show. Funnily enough, the show didn't find the need to brand Ross with the bi stamp, but casually had him reveal it to one of his male lovers. Even better, Ross' "reveal" of his sexuality didn't capitalise on the shock value of two men having sex on television. The knowledge of his sexuality isn't a huge revelation, but a matter of fact, and isn't considered a big personality trait. He's bisexual and it doesn't impact his friendships, family, job or character.

Oberyn Martell is another bisexual character whose appearance on TV was short lived. With his introduction at a brothel in King's Landing, he is immediately depicted as being surrounded by naked men and woman, where he chooses a paid casual encounter with Olyvar. Oberyn acts as a loyal fighter and is seen as being traditionally masculine, with the exception of his sexuality. But in this case, Oberyn's bisexual tendencies are intrinsically linked to his exotic otherness—he resides in the "uncivilised" Dorne, south of Westeros, wearing nontraditional royal clothing, and is one of few darker-skinned characters among the predominantly White upper class of King's Landing along with his lover Ellaria Sand. But as with all bisexual characters on television, Oberyn is quickly disposed of and doesn't become an integral part of the series.

Captain Jack Harkness from *Doctor Who*, and later *Torchwood*, is apparently one of few accurate portrayals of bisexual men on television. Jack is seen as more of a conventional action hero with some moments of unabashed flirtation. Having never been interested in *DW* or *Torchwood* myself, I never watched Jack, but have heard from other young gay and bisexual people that Jack's sexuality isn't exploitative. It doesn't undermine his character, and is considered ordinary and dealt with matter-of-factly. Jack has also been deemed pansexual, which is a progressive aspect of his characterization, but somewhat falls outside the field of bisexuality.

Audiences influence much of the lack of bi men on TV. There's an inherent issue with straight male audiences not understanding that bisexual men would want to sleep with other men rather than a woman, even though they understand that gay men don't choose to be gay. A paper in the *Journal of Sex Research*, "Heterosexuals' attitudes towards bisexual men and women in the United States" echoes this

idea, displaying that heterosexual men rated male homosexuals and bisexuals lower than female homosexuals and bisexuals. Likewise, many male viewers may feel threatened by bisexual characters, because they defy heteronormativity in a different way to homosexuality; bisexual women are less threatening to a straight male audience than lesbians because they are sexually available to men.

The recently ended TV adaptation of the comic book *Constantine* downplayed the titular character's sexuality. Many commentators believed that he was never bisexual (because references to his sexuality are subtle in the comics) and felt that his sexuality wasn't integral to his character. The show was cancelled, but fans never forgave TV producers for once again erasing Constantine's bisexuality in the story.

What appears to be happening is a pattern of bi-erasure on television. Recognition has always been a challenge for bisexual community, especially when numbers of self-identifying men are small. On-screen representation is something that is important to people in the bisexual community, especially ensuring that their portrayals are accurate and fair, and not for the drama of a series. What the bisexual community needs is TV shows that will inspire and represent our community effectively, like what *Will & Grace* and *Ellen* did in the 1990s to empower the gay and lesbian community.

TV frequently misunderstands bisexuality and abuses it for the sake of story lines. Instead, we need characters on TV to embrace their bisexuality and to be shown exploring their identity, like so many of the community. It is right to praise the growing complexity and inclusion of gay and lesbian characters on TV, but it's time for female bisexual characters to stop pandering to straight male audiences and time for the bi men to come out (literally and figuratively) so that their characters evolve as well.

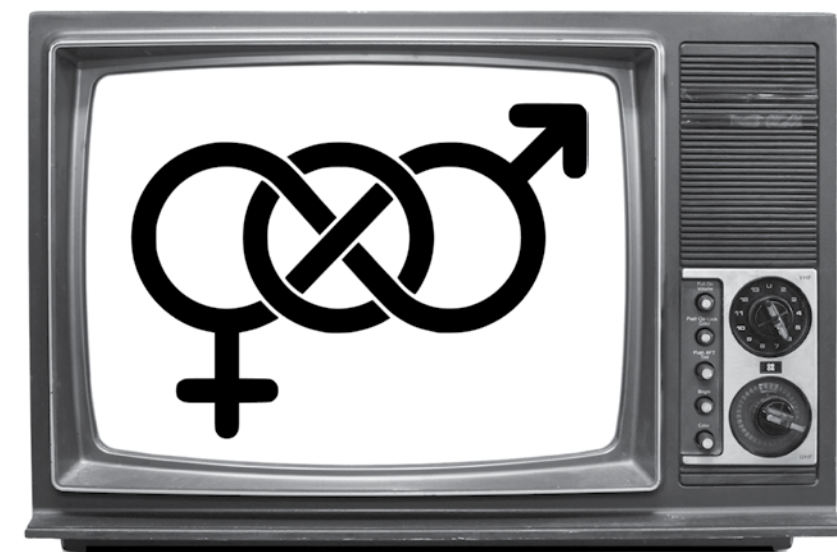
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President's Report

