

Wom*n's Honi

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USyd Wom*n's Collective protests an event perpetuating harmful misconceptions about contraception / May 2016

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EDITORIAL

*Anna Hush, Wom*n's Officer*

This week, investigative journalists have brought the culture of misogyny and sexual harassment at Sydney University's colleges into the spotlight. A flurry of articles in the mainstream media have explored an endemic culture of sexism that reduces women to the titles of 'best cleavage' or 'best pornstar', or the number of men they have 'racked'.

However, sexual harassment and assault do not only happen in colleges, nor in dark alleyways and backstreets. These are phenomena that happen in classrooms and in homes. Perpetrators are most often friends, family members or other trusted acquaintances.

The stories in this edition show the huge range of experiences that fall under the umbrella

term 'harassment', and explore the structural aspects of our society that allow these experiences to take place, and in many cases, go unreported or unnoticed.

The pages herein may not be filled with 'objective' or 'balanced' journalism; these are deeply personal stories, arising from distinct lived experiences of wom*nhood. Some are funny, some are sad, and all of them are moving. I am proud to share these stories with you and to promote the voices of women, which are too often silenced or mocked, and I thank all the contributors below for bravely sharing their stories and experiences.

I hope you enjoy this special edition of *Honi Soit*, edited by a team from the Wom*n's Collective, as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

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Anna Hush

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Acknowledgement of country

As we present this edition of Wom*n's Honi to you, we would like to acknowledge that all the hard work that went into it, hours of writing and editing, as well as all of our meetings and events as a collective, take place on the sovereign land of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation.

We are incredibly privileged to be students at one of the country's oldest and wealthiest academic institutions. We believe it is our duty to use this privilege to actively work against the ongoing colonial violence that underpins Australian society. We need to educate ourselves and each other about the racist history of academia, and Sydney University in particular. Academia is founded on an ethos of elitism, creating boundaries between those who have the wealth and opportunity to gain access to the ivory tower, and those who do not. Indigenous people have been systematically excluded from the academic world by structural socioeconomic disadvantage as well as racist attitudes that permeate academic research. This exclusion will only be exacerbated by the federal government's proposed deregulation of the university sector, which will push degree costs up to \$100,000 and entrench further educational inequality, as well as the University's internal restructure plans.

Outside the intellectual bubble of the university, Indigenous women face a specific set of challenges that are not adequately acknowledged by feminists, academics or mainstream discourse. Indigenous women are hospitalised due to violence from their partners at a rate 35 times higher than non-Indigenous women, and are three times more likely to experience sexual violence. Incarceration rates for Indigenous women are skyrocketing: between 2000 and 2010, the number of Indigenous women in prison rose by almost 60%. Aboriginal children are being removed from their mothers at the highest rate in Australian history, making the Stolen Generations a definitively ongoing phenomenon, not a historical relic.

WHAT IS THE WOM*N'S COLLECTIVE?

The University of Sydney Wom*n's Collective is a group of women and non-binary students engaged in intersectional feminist activism - that is, activism that responds to race, class, sexuality and other structures of oppression, in addition to gender. We organise campaigns, educational and social events that relate to feminism. We are funded by the Students Representative Council and operate under a non-hierarchical, collective organising model. This year, our major areas of work are around reproductive justice, sexual harassment and assault on campus.

Anyone who is a woman or non-binary person is welcome to join the collective! Come along to one of our meetings - 1pm every Tuesday, in the Manning Wom*n's Room - and keep up to date with our campaigns by following us on social media.



facebook:
facebook.com/usydwoco
twitter: @usydwoco

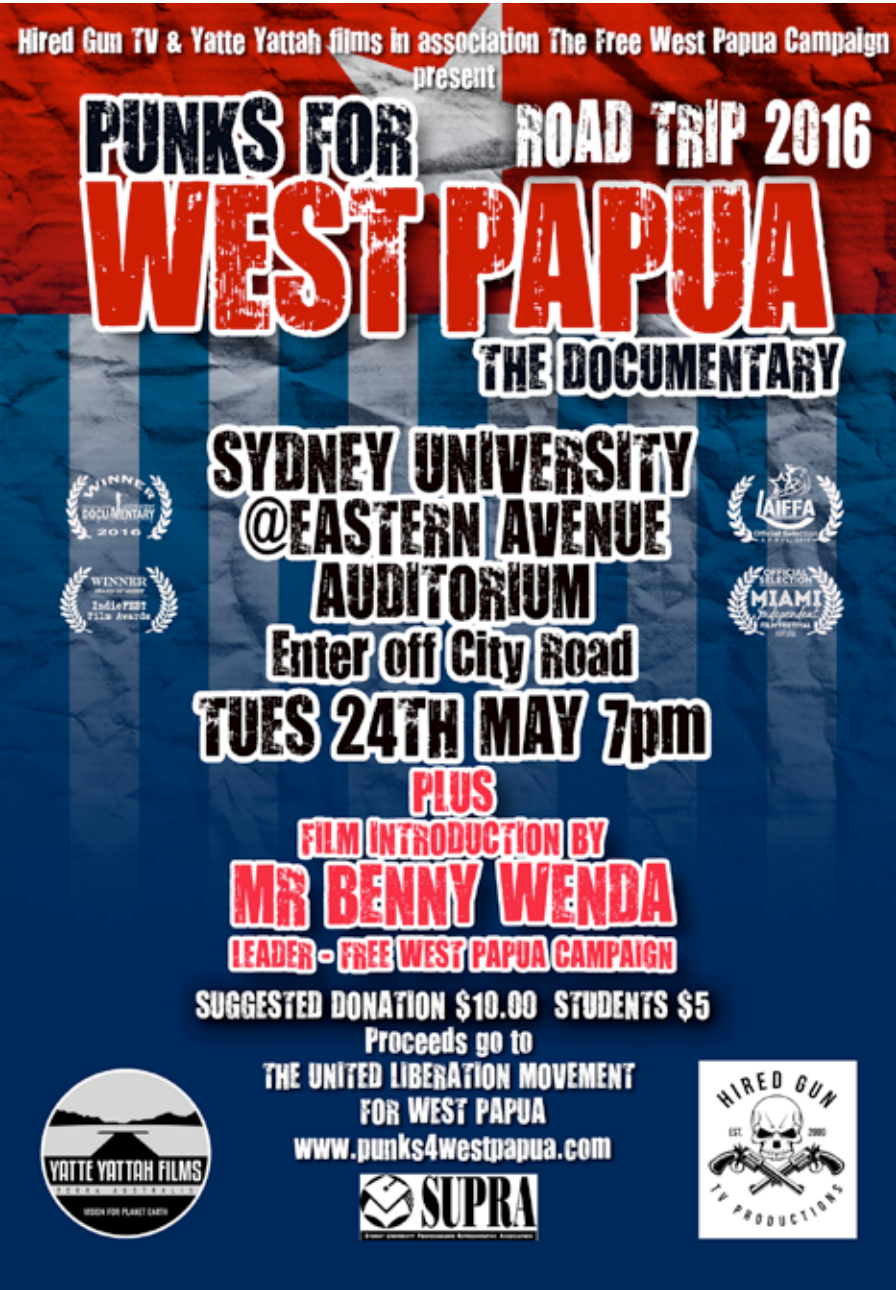
[srcusyd.net.au/
representation/src-
departments/women](http://srcusyd.net.au/representation/src-departments/women)

However, these experiences remain on the margins of political discourse, partially because Indigenous women have few platforms from which to shed light on these issues. Autonomous publications, like Indigenous Honi and Wom*n's Honi, are a special opportunity to hear these stories from those affected by them. We need to seek out these stories and give the public an opportunity to hear them, because without first listening to Indigenous women, we will never be able to respond.

We also acknowledge that Aboriginal societies often have especially progressive gender relations, including matriarchal power structures, and great respect for brotherboys and sistergirls. The imposition of European patriarchal social structures disrupted many of these phenomena, imposing ways of being and relating to one another that harm people of all genders.