Kyol Blakeney

Pride. It's often seen as a sin. It is said to be something that does nothing but feed one's ego and put them above others. People will often tell you to be modest, to not stand out, to not be who you are and just conform to what the majority of society is telling them to do. You must not question the status quo.

I tend to take a different approach. I believe you should have pride in who you are. I believe you should stand out. I believe you should question the status quo. The fact is that for people from marginalised groups, pride can sometimes be all they have. I am talking about people of colour, wom*n, and people who identify as queer. I am talking about those people

who are constantly kicked to the side because they may be seen as 'different'.

In this society, people are rejected from their families and their homes for being who they are. They are spat on in the street and called names. They are physically or verbally assaulted in public and private spaces because they are seen as 'different'.

What many people don't understand is that when there is a problem that society has thrown at you, there is a high chance that these 'different' people know exactly how it feels. There is also a high chance that those 'different' people are the ones who are filled with understanding and compassion. They will be the ones to

stand in solidarity with you. And they will do it with pride; owning absolutely everything they wear, owning the actions they take, owning the attitude they have, and showing society that they are the only ones who own them.

But the disappointing thing is that when all of that is over and society returns to its status quo, most people will still continue to abuse those who are 'different'. They will try to cut down their pride and degrade them as less than human. It is at this point that a trans* person who stood beside a worker to defend their wages is brutally beaten during a night out, or a father throws his son out of his house because he has admitted that he is attracted to the

same sex. It is at this point that a queer student walks into a bathroom to find homophobic slogans scratched across the door of the cubical. It's at this point that those 'different' people have, once again, only been left with their pride.

Pride is something that cannot be taken away from you no matter what else has. It's what drives people to continue their work when all odds are against them and I encourage those who are 'different' in our society to remain proud of who they are and show the world what you are capable of because I will always stand beside you with pride.

General Secretaries' Report

Chiara Angeloni

With just under three months left until the end of our term, the theme running through much of our work at the moment – from challenging university policy, to reviewing SRC procedure, to collaborating with other student organisations on campus – is looking towards the future of the SRC and students to come.

Since you last heard from us, we've been working with the President and Executive to institute some changes in the SRC arising from the mid-year Office Bearer consults. We also coordinated the SRC's stall at the University's Open Day last Saturday. We met many bright-eyed,

bushy-tailed high school students eager to find out what was next in store in their learning journey. They were especially excited to hear about the campaigns and initiatives run by SRC collectives and snapped up copies of the SRC's 'How to Uni', 'Growing Strong' and 'Counter Course' handbooks.

There's no greater a reminder of how fast our term has gone than the fact that Eastern Avenue is soon going to be flooded, once again, with students in brightly-coloured shirts campaigning for the SRC elections. From Camperdown to 'Cumbo' to the 'Con' and beyond, they'll be asking for your vote to represent your

interests in the SRC. The positions up for election include President, 33 Councillors (who will elect the 2016 SRC Office Bearers), 7 delegates to the National Union of Students' National Conference, and the editors of *Honi Soit*.

Your vote will go towards deciding which students will sit at the head of a \$1.65 million organisation dedicated to defending and advancing the rights of all undergraduate students at our university. Next week's edition of *Honi Soit* will feature the policy statements of students running in the election. In between mid-sems and your fifth pot of tea to procrastinate from said mid-sems, please

read this information closely and carefully to make a considered judgment on which candidate you'll vote for to best represent your interests.

As for your current SRC representatives, there will be a Council meeting on 6pm Wednesday September 2 at the Professorial Boardroom in the Quadrangle. Max and I will be giving our General Secretaries' report as per usual and presenting policy to be voted on by Council regarding the loaning of items to Office Bearers from the SRC's shared resources pool. Any interested undergraduate students are more than welcome to attend.