We hope that the stories within can help to work against the sexist structures that affect all of us, but especially Indigenous women. We hope that this acknowledgement can serve as a reminder that colonialism is not just an abstract political notion, but something that is borne out daily in our bodies, gestures, words and minds. We cannot escape the patriarchal, colonial society in which we live, but we can critique it from within. We should always remember that we are living on stolen land.

SOVEREIGNTY NEVER CEDED



FOCUS: SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT

Combatting college culture

SRC Residential Colleges Office Bearer, **Justine Landis-Hanley**, uncovers the toxic culture at the University of Sydney’s most prestigious, and polemic, living quarters.

CONTENT: SEXUAL HARASSMENT, SEXUAL ASSAULT

February 2014: it’s Kendra Murphy’s third morning at St Andrew’s College. She wakes to the crackle of a senior student’s voice echoing through the halls over the central PA system. The voice greets the students by reeling off their O-Week sexual encounters and embarrassing stories. Kendra listens in horror as they tell her new friends and neighbours the compromising tale of how her evening ended the night before. For the rest of the week, she is teased and mocked.

Kendra quickly learns that this sort of public shaming isn’t merely a one-off event, but a glorified tradition at the college. Every night, the senior students open up the college’s internal bar, the Highlander, to sell lollies, an event called ‘Buffet’. About once a week, a similar voice announces the start of Buffet by revealing college hook-ups and other personal information, a tradition known as ‘Buffet Chat’. A few weeks into semester, the students on Buffet Chat reveal that Peter* and Kendra were seen going back to his room during a college celebration, known as Victory Dinner (VD).

“They said it to everyone as if it was a funny thing, but what they didn’t know was that something bad happened that night,” Kendra said. Kendra alleges she was sexually assaulted. “Having that announced in front of the entire college, and having people come up to me and tease me for getting with Peter for weeks to come, was the absolute worst”.

Kendra’s story is not unique, and not confined to within the walls of St Andrew’s College.

On the first night of that very same O-Week, Sarah*, a Women’s College Fresher, was helped out of David*’s bedroom at St Paul’s College by her RA (Residential Assistant), after she was found drunk and vomiting into his bin. She can’t remember if they had sex. But as Sarah told *Honi*, “it wasn’t the incident itself, but the fallout and treatment of the situation that was unique to college”.

After apologising to David at an intercollege event the next day, Sarah thought that the situation was self-contained and put aside. She realised this was not the case at the Women’s and Pauls ‘Fresher Revue’: an annual show written by second-year students to make fun of the seniors, in which the Freshers are forced to perform. Sarah tells *Honi* she was made to play a Women’s resident made fun of in the show for having slept with lots of first years. This didn’t have the older girl’s consent. Nonetheless, Sarah said she was forced to rub baby oil on one of the other guys.

“I went along with it, but during the dress run, a bunch of Paul’s guys got drunk. One of my lines was “Mmmm, take your shirt off”. Suddenly, one of David’s friends at Paul’s yelled out, “is that what David said?” Paul’s boys continued to heckle Sarah in front of the entire cohort of Freshers. “The fact that I was heckled to my face on stage, while playing a girl who was also being slut shamed by the Women’s College community, was one of the most humiliating things... I felt so uncomfortable in that living space from then on”.

Being teased by her intercollegiate peers about an unwanted sexual experience became a familiar threat for Sarah. A few weeks later, she was walking home to her room when a bunch of boys on the tennis courts jeered “David, look who it is”. “I had to be scared when I walked around, or went back to my room, and into Paul’s from Chapel Choir. I would see those people who would make fun of me for this deeply personal thing that happened. No one in their right mind would think that is okay or tolerated in the real world. But college is different”.

College is different.

Last week saw University of Sydney colleges dominate mainstream media. USU’s *PULP Media* exposed a 2014 Wesley College student journal that labelled female college students as ‘hoes’ and ‘bitches’, shaming men and women who slept the most with each other, and handed out titles like “Best Rack” and “Best Pornstar”.

Speaking to former residents of various residential colleges since then, it was made clear to *Honi* that this shaming of sexual activity was widespread throughout the intercollegiate community.

In the past, Sarah said student leaders have started breakfast at Women’s O-Week with a slideshow of photos depicting the freshers in compromising and embarrassing situations from the night before. Kendra says that at St Andrew’s college Annual General Meetings, the House Committee picks out students to stand up and tell a joke or their first sexual experience.

Alexander Tighe says similar stunts were regularly during his time at St John’s College.

Speaking to these former college students, it quickly became clear that, within these sandstone walls, standards of normal behaviour and codes of conduct are heavily warped.

One example is ‘Fresher Fishing’ at St Andrew’s - an annual party that college administration have threatened to shut down, according to Julia*. Kendra also talked about this party, where groups of second year students are paired with first year students. “The aim of the party is to catch the bait; for the older students to catch the young fish and get them in bed”, said Kendra.

“No one in their right mind would think that is okay or tolerated in the real world. But college is different”.

Later in the year, St Andrew’s Freshers are also pressured to be auctioned off in groups for the annual ‘Walkabout’. Older students place monetary bids on the freshers lined up on their hands and knees like cattle in the college’s Highlander Bar. “It’s humiliating,” Kendra said. “The popular kids get upwards of \$200, and they fight over them. The non-popular kids get \$10. And all so they can dress you, get you drunk and drive you as far away as they want”.

FOCUS: SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT

But perhaps what is equally unique about college is the way that many college students have leapt to their institution’s defence to brush off or justify events like these when they have been exposed in the media.

In response to last week’s Wesley College Rackweb debacle, a person identified as “Robert Oliver”, who *Honi* believes to be a college student, defended Rackweb’s existence, arguing on Facebook that “it is a satire piece written for and by student [sic] take the piss out of a variety of things, even sexism as a concept”. Another identified as “Kate Burgess” denounced the article as “sensationalist drivell”, saying that she doesn’t “actually need to defend myself in the first place. Never had an instance of slut shaming nor discrimination”.

Several of these comments have since been deleted.

A former Wesley woman, who preferred to remain anonymous, told *Honi* that she and her friends found being named in Rackweb empowering.

“The thing that people need to understand is that it is all just jest. The journal is something produced by Wesley students for the enjoyment of the rest of the cohort. We all vote on the ‘awards’ section of the journal and all students have the power to ask not to be featured in the journal if they don’t want to be.”

As with Rackweb, active consent is the common defence against controversial college practices: students insist everyone is given the chance to opt-out and that their decisions are respected. It’s all harmless fun, after all. However, as former Women’s student Rachel* told *Honi*, this defence is fabricated to “cover the arse” of senior students.

“Of course it’s your option, of course you have agency, you don’t have to do anything, but you are in an environment where you don’t want to be the odd one out. You want to be like anyone else”.

The reality is that consent does not exist in a vacuum and as Sarah explains, college is “unlike any other community on campus”.

“Because you are in a living environment with these people it is assumed that all these things are okay and any dissent is used as social ammunition to be excluded, and no one wants to feel excluded from where they live... it takes time for people to find their voice and stand up to an institution that is incredibly protective and particularly savage on the internet”.

At times, this attitude towards silencing dissenting, and potentially revealing voices, is made explicit within the college: every former student I speak with mentions how their O-Week student leaders gave them the ‘media talk’, warning them against talking to the press, and encouraging them to give false names. In 2012, St John’s College administration had to arrange for alternative accommodation for some of their students who were threatened by their peers for speaking up after a girl nearly died during a college drinking ritual.

What becomes clear throughout all of my interviews is the fact that, for these students, living in these colleges was like being a fish in a fishbowl. From day one of Orientation Week, students are taught chants, given merchandise, have their personal stories revealed to their peers, and get their beds flipped over if they leave their bedrooms unlocked. Sarah says that this level of intimacy within the college fosters insularity.

“It alters their mentality, particularly the way that some colleges actively discourage engaging with

the university... at the end of the day, your only friends are from college, the last thing you want to do is attack them and say something that goes against their reputation.” This isolation creates a bubble within college, in which all behaviour becomes relative to warped norms. It is largely with hindsight and distance that the students I speak with say they have been able to gain perspective on the inappropriateness of these practices and their experiences. It’s very difficult to opt out of a culture when you live there.

Arguably, this culture allows for these behaviours and practices to perpetuate under the guise of ‘tradition’ and ‘harmless fun’. It’s why at St Andrew’s College, older students rip the shirts of boys, and girls with large breasts, during Victory Dinners, Kendra says. It’s why, she says, following their O-Week sexual harassment talks in 2014, the girls were told by senior students to line up waiting for the boys, and try to grope them sexually because it would ‘be really funny, because they’ll be too afraid to look at you after being told that they can’t touch you without your consent... they won’t know what to do’.

It’s why, when Sarah cried to her Residential Assistant (RA) during O-Week because she was embarrassed about her drunken sexual encounter at St Paul’s, her RA reassured her by saying ‘Don’t worry, this is a rite of passage; during my O-Week, I was found passed out on the St Paul’s lawns without any pants on. This is just part of it’.

It’s why it is acknowledged, accepted and assumed that students may have experiences like this during the time at college.

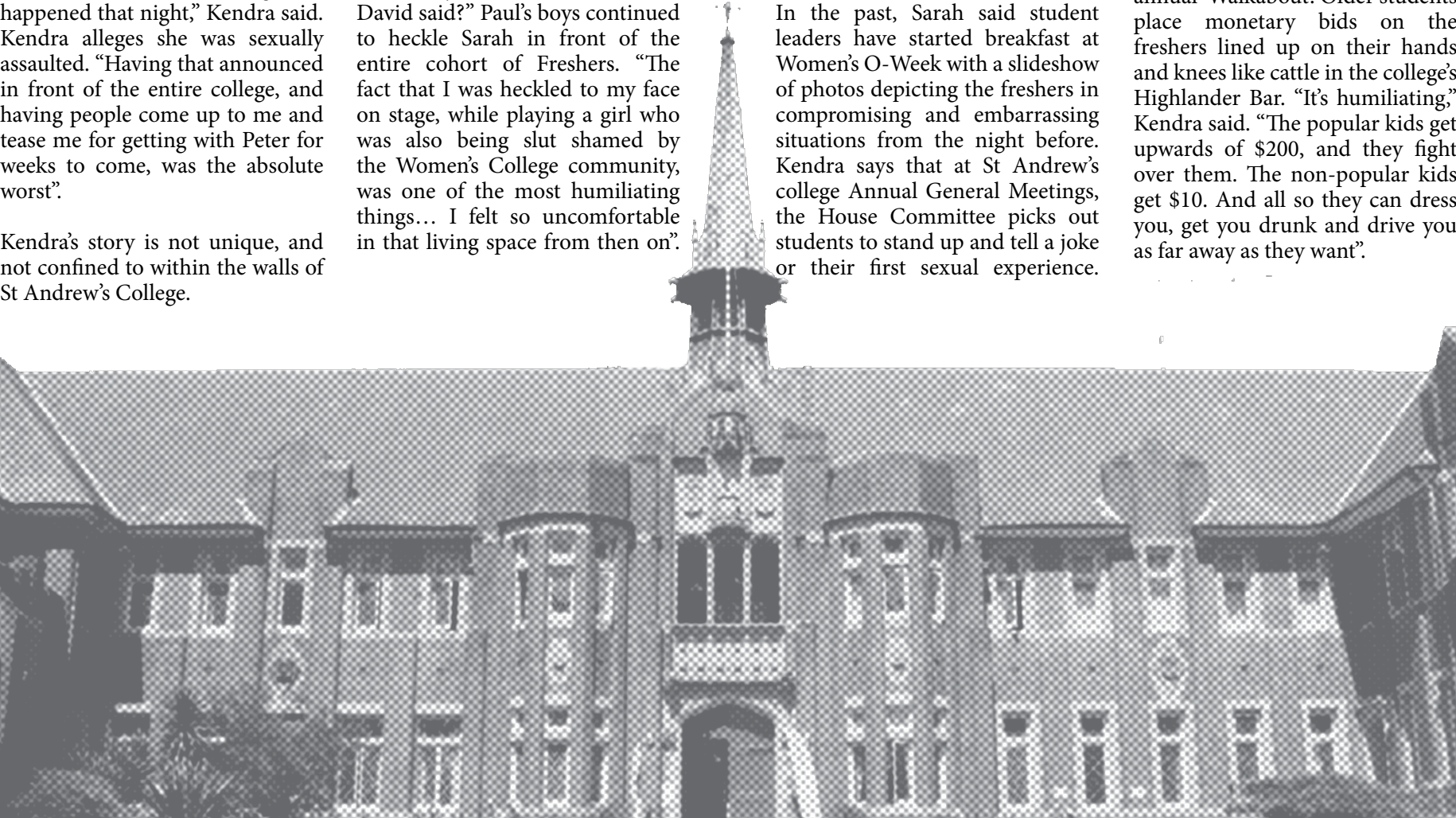
Clearly not everyone who goes to college experiences discrimination, or is made to feel uncomfortable by their living environment. Not everyone is a victim. And it is not my aim to portray all college students as victims. You cannot homogenise personal experiences. Nor is it the case that the students who endorse and partake in these behaviours do so with malicious intent. However, the fact is that some people are deeply affected by what is arguably a toxic culture. This piece is not an attack on the individual - it is an attack on an environment that compels people to behave in certain ways, and subject others to this behaviour.

How we enact change within the aforementioned institutions is a dilemma fraught with difficulty. It would require overturning years of action and inaction that has been continually justified as ‘tradition’. Further, the only way that change can be brought about is if it is willed by the institutions and their constituencies. They need to investigate their own systemic sanctioning of dangerous behaviours and take the appropriate steps to combat them. Fighting such a deeply entrenched set of practices, perpetuated by a generally forgiving mentality, is undoubtedly difficult, but certainly possible.

At what point do we look back and realise that things still need to change?

**Not their real name*

If you have experienced sexual harassment or assault, or want to talk about these issues, you can call 1800RESPECT. This service provides 24/7 professional counselling over the phone and is completely confidential.



Inexcusable excuses

Olivia Borgese thinks that we should stop making excuses for street harassment and name it for what it is

CONTENT: STREET HARASSMENT

A close friend of mine, Eirinn, was recently chased by an unknown man on campus. It happened when she was walking home from the library, after another late night of writing her thesis. She sensed someone was following her and turned around. Before she could say anything, he started running towards her. She was fortunate to live around the corner, and ran home.

One of her housemates called Campus Security to report the incident, and was told there was an intercom on each campus map for assistance. They were sympathetic, but there was no time for her to stop, speak over an intercom and wait for security to respond.

She was very lucky to get away.

I too was lucky. Last year after a late night shift at work, I was sitting at a bus stop in Glebe waiting for friends. I could see a group of obnoxiously loud, drunken men walking towards me from the distance. I tensed up, held my breath and stared at my phone. When I looked up, they were crowded around me and I couldn't move. The leader, and drunkest of the group, sat on my lap and grinded on me to the amusement of his friends. I was too paralysed to move and too scared to respond.

After a while, he got up and another member of the group excused his friend's behaviour

by holding up a goon sack. They left and I sat there, trying to process what had happened. My friends arrived shortly afterwards – we talked about it for a while, laughed it off, drank wine and tried to forget about it.

Eirinn and I both talked about going to the police, but it was just something that never eventuated. My friend was too distressed and didn't know what the police could do. We felt lucky that nothing more happened to us.

These excuses are a gentle coming-to-terms with a society that refuses to pay harassment and assault anything more than lip service.

After a while, we both started making excuses – Eirinn began suggesting that her perpetrator was unwell, and I blamed my unwanted lap dance on an inebriated display of masculinity. We both told our stories making sure to mention what we were wearing - my friend in her pyjamas, and me in jeans – to avoid the blame we knew was imminent. We both agreed we needed to be more aware of the space we were in late at night

- street harassment had become normalised for us. Unfortunately almost every wom*n I know has a similar story as these experiences are sadly all too common.

As wom*n, we often internalise the excuses we hear to defend this kind of behaviour – ‘he was just drunk’, ‘he’s going through a really hard time’, ‘it’s just a joke’, ‘he’s just that kind of guy’, ‘he says/does that to everyone’, and my personal favourite, ‘you just need to get to know him better’. These excuses delegitimise experiences of harassment.