Ethnic Affairs Officers' Report

Eden Caceda, Deeba Binaei, Lamisse Hamouda, & Kavya Kalutantiri

Last week the Autonomous Collective Against Racism (ACAR) *Honi Soit* edition appeared on stands and we, at the collective, could not be more proud of the hard work our writers, editors, illustrators, photographers, poets and comedians put into our second ever issue. We also thank the beautiful people at the SRC and our launch performers and singers who helped us celebrate this wonderful occasion.

But structures of oppression are not isolated and white supremacy, sexism, queerphobia, ableism and classism all

intersect. There is no space safe from each of these oppressions and it's important to never see any of these issues separately. What this means the most is that those of us at the intersections frequently suffer, face discrimination and can experience great pain, even from the communities that from which we belong.

If we want to continue anti-racist organization, we must continue to understand and organize again the multiple ways queerphobia manifests in our communities and every day lives.

Queer organizing will be nothing if our queer spaces are inhospitable to Indigenous people, people of colour, wom*n and disabled people, and vice versa. We need to work together and refrain from viewing each oppression differently.

This year we are fortunate to have two queer-identifying office bearers, and we are proud to continue to foster the inclusion of more queer people of colour in our collective. Too often we silence or don't give enough opportunity for intersectional voices to be heard above

those in power. We hope this increase in representation and inclusion of varied voices can expand to all SRC collectives and into other institutions.

Indeed we work hard to improve things for our communities, but our goals should be bigger and should remember that intersectionality exists. We will not achieve anything until equality exists within every community and we ensure that society is feminist, anti-racist, decolonial, non-ableism and queer-safe space.



Education Officers' Report

David Shakes & Blythe Worthy

With all the whimsical flair of a not-yet-disgraced Barry Spurr, a few short months ago our Vice Chancellor Michael Spence declared his intentions to "wake the proverbial sleeping dragon" (fire staff and cut courses) in order to prevent a thousand flowers from continuing to bloom (???) through a "traumatic" (verbatim) university restructure for the 2016-2020 period. Dissent to this proposal must be spread as quickly as possible lest we forever say goodbye to double degrees, three year degrees, over a hundred undergraduate degrees, many more staff lost through redundancies, remaining staff's job

security and teaching conditions, already limited resources for staff and students, diversity of course content, accessibility to all levels of education, student debts smaller than mortgages, joy, value, and purpose, among other things.

Sydney University is an institution of considerable power, and the direction it takes in this 2016-2020 period is important and has consequences for the university sector. Made clear by the Vice Chancellor's dismissal of questions and concerns raised by staff and students to do with the restructure and the established

history of years of aggressive cuts to staff and work conditions, University management is not on our side. They've bought into the "accepted wisdom" of decades of cuts to public funding for higher education from the government and are pursuing students for costs most of these baby boomers never had to pay, be that through lobbying for fee deregulation or introducing an internal restructure.

This is all happening while former student, social reformer and Prime Minister Gough Whitlam is paraded about in USYD's massive new marketing

campaign. The late Gough Whitlam's great contribution to the university sector was abolishing fees for higher education. The university using his influence for their marketing campaign while simultaneously trying desperately to find a way to increase student fees is not only hypocritical, it is disrespectful, and representative of the many years that have been spent by the university pursuing international repute at the expense of teaching conditions and quality of education. The terrific façade of Open Day this past weekend was another example of this; the University never seemed so cheery. Lucky it was a weekend.



Environment Officers' Report

Jay Gillieatt

On one horror day a few weeks ago, the Abbott government affirmed its commitment to making Australia the world's most regressive nation. Not only were we to be behind the rest of the developed world in Equal Marriage, but just as proudly, we were to have the weakest commitments to reducing our emissions, as if we were going for the last place award on all fronts. It's days like these that the relentless attacks on people and the planet by "Coal is good for humanity" Tony and his cronies makes you want to despair. But one person's despair achieves little. Rather only by organising, through action together, can we make change. And

what a better place to start than right here on campus with other likeminded students through the SRC Environment Collective.