Of course these excuses are just a reflection of an intense cultural, social and political neglect towards listening to wom*n when harassment occurs. These excuses are nothing more than a defence; an in-built coping mechanism in response to a culture around gendered harassment that refuses to listen. They are a gentle coming-to-terms with a society that refuses to pay harassment and assault anything more than lip service.

Just like the emptiness of the mechanical engineering faculty at night, or being alone at the bus stop, wom*n find themselves similarly alone when they try to speak up. The isolating nature of harassment, as an experience on its own, mirrors the isolation society forces on wom*n when refusing accountability, defending men one excuse at a time.

The things we were never taught

Georgia Mantle on the failures of sex ed to teach us the reality of sexual assault

CONTENT: SEXUAL ASSAULT, VICTIM BLAMING

I remember being taught in high school religion class that it was very unlikely a woman would get pregnant from rape because she would be fighting her attacker off so furiously it would make it nearly impossible. I remember being taught self-defense in physical education and how to fight off an attack on the street. I remember being taught to say ‘no’. I remember being taught that drinking alcohol increases your risk of being assaulted.

None of my education equipped me to deal with my assault and the lessons I was taught to perpetuated self-blame and hatred. Being taught to say ‘no’ and being introduced to self-defense was great, but what happens when your attacker doesn't let you speak? Or what if your attacker isn't a stranger on the street? What then? When education refuses to teach the complexities of sexual assault, our education system is leaving people vulnerable.

I never thought I would be assaulted. I knew the statistics, but I also knew myself. I'm a fighter, I would often joke around with friends saying “good luck to any man who tries to attack me, I will cut his balls off”. This view came from my ignorance and my own internalised victim blaming. I had an image of what I thought a victim of sexual assault looked like and I believed I didn't fit that image.

I didn't understand that assault affects everyone differently, I didn't understand that sometimes the body freezes up out of fear, making it nearly impossible to move. I was taught how to fight and I always believed I would be able to do that, except when it came down to it, I couldn't. For a long time, I blamed myself. Why didn't I fight harder? Why didn't I yell, scream or shout? Why did I let him do this to me? It took months to accept that I didn't let this happen, that the alcohol in my system and the short skirt I was wearing didn't cause this. Education around sexual assault while I was growing up was always about what not to do. I broke all those rules that night. When what I had been

taught and the rules I had been told to follow were disregarded, I figured the only person who had done something wrong was me.

The thoughts I was having after the assault were making me sick; I felt depressed and anxious all the time and I began to question my right to call myself a feminist. I knew that if any other person were saying the things I was thinking I would reassure them; I would tell them that sexual assault is never the survivor's fault, yet when it came to saying the same things to myself I couldn't. I saw myself as a strong feminist, someone who stood up and fought against injustice but my concept of feminism and being a feminist didn't include weakness and vulnerability - feelings that everyone is entitled to have.

I never thought I would be assaulted. I had an image of what I thought a victim of sexual assault looked like and I believed I didn't fit that image.

I thought to be a feminist I had to reject those feelings to rise above the way my gender was viewed within society. I refused to acknowledge those feelings of weakness and vulnerability. I told a few close friends but then I pretended as if it has never happened. I didn't want to acknowledge what had happened because I didn't want to feel vulnerable. I wanted to move on, only that wasn't possible. The feelings I had weren't going away; years of education and societal pressures made me want to hide my experiences while my feelings were bringing me to tears every day. I felt as if I was breaking.

I eventually reached out and spoke to a professional, who told me it wasn't my fault and that I didn't deserve what had happened. I didn't realise how much I needed to hear those words. It was as if in the time leading up to hearing those words, I was holding my

breath and upon hearing them was finally I was able to breathe again. Part of me expected her to say that I hadn't been assaulted, that what had happened to me was my fault and that what had happened wasn't that bad, which is what I had told myself. Sharing the details of any assault is always difficult, but I was so scared that people would question what happened to me and deem it to not be a ‘real’ enough experience of assault.

I didn't report my attack. I was a drunk teenager; he was a sober man. I knew the law and I knew that no rape kit would pick up any evidence on my body against him. I stand by my decision not to pursue my assault with the police, but what are his repercussions now?

He says I didn't fight. I didn't say ‘no’ so how was he to tell that what he was doing was wrong? Will my failure to report him mean another woman has to suffer the same way I did?

Society puts so much pressure on the victim to control the outcome of their assault - we focus on the things they should have done or could have done, yet we don't acknowledge the complete loss of power that victims can experience in that situation. I was told to fight back, yet I was held down. I was told to yell, yet when it came down to it I felt as if I had lost my voice. Our education and understanding of sexual assault prevention needs to be re-directed to the perpetrators of assault. My experience of assault was a loss of power in that moment, as I was held down by him everything I was taught was forgotten.

Society tells us that women who experience sexual assault are broken and maybe I am, maybe I am scarred in a way that can't be fixed but despite all, I still love myself and despite what happened to me I will trust other people again.

A version of this piece originally appeared on 'Boobs, Bumps and Blood', a feminist sex ed blog. Check it out here: boobsbumpsandblood.tumblr.com.



Responding with compassion when someone discloses an experience of sexual assault

Guidance provided by the Full Stop Foundation / 1800RESPECT

INITIAL RESPONSE: DOS AND DON'TS		THREE KEY THINGS TO SAY	THIS IS HEARD AS...
Do:	Don't:		
Listen to their story.	Tell them what to do or try to take over.	I am sorry for what has happened.	I believe you.
Let them express how they feel.	Ask them the 'why' questions. i.e. why they were there, went there or why they trusted them.	What has happened is a crime.	This is not your fault.
Let them cry.	Get angry on their behalf.	I will do what I can to help.	You are not alone.
Encourage them.	Assume you know how they feel.		
Not worry if parts of their story don't add up.			
Tell them you are sorry for what happened.			
Explain what you can do.			



1800RESPECT
NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT, DOMESTIC
FAMILY VIOLENCE COUNSELLING SERVICE

1800RESPECT is a 24/7 hotline run by the Full Stop Foundation. Trained counsellors are always on hand to discuss experiences of sexual harassment, assault and domestic violence, as well as vicarious trauma. They can provide professional support and referrals to other services. Calls are completely confidential. **1800737732 | www.1800respect.org.au**

Women in science: academics breaking ground on gender equity and equality

Elisa Quijano writes on the gender disparity amongst science academics

While there remains equal representation of genders at an undergraduate and postgraduate degree level, the mass exodus of early career female scientists brings with it a loss of knowledge, talent and investment.

The Australian Academy of Science reports that only 17% of all senior academic positions at Australian universities and institutes are filled by women.

Within the University of Sydney’s Faculty of Science seven Schools and one Unit, only two are headed by women, with 23% making up all female Professors (level E) within the Faculty. Currently 29% of all Professors at the University of Sydney are female, with an aim to increase this to 40% by 2020.

Additional to gender quotas is the University’s “Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy” set in place last year. Dr Jenny Saleeba from the School of Life and Environmental Sciences says discrimination is done “not in an obvious way”.

Professor Maryanne Large from the School of Physics agrees, saying that “gender discrimination is much more subtle”. She believes the largest driving factor in gender inequality is unconscious bias. “If you don’t know of the unconscious bias, then you won’t have that conscious to change.”

Dr Lindsey Gray from the School of Life and Environmental Sciences suggests that "until women start getting equal "air-time" in work-place meetings, the unconscious bias will sadly remain. "Unfortunately, there still seems to be a societal perception that "conventional" men are the most worthy movers, shakers and leaders".

In a field dominated by men and a pressing need to change the culture of women being seen as outsiders, the Faculty of Science put forward a Gender Balance Action Plan in March. Titled the Women’s Career Acceleration and Leadership Strategy (WCAL), it aims to reach the University’s set gender targets.

As the 2020 gender quotas are collective, not all faculties are required to reach the targeted 40% for female professors. A University representative said “it would therefore be unreasonable to expect Science to have achieved a 40% figure by 2020. A more reasonable target of 33% has been set by the Faculty of Science to be reached by 2020.”

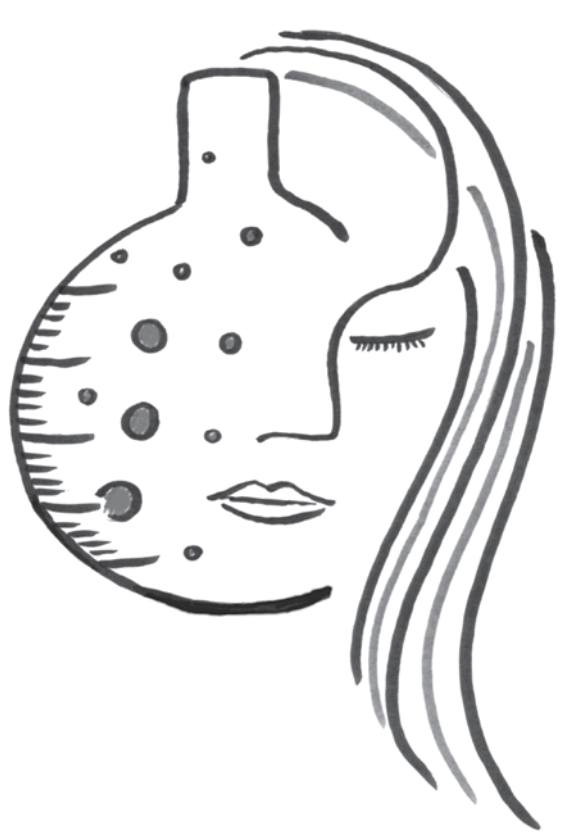
The WCAL Strategy brings together the faculty’s array of programs and initiatives, such as the Strategic Promotion Advice and Mentoring (SPAM), the Physics Equity and Access Committee (PEAC), the faculty governed Equity and Diversity committee and the ‘Family Friendly’ schemes.

Professor Fiona White from the School of Psychology and co-founder of the SPAM program says such initiatives “target the glass ceiling within academia”. White, who lacked an influential mentor during her earlier career, believes that “because of SPAM... women now have a mentor.”

Through the SPAM program female academics are advised on more senior (level D & E) roles through the assistance of feedback on applications and practice interviews.

Dr. Jenny Saleeba from the School of Life and Environmental Sciences acknowledged that “it was very hard to find a role model... I think I would have benefited from being able to find someone who I felt had a really good balance between work and life.”

Professor Large, however, believes that an emphasis on sponsorship rather than mentoring will aid female academics. “Sponsorship will more actively make sure they are given opportunities," she said.



Currently in place at the university are three equity fellowships with the Thompson fellowship open to women only, designed to address the gender disparity in academia. Such fellowships aim to offer an opportunity for women to move from Senior Lecturer (level C) to Associate Professor (level D) and on to Professor (level E).

Professor Large discussed how it is the key transitional period between more provisional periods of employment and on to permanent contracted positions that women will be at the age and life stage to start a family. When motherhood begins, women typically exit science academia.

The Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) group reported women making up half (48%) of junior academics but only a fifth (21%) of senior academics. "I do think these equity fellowships are assisting mums", says Professor White.

However, Professor Madeleine Beekman from the School of Life and Environmental Sciences suggested that such schemes can create a greater divide between the genders, feeding an attitude that women only achieve high positions because “it was given to them”.

On taking time off to become a mother, Professor Beekman believes it’s “a choice that women make. It’s easier for men to have it both ways, that is biological.”

As the Faculty’s 'Gender Action Plan' acknowledges the University’s gender targets won’t be reached by 2020 due to current staffing structures, the School of Physics is “the leader within the Faculty”, Professor Large says.

The PEAC’s provisions have included a new parent room (with breastfeeding chair and change table), and shortlists for all positions within the school have a target of 40% to be female and all positions must be offered with a part-time or job-share option.

A PEAC Equity Officer Professor Large encourages women “to be more challenging”. “Women will only apply for promotions when they feel they think they fulfil 100% of the criteria, differing with men applying when they believe they meet 70%. This attitude magnified over an academics career sees women left behind.”

Professor Beekman explained that it’s important to have more female scientists in lectures and laboratory classes, allowing “the students to see female role models... with women at lots of different academic levels”. As PEAC worked to include more female students in the School’s marketing and communications they are set to challenge the stereotype of a traditional scientist.

“Women will only apply for promotions when they feel they think they fulfil 100% of the criteria, differing with men applying when they believe they meet 70%. This attitude, magnified over an academic’s career, sees women left behind.”

In an industry where talent is judged on paper publication count, such a merit structure often sees female academics that miss out on opportunities or become mums lose momentum.

A critical setback for both genders as parents is when an academic decides to take up a

temporary position overseas, taking with them their family. The rigid childcare structure “inhibits parents from taking advantage of these international opportunities”, Dr Saleeba explains. “Childcare has to be easily accessible, it’s a given”.

Acknowledging the key issues that affect women in reaching more senior roles in academia is being championed by the SAGE pilot program. SAGE is co-chaired by Australian Laureate Fellow Professor Nalini Joshi, the School of Mathematics and Statistics’ first female Professor.

Differing from the faculty’s action plan, it endeavours to investigate the causes of gender disparity rather than set gender targets or quotas.

“Identifying what diversity brings, [we can] use that knowledge to address the disparity of not only gender but diversity in academia across disciplines,” proposed Dr Saleeba.

Initiated last September, SAGE follows the framework of the UK’s successful AthenaSwan Charter, designed to improve gender equity and diversity in the Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM) disciplines.

In October the Faculty will begin its participation, collecting data on gender

equity policies and practices across the Faculty’s disciplines and upon presentation of this apply for an Athena Swan Award. In the UK the bronze, silver and gold awards have started to be linked to funding and the university or research institute’s public image.

“What’s nice with the data collection is it puts it in front of people,” Professor Large noted; “the targets look good, but it’s actually making a change”. She is optimistic as the goal of reaching gender equity within universities has now “become a competitive space”.

Dr Saleeba also noted the influence of diversity on research and productivity, explaining that “diversity leads to better decision making and to a different way of thinking. I think science will benefit from a diverse makeup of participants.”

Professor White encourages her fellow female academics to “recognise the unconscious bias against women, push yourself, be a bit less safe”.

Although academia is incredibly hard work, as Professor Beekman emphasised, Professor White remains hopeful, encouraging female students to “never let the thought of a hurdle stop you from pursuing an academic goal or scientific endeavour”.

Promoting equality?

Lily Matchett and Anna Hush explore the ways in which the USyd promotions policy disadvantages women

A significant number of students reading this paper will go on to pursue careers in academia. It is common knowledge that academics are usually overworked and highly stressed, and that progressing up the ladder in the academic hierarchy is a very slow process. However, not many realise the bias against women that is entrenched in the University’s promotions policy. When this was brought to our attention by an academic in the Business School, we set out to investigate.

As Subeta Vimalarajah and Max Hall reported in Honi Soit earlier this semester, female academics are approved for promotion at around the same rate as male academics. However, there is a huge disparity in the number of women that apply for promotion in the first place: in 2015, 36% of the applications for promotion to Associate Professor, and less than a quarter of applicants to the Professor level, were women.

This suggests to us that aspects of the promotions procedure may discourage women

from applying. Research output forms a major component of any application, and is counted as ‘the number of publications since last appointment or promotion to the current level’. However, when academics take time off to give birth or care for children, this number drops dramatically. Women are disproportionately burdened with this reproductive labour, and the promotions policy does not account for this inequality. In fact, it punishes women who choose to take leave and care for children.

Women academics are thus faced with a tough choice between children and their career. Professor Marian Baird, the Director of the WomenWork Research Group at USyd, believes that women should be rewarded for their reproductive labour. She suggested that people who take time off to care for children could even receive the equivalent of one or two publications in their applications to compensate for this labour. This would promote a culture in which academics don’t have to fear their careers being negatively affected by having children.