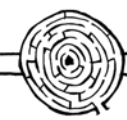
The Environment Collective is an opportunity to engage in environmental campaigns on campus and engage in the environment movement through the Australian Student Environment Network and beyond. So far this semester have been getting our Community Garden ready for Spring to teach students about sustainable growing, preparing the next phase of Fossil Free USYD's campaign to make USYD divest from fossil fuels and

are preparing an eye opening contribution to the Verge Festival. Building campaign skills are another big part of what we do, recently our members have been skilling up on Non-Violent Direct Action, The Fossil Free movement, and soon we will be holding climbing workshops. Coming up in the Mid-Semester break will be a road trip to visit the blockades stopping logging in Victoria's East Gippsland. If that sounds like something you would like to get involved in, or if you have your own idea for a campaign and want to meet up with a network of likeminded students, come along to one of our meetings. Don't despair, take action with us!

The Environment Collective meets every Tuesday at 12pm at Manning Sunken Lawns.

The Fossil Free working group - Tuesday at 11.30 at Manning Sunken Lawns

The Community Garden working group - Friday at 12pm at Level 5 Wentworth Building Balcony.



Queer Find-A-Word

D	F	T	M	A	R	R	I	A	G	E	S	P	S	M	R
D	E	L	P	U	C	H	I	L	L	L	L	R	A	D	A
A	E	K	V	H	Q	I	L	Q	A	P	W	I	L	S	I
D	O	U	C	A	U	Z	H	G	A	Y	Z	D	A	M	N
R	K	I	Z	O	T	Y	T	O	L	X	C	B	D	E	B
A	B	Q	K	P	R	I	D	E	U	U	Z	X	T	P	O
G	D	R	J	X	A	E	U	P	B	P	E	V	O	L	W
K	J	E	S	F	N	Q	U	E	E	R	I	P	S	X	X
B	Q	O	C	Y	S	L	V	V	E	R	Y	Z	S	I	P
S	N	E	P	T	G	P	R	R	E	T	T	R	E	L	P
T	Y	J	P	S	C	I	S	S	O	R	I	N	G	F	I
E	Y	T	I	L	A	U	Q	E	P	X	R	U	A	T	G
A	Q	I	C	H	R	K	N	A	I	B	S	E	L	E	D
L	T	T	F	O	C	E	Y	A	X	B	L	Q	E	N	Q
T	A	L	S	T	O	N	E	W	A	L	L	F	C	U	L
H	F	Y	R	Y	R	A	N	I	B	N	O	N	Z	O	Q

Clues

- | | |
|------------------|-----------|
| Gay | Stonewall |
| Scissoring | Marriage |
| BQOC | Trans |
| Queerrevuerocked | Drag |
| Queer | Stealth |
| Lesbian | Pride |
| Saladtoss | Nonbinary |
| Love | Netflix |
| Equality | Chill |
| Rainbow | Lube |



Special Consideration – Who Cares?



If you are sick or have experienced some misadventure that has stopped you from being able to complete an assessment or exam you can claim Special Consideration.

However, did you know that this includes being a carer for someone who is sick? Of course there are conditions. For example, you have to be their primary carer, and be able to prove that. The University's policy says:

Students who bear a primary carer responsibility toward another person at the time of an assessment may also apply for special consideration on the basis of

illness, injury or misadventure on the part of the person for whom they care if their ability to prepare for or perform the assessment is adversely affected.

So if you are in that situation, get the appropriate documentation and apply before the 5 day deadline.

If it is a situation that you can foresee, then you should talk to your teacher about getting special arrangements instead of special consideration. This might include doing your exam earlier or having a different type of assessment or something else we haven't thought of.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION
Get a doctor's certificate on the day of the assessment.
If you're too sick to go to the doctor, get a doctor to come to your house. There are many available via Google. For help with your application, talk to an SRC Caseworker: 9660 5222.



Ask Abe

SRC Caseworker HELP Q&A

Dear Abe,

I've got a million things going on in my life at the moment and uni just can't be my number one priority. I can't imagine that I will be attending many classes from now until the end of the year. I know I've missed the HECs census date, but is there a way that I can avoid failing.

Past Census

Dear Past Census,

You are still in time to apply for a Discontinue Not to count as Fail grade (DC). Look on your faculty website for details on how to do this. This means you will have no academic penalty, but will still be liable for fees. However, if you can show that you reasonably believed that you could complete the subject at the beginning of the year, then you experienced an illness or misadventure that was not predictable and beyond your control, you may be able to apply for a refund or re-crediting of your fees / HECS. Ask an SRC caseworker for details based on your personal circumstances.