‘Service to the University’ is another crucial part of applications for promotion - academics must prove ‘ongoing involvement’ with boards and committees. Involvement cannot be ongoing, however, if an academic takes leave to care for children. Appointment to these committees is also often done by ‘shoulder-tapping’, and relies on having good networks with senior staff. This process itself is ripe for sexism (and racism, and homophobia, and transphobia...), an issue that could be solved with affirmative action quotas.

We are currently preparing a report for the Equity and Diversity Working Group on bias in the academic promotion procedures. If you are an academic and feel you have experienced discrimination in applying for promotions, or have been discouraged by certain aspects of the policy, please get in touch with us - we’d love to hear your story. Email vice.president@src.usyd.edu.au.



Queer girls: the none-of-your-business story

Susie Elliott has had enough of being fetishised for her sexuality

“I’m bisexual.”

“Oh, so do you scissor?”

This is a familiar interaction for all women-loving-women. Many of us queer women find a unity under the male heterosexual gaze that continues to define us by a porn site category, rather than genuine beings. It baffles me that the invasive and inherently disgusting comments regularly made to queer women are often disregarded it as the mere stupidity of the male gaze. To be fair, that’s how all misogyny is often perpetuated. The words of men seem to be brushed off as stupidity and they are never held accountable for their own thought. These invasive and disrespectful comments are dismissed as compliments or curiosity - but really, they are neither. I’m truly tired of avoiding the specific and delightful brand of misogyny that seems to be aimed at queer women. Many privileged women love to disregard the intersecting oppressions of others and offer up some hippie mumbo-jumbo of ‘uniting’ women under one common cause and blanket. Of course sisterhood and battling for the rights of all women are important, but not all women experience the same misogyny (some are more privileged than others) and I’m here to lay down some empirical truths about the lives of gay, bisexual and pansexual women.

Unfortunately, like a lot of people, my budding sexuality as a silly tween was tested through raunchy videos on the web. This is where I first came in contact with gay sex - the sex I thought I wanted. These videos included cisgender women with curled hair, long nails, full faces of make up and performing acts that were so graphic and definitely painful. So here I was, a thirteen year-old queer girl, looking at a screen full of scissoring and twelve-inch strap ons, and this was meant to represent me? This was my identity? I felt dirty and strange. Don’t get me wrong, I have the utmost respect for sex workers, but pornography has always been a performance and, like all performances, there is a target audience. Lesbian pornography, as what many people view, is mostly fetishizing, unrealistic, and made for a heterosexual male gaze, and this is often a lot of young men’s first glance at any representation of queer women. We are suddenly a kink or an exhibition to project your fantasies (and bodily fluids) onto.

Now this is where people start screaming “Take it as a compliment! That means they find it attractive!”- no. Ask any woman of colour, fat woman, transgender woman or queer woman, and they’ll give you the same answer: fetishization is not a compliment and it is outrageously demeaning. Knowing that the media tokenizes you so much that you even have

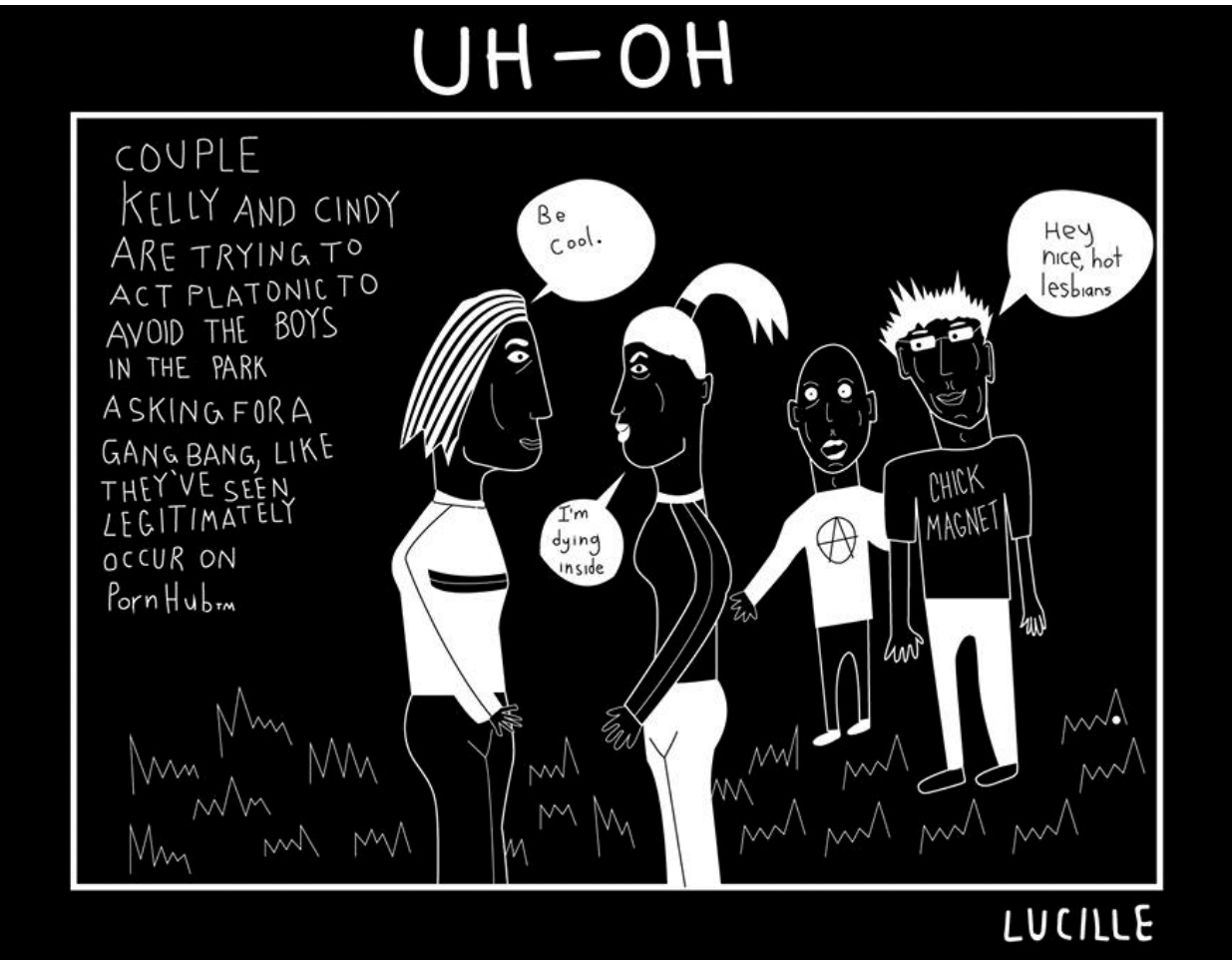
your own a category on porn websites suggests that your identity is merely a sexual deviancy, and that finding you attractive is only niche and for novelty. For women-loving-women, because part of our identity often is reliant on our sexual behaviour (though not always) it seems to give everyone a free pass on respecting us. By identifying with something that seems inherently sexual it seems that others feel entitled to sexualizing us. Apparently just being queer suddenly makes us freaky, sexually deviant freaks, so it’s okay to jack off to our sex but not consider our opinions, and this is permissible because we accept the labels that they want to fetishize? This is how lesbian, bisexual and pansexual women experience misogyny differently to our heterosexual counterparts. Asking a heterosexual woman about her activities in the bedroom is disrespectful, yet asking a queer woman seems to be acceptable.

Throughout history, Sapphic activities were actually not as criminal as male homosexuality. Apparently queer girl sex means there is no penis and therefore the sex isn’t legitimate. This concept is transphobic, homophobic and misogynist all at once - hoorah! However, this concept is subtle but potent in shaping the sexualisation of queer women that feeds into our everyday lives. This stereotype assumes that many queer women are innocent, because of their lack of penetrative sex. On the other hand, they still engage in sexual acts and are somehow wildly erotic - meaning that queer

women are apparently the ‘purest’ and the ‘dirtiest’ at the same time, which is meant to be completely arousing for the straight male gaze. This paradox obviously inflames the loins of patriarchal heteronormativity, but the women I know are neither of these tropes. We are not “sexually deviant”, but neither are we “pure”. Surprise, surprise - we’re women who love other women, and our sex life is not a fetish. Pretty simple.