Abe

Notice of Council Meeting

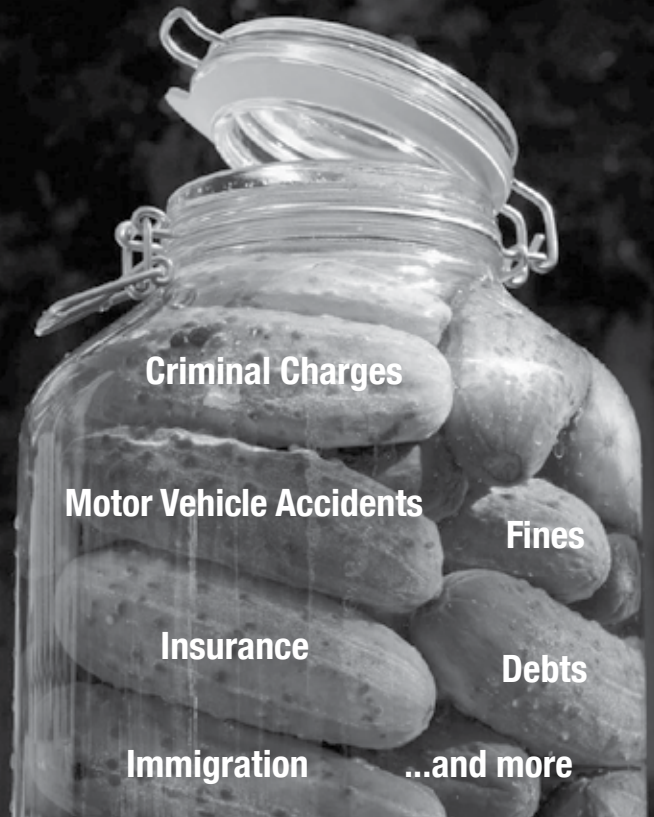
87th Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney

DATE: 2nd September
TIME: 6-8pm
LOCATION: Professorial Board Room (Quadrangle)



Students' Representative Council, The University of Sydney
 Phone: 02 9660 5222 | www.src.usyd.edu.au

IN A PICKLE?



If You Have a Legal Problem,
We Can Help for FREE!

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e: solicitor@src.usyd.edu.au
ACN 146 653 143 | MARN 1276171

法律諮詢 We have a solicitor who speaks Cantonese, Mandarin & Japanese
法律アドバイス
Liberty limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation



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Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney | p: 02 9660 5222 | w: src.usyd.edu.au

Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney

Want some work? Polling Booth Attendants Required

The SRC is looking for people to work on the polling booths for its elections this year.

If you can work on
Wed 23rd Sept and/or Thurs 24th Sept,
and attend a training at 4pm Tues 22nd Sept,
we want to hear from you!

\$33.02 per hour

There may also be an opportunity to undertake additional work at the vote count. Application forms are available from the SRC Front Office (Level 1 Wentworth Building). For more info, call 9660 5222. Applications close 4pm, Tues 8th September 2015.

Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney Annual Election

Polling Booth Times and Places 2015

Polling Location	Wed 23rd Sept 2015	Thurs 24th Sept 2015	Pre-Polling
Fisher	8:30–6:30	8:30–5:00	Pre-Polling will also be held outside the SRC Offices, Level 1 Wentworth Bldg, on Tuesday 22nd September from 10am–3pm.
Manning	10:00–4:00	10:00–4:00	
Cumberland	11:00–3:00	11:00–3:00	
SCA	12:00–2:00	No polling	
Engineering	No polling	12:00–2:00	
Conservatorium	12:00–2:00	No polling	
Jane Foss	8:30–6:00	8:30–6:00	



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A letter from the Premier of NSW Mike Baird

Dear Queer Honi,

It is my great pleasure as Premier of NSW to be given this opportunity to extend a ten foot pole of friendship to the Gay, Lesbian, Bacon and Tomato peoples of Sydney. On behalf of the government I send my best wishes for this Queer edition of Honi as well as my best team of government censors. I know many of you are less than keen on me and the boys down at the Lib Tank this week given recent events at a certain former school, but I would like to take this opportunity to explain that my government and I fully support the rights of gay people – just so long as those rights don't extend to marrying or being acknowledged to exist. (Also we're not too keen on the whole two guys banging part either to be honest, but let's not get bogged down in detail.)