This is a story of how a beautiful hybrid of misogyny and homophobia actually affects women. I’ve been told, “it’s not that deep” and “you’re thinking about it too much”, but truly this is what builds the closet around us. Aligning myself with an identity that had its own porn category was frightening and shameful, as I can imagine for many other young people. After a confusing closet experience (isn’t everyone’s?), being out and proud did not save me from this shame. Same-gender attracted women are pressed to confess our sexual experiences, we’re asked for threesomes, and gawked at. We’re walking sexual fantasies, right? Exhibitions of the dirtiest kind! It’s shocking to see many straight men feel so entitled to women’s sexuality that even when it does not involve them, they must involve themselves.

So next time you want to question queer women about their sex life, ask yourself why you want that information anyway, and consider that it might just be none of your business.



Art by Lucille | facebook.com/lucillethecreator

Can you be a feminist and support Julian Assange?

Kitty-Jean Langinha takes a critical feminist perspective on the Assange saga, using a cheeky Harry Potter analogy

“Laws can be changed,” said Fudge savagely.

“Of course they can,” said Dumbledore, inclining his head. “And you certainly seem to be making many changes, Cornelius. Why, in the few short weeks since I was asked to leave the Wizengamot, it has already become the practice to hold a full criminal trial to deal with a simple matter of underage magic!”

Harry Potter produces the Patronus charm in order to defend himself and his muggle cousin Dudley from Dementors when they appear in the town of Little Whingeing on August 2, 1995. Ten days later, Harry is tried by the full Wizengamot (high court of law) on a charge of violating the Decree for the Reasonable Restriction of Underage Sorcery, which permits witches and wizards from using magic in the presence of muggles. The aggressiveness with which the case is pursued is oddly disproportionate to the charge, hinting that something more sinister is at play. The Ministry of Magic’s politically motivated prosecution (as well as ongoing malicious defamation of Harry and his supporters) bears likeness to the zealous persecution of Julian Assange, who is still residing in the Ecuadorian embassy in London, having been granted political asylum. Of course, the crimes alleged (Harry’s self-defense and Assange engaging in coercive sex with women) are completely different – there’s no comparison. But an analogy can be drawn between the motivations behind the inconsistent, drawn-out prosecution and what this might suggest about corruption and the application of the law.

Let’s be honest, the Minister for Magic Cornelius Fudge isn’t concerned about risking the security of the magical world. Rather, the trial is the Ministry’s embarrassing attempt to discredit Harry in any way they can. Harry’s claim that Voldemort has returned to power is a big nuisance for Fudge and the ministry, and so they drag him through the wizarding criminal justice system in the hopes that he will shut up and be expelled from Hogwarts.

Abuses of the justice system by the political elite are present in the case of Assange v Swedish Prosecution Authority. Regardless of whether or not Assange is guilty of sexual misconduct, it doesn’t take a mind trained in legilimency to see that it is not the real reason he is being pursued. The whole case is incredibly dubious given, for one thing, how profoundly differently other accusations of this nature are and have been dealt with in Sweden. Other more serious and clear cut cases of rape, assault and human trafficking receive nowhere near the amount of official support. This glaring contrast is a point surely worth making whether or not you think Assange is an anti-American anarchist, badass hacker extraordinaire or a “high-tech terrorist” (in the words of US VP Biden).

As a woman, it’s with intense frustration that I



see the issue of sexual violence being used to further political agendas. Having the audacity to manipulate rape allegations at will (in order to extradite Assange to the US) reveals how little they truly care about violence against women. It is incredibly insulting to all sexual assault victims (especially those who still await justice in Sweden) and does nothing but cheapen what is a serious and extremely prevalent issue. Claims of rape and sexual assault should never be used as political tools.

The case becomes even more dubious looking at how Chelsea Manning was treated before her sentencing. Chelsea Manning has been sentenced to 35 years in prison for leaking classified military and diplomatic documents showing immense injustice, deception, sexual abuse and war crimes to Wikileaks. She spent over a thousand days in prison without trial. It seems to me that the US were scrambling to prepare a case, attempting to use Manning to implicate Assange in order to create grounds to charge him with espionage - if they are alleging espionage they need evidence of espionage and can do so if they can prove that Assange colluded with Manning by persuading or requesting the information.

She is now in prison and Assange has been holed up in the embassy since 2012, wanted for questioning (he hasn’t been charged) in Sweden. The obvious question still hangs in the air: why can’t the Swedish authorities question him in London, or via video-link, like Assange and his lawyer have repeatedly suggested? The obvious answer is that they want him to go to Sweden as then he may be able to be extradited to the U.S. to face potential espionage charges.

In 2008, two years before the release of the Iraq

and Afghanistan war logs and diplomatic cables, the Pentagon created a secret report which proclaimed Wikileaks to be an enemy of the state and suggested ways to destroy its credibility and reputation. This is quite interesting considering that it turns out Umbridge sent the Dementors to either kill or harm Harry into silence, or to provoke him to react illegally. This is may not be an apt metaphor in all respects, but one parallel does resonate ominously: governments pursue personal attacks to destabilise people or organisations that threaten powerful institutions. Of course, Fudge’s motivations are perhaps more innocent – he’s just plain stupid, power-hungry and delusional. His fear and denial that Voldemort has returned to power, combined with paranoia that Dumbledore is after his job makes him blind to the truth and he abuses his position by damaging the reputation of Harry and his supporters.

But this critical interpretation of the corrupt motivations of the prosecution doesn’t exclude applying feminist principles, of which solidarity with the women is paramount. Just because the case is politically motivated doesn’t mean the allegations are trivial. If the women say he did do those things, then he did. I’m not surprised; I imagine Assange probably does have unhealthy and harmful attitudes to women and sex in virtue of toxic male-socialisation. No surprises there. However, it’s important to keep in mind that the case seems to have never been genuinely based on the needs and wants of the women involved. For instance, one of the women did not actually initially intend to press charges (she wanted him to take an STI test) until she was contacted by the police.

Justice isn’t being sought for the sake of the women involved, that’s for sure.

PERSPECTIVE

Who is being heard?

Bridget Harilaou on the power dynamics that shape the way we listen to others

It is always extremely obvious to me, in both social situations and formal activist spaces, who is speaking – a lot of the time it's me. I am loud, I'm extremely talkative, I know how to carry a conversation and keep it flowing and I've never had a problem interacting in large groups. I don't get drowned out because I'm confident, and I come from a culture where butting in, shouting over the top of each other, and being raucous is how you know a conversation is going well.

I see this as my personality, able-bodied and neurotypical¹ privilege (in particular, but of course my cis, straight, thin, middle-class privilege too) outweighing the fact that I am a wom*n of colour, especially as I do not have social anxiety or any neurological difficulties with understanding social cues and social communication. In this way, I manage to speak out, have my voice heard, and usually even direct the conversation so that people who do not speak up as often can have their turn. There is a fine art to facilitating meetings or social interactions, so that privileged voices do not dominate, and it's something I am still working on.

There are still problems when I manage to speak up though, and I often get labelled as too aggressive or dominant, by both white people and people of colour. Apparently, having the audacity to call things out, speak bluntly and do so confidently is threatening, and many then feel justified in taking issue with 'how' I speak or go about conversation. This is called tone policing. Not only does tone policing derail a conversation from the actual issue that is being discussed, it places the onus upon wom*n of colour to act 'politely'. The racist undertones of comments like these is that what is deemed 'polite' is distinctly

cultural – and in a White Supremacist society, it is distinctly White. Phrasing a sentence as a question or a statement, using words like please and thank you, the directness of speech and how a problem with someone is articulated, are all deeply ingrained in culture. By placing one set of cultural norms for 'politeness' over any other culture, you perpetuate racial superiority and racial hierarchies.