Now I know that a lot of you will be upset about not being able to brainwash our children with your radical PC ideas like "equality" and "existing" but the fact is schools are an apolitical place of learning and if you wanted people under the age of 18 to know you exist then you shouldn't have made the political decision to be born the way you are, Greens voters. And before you try and correct me that there are some people that are born both Liberal and gay like Tim Wilson, I would point out that he can hardly be considered a person. Don't get me wrong though, banning that film wasn't discrimination against you guys- I have always been very clear in my belief that schools shouldn't be a place for politics. They should be a place of study, a place of teaching, and once a week a place for state sponsored religious indoctrination. But no politics. The last thing we need is more informed voters.

I promise I would have done the exact same thing if a school was proposing to play a movie about another political issue, like say a film about the systematic oppression of a people based on the colour of their skin and the changing attitudes of white people in the American South as viewed through the eyes of an innocent four year old girl. We never would have allowed a film like that in the English curriculum. Not in a million years.

So instead of focusing on one bad incident, I would just like to take a second to draw attention to all the things the Liberal government has done to further the rights of LGBT people over the last year instead:

- Continued to employ a Roads Minister whose last name is Gay
- Got rid of the legal right to kill gay people (okay yes this was last year, but you can't expect us to pass laws EVERY year!)

Boy, that's one long list! Anyways, I gotta bounce. These shirts don't half unbutton themselves, and I've just been given word of a teenager who is getting dangerously close to coming to terms with their identity. So good luck with this paper of yours, god speed, and if you're under 18 and reading this please be aware that the police are on their way.

Baird out.

Queer Representation in the Media Threatens Endangered Species of Stereotypes

A new report commissioned by Minister Against the Environment Greg Hunt has revealed that more and better representations of queer people in the media have caused irreparable damage to numerous species of stereotypes. The report recommends raising the conservation status of the affected species from vulnerable to endangered.

The effects of giving minority groups fair media representation have long been understood by social scientists. Conservationists, the report explains, have largely failed to take a holistic approach to preserving these stereotypes, neglecting to prevent noxious infestations of realistic portrayals. While some conservationists have tried to counterbalance the effects of these representations with misrepresentations, their efforts have increasingly failed to protect the affected stereotypes.

According to the report, members of the public—who play a vital role in sustaining stereotype populations—are largely embracing queer representations in the media, giving these the attention and consideration formerly given to stereotypes.

The realisation that these representations cause as much harm to stereotypes as they do has inspired many conservations to change tactics. Rather than seeding misrepresentations and hoping they take root, conservationists now prefer to prevent representations from growing at all. This conservation method recently received considerable public attention when NSW Indoctrination Minister Adrian Piccoli banned the screening of queer documentary *Gayby Baby* in schools.

The report estimates that population sizes of affected stereotype species will decline by up to 80 per cent in 20 years if trends in representation aren't reversed soon. Conservations are pessimistic about their chances of success, with many abandoning queer stereotypes to conserve more socially acceptable stereotypes about asylum seekers.



Sydney University Safe Space Deemed Unsafe Due to Lion Pit

Sydney University's Queer Action Collective (QuAC) has announced that the University's Queer Space could no longer be considered a safe space due to the presence of a lion pit. The recent Holme Building renovations installed, among other things, a two-metre deep enclosure within the refurbished Queer Space, partitioned from the room by half a metre of chicken wire. This enclosure was filled, and has since been consistently restocked, with live lions.

A queer activist who wished to remain anonymous described the situation as "unjust", declared the perpetrators "queerphobic", and stated that "the demands of safer spaces are very simple and uncontroversial: the right to not be judged by one's sexual or gender identity, the right to express one's identity without discrimination or harassment and the right to not be mauled by lions." In response, a University of Sydney Union (USU) spokesperson issued a statement refuting all allegations of queerphobia, claiming that "in no part of the Safer Spaces policy is there a specific prohibition against lion pits. In fact, the USU considers it

queerphobic that QuAC believes queer people cannot fight lions as well as non-queer people can. I myself, a straight cisgender male, have fought six lions, and slayed each one with no injuries to myself. I'm very good at fighting lions."

The USU has further stated they will not reconsider the decision, and have even implied plans to extend the pit. "I need more lions to fight," their spokesperson explained. "Bring me more lions! I cannot rest until I have killed one hundred lions! Bring them on! Send lions to me! I will kill them! More lions! More lions now!"

In reply, QuAC have announced their 2016 Mardi Gras float will be dedicated exclusively to raising awareness of the lion pit and educating the general public about why lions are problematic.

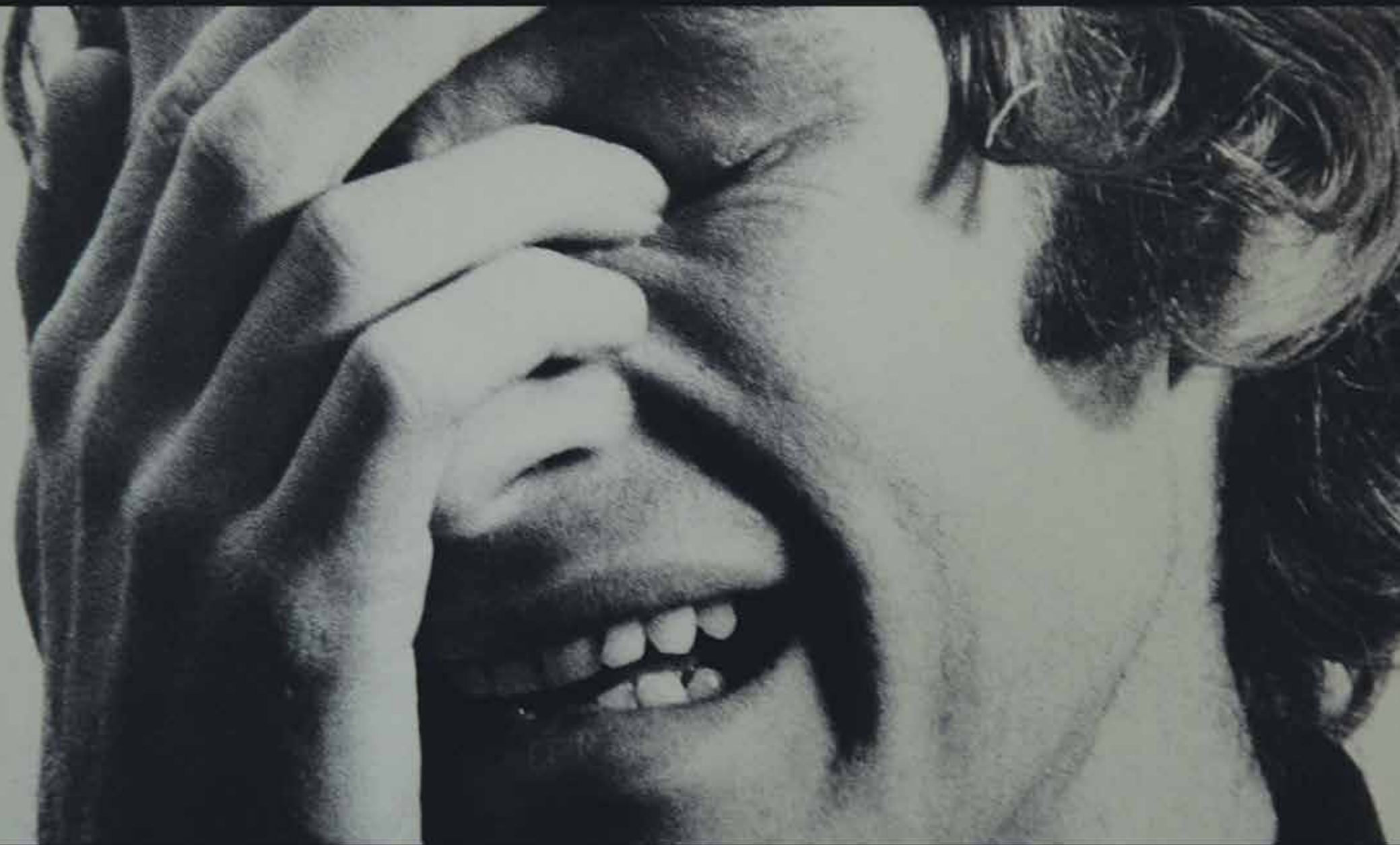
Honi Soit 2015 Opinion Competition

SHAME

Judged by Executive Editor of *The New Yorker*,
Amelia Lester.

What are you ashamed of?
What are you *not* ashamed of?

Pieces can be up to 800 words, and are due Friday 25th September.
Email your name, degree, and entries to editors@honisoit.com.
Do *not* include your name in the word document.



Prizes:

1st: \$1000

2nd: \$500

3rd: \$250 Highly Commended: \$150