This easily leads to the stereotype of the 'angry feminist' or the 'angry black wom*n' or the 'angry brown girl'. A stereotype that is used to devalue and de-rationalise wom*n of colour, as if we are not capable of logical argument. By defining emotion as the sole basis for our arguments, wom*n of colour are cast as irrational, as if we are the ones who 'don't understand'. Honestly, the audacity of White people (some who claim to be feminists: White Feminists²) to feel as though they are the victims of people of colour's unjustified anger and then agree with each other about how they are right, shows just how successful White supremacy is in creating psyches that could not possibly fathom their own privilege.

Respectability politics also plays a role in defining politeness, and what is a palatable person of colour, or a likeable wom*n of colour. Apparently there is a way to go about our oppression nicely and politely. Not only must we give up our culture to assimilate, and any hope of ever truly receiving equal treatment, we must talk about this process in a palatable way, lest we be labelled aggressive or a bully.

Even when activist movements or events make an effort to create space for the voices of wom*n

of colour, I notice who speaks first. I was recently at an event run by the USYD Wom*n's Collective, and on a panel with only trans wom*n, where a majority were Aboriginal trans wom*n, who do you think spoke first after every single question?² The unspoken code between White people that they unconsciously relate to each other is so extremely obvious to me, and I know where the authority lies. But let me ask you. Who do you think spoke first? Who did the White facilitator make eye contact with to answer questions?

Who is being heard?

¹ A person with typical neurological structures and functions.

² A cookie for every Whitey who guessed: the only white person on the panel!

tone policing:

Focusing on and critiquing how something is said, rather than the content of the statement itself. Signs of anger and emotion are used to silence the speaker, often along axes of oppression such as race, class, gender and ability.

More than just mummies and jezebels

Sahra Magan writes about why depicting complex women of colour on TV matters

The depiction of subversive and engaging women of colour on television is a belated move forward by an industry in which women of colour are still underrepresented and undervalued. The complex and challenging women of colour depicted on the small screen such as Annalise Keating, Dr. Mindy Lahiri, Olivia Pope, Mary Jane Paul Jane Villanueva and Dr. Joan Watson, all transcend the archaic, sexist and racist tropes that inform the portrayal of women of colour in media.

The dynamics of structural gender inequality are reinforced through the underrepresentation of women in the media. This year alone, two of the biggest children's movies (The Jungle Book and



Viola Davis as Annalise Keating in drama series *How to Get Away With Murder*

Kung-Fu Panda 3) failed the Bechdel test. From an early age, women are confronted with the reality that our stories and experiences are deemed less worthy due to systemic gender inequalities which are subconsciously reinforced in every facet of our lives.

For women of colour, gender inequality is complicated by the pervasive structural and institutional dynamics in society that place whiteness at a premium and marginalise people of colour. The representation of women of colour in film and television largely conforms with these institutional dynamics and, as a result, the depictions of characters that conform with dehumanising tropes of women of colour

PERSPECTIVE

dominate mainstream TV.

For black women, the reductive character tropes of the 'jezebel, mammy and sapphire' that have framed our depiction in media reinforce the pervasive structure of White Supremacy that simultaneously sexualises and desexualises our bodies, creating pale caricatures of the vibrancy of our lives and experiences.

The experiences and lives of women of colour need to be represented through narratives that transcend these reductive tropes. The depiction of high powered defence attorney Annalise Keating, a middle aged, successful, intelligent, bisexual, black woman on primetime, goes a long way to normalise the representation of the complexity of the lives and experiences of black women. By depicting a morally ambiguous woman of colour who exercises free agency over her sexuality and life, *How to Get Away with Murder* subverts the conventional polarisation of black women in television in film and television as nurturing, sexless 'Mammies' or hypersexualised, deviant 'Jezebels'. Annalise Keating transcends the limits of these tropes and reflects a movement away from the depiction of black women in the Academy Award-nominated and winning roles of 'Mammy' (Hattie McDaniel

in *Gone with the Wind*, 1939) and 'slave' (Lupita Nyong'o in *12 Years a Slave*, 2013).

Similarly, Dr. Mindy Lahiri on *The Mindy Project* subverts the reductive tropes that limit the representation of Asian women on television and film. As a successful Ivy League doctor, Lahiri is the star of the witty sitcom and her characterisation reflects a level of complexity that could not be achieved within television tropes that limit the role of women of colour to the witty/nerdy/sassy sidekick of the main (white) character. The unashamed characterisation of Mindy as a superficial, and sometimes racist, woman of colour may be problematic for many reasons, but her flaws accentuate her complexity and humanity in a way that is denied to women of colour by reductive and polarised tropes. Mindy Lahiri dresses immaculately, is well-versed in pop culture and actively challenges white beauty norms, whilst also working as a successful OB-GYN. Mindy is multifaceted and as an audience we watch her succeed and fail in a way that makes her a complex, relatable and realistic character that reflects the diverse experiences of women of colour.

It is relevant that the two shows are produced

by influential and successful women of colour (Shonda Rhimes and Mindy Kaling, successively) who recognise the underrepresentation and reductive representation of women of colour in media. The concerns of women of colour about our representation in television and film need to be understood within the context of a culture and society in which masculinity and whiteness are held at a premium. As a distinctly marginalised group, women of colour need representation that reflects the unique challenges we face in a realistic and nuanced manner. Reductive narratives and tropes undermine our agency and our lives as human beings in a world that is institutionally structured to reinforce the message that we are unworthy and our stories are unimportant.

The portrayal of Analise Keating and Mindy Lahiri is a promising sign that although women of colour are still woefully underrepresented, stories are shifting beyond racist and sexist tropes, and towards characters which reflect the diversity of our experiences and lives. The success of their respective programs and numerous other programs that are led by complex women of colour characters reflects the urgency of women of colour and other consumers of media to view stories that are challenging and realistic.

Marginal masculinity

Andy Mason reflects on the harm gender binaries can do

I'm Andy, a 22-year old Geography/Indigenous studies student and activist troublemaker. I was raised and socialised under the presumption that I was a straight man. Since coming to university I've identified as queer because I don't fit within the heteronormative world. I see myself as not having a particular gender identity (agender), not particularly fussed about the genders of my partners (pansexual) and not having all that much interest in sex outside well-developed emotional relationships (demisexual). Sometimes I prefer to think of myself as without any kind of sexuality (asexual), and I've come to identify a lot with "Ace" discourse and the Ace community.

Like many queer people, high school was a pretty stressful and confusing time for me. I always got on well with both girls and boys, and I felt confused when social groups became gender-segregated. I was also bullied extensively by many of my male friends for being small, effeminate, bookish, shy and disinterested in sport or pursuing girls. I was always disgusted by the hetero machismo with which my male peers talked about their sexual contests and I wanted nothing to do with it.

I will always support womn struggling to end a patriarchal system that oppresses not only them, but people like me – on the margins of masculinity, or outside the gender binary altogether.

When I started dating a girl at a different school I noticed that all the bullying stopped. Things fell apart as I realised I was actually in love with a male best friend. When people found out they started the most sinister bullying yet, no longer involving physical violence but complex psychological violence. One person convinced our social circle that I was

a pervert. I was never the same after this, becoming quite socially isolated and developing a reasonably serious alcohol problem for a 17 year old.

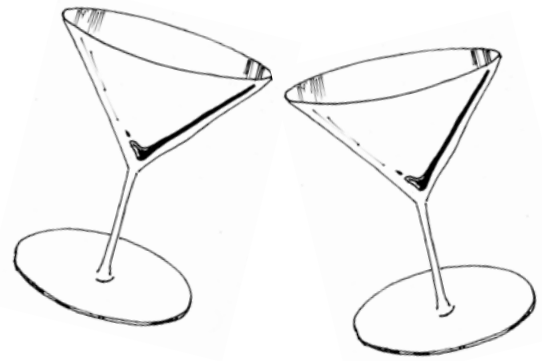
New possibilities came at uni as I was exposed to feminist and then queer discourses about gender. New terminology helped me make sense of my experiences and the ability to describe myself properly for the first time. I also found a lot of comfort in a community which understood the fluidity and complexity of gender, where people asked which pronouns I wanted to use, and which encouraged me to express myself.

I used to put more effort into my gender presentation, trying to present in a more deliberately ambiguous way by wearing skirts, makeup and so on, but I don't have the time, money or inclination to do that anymore. I also used to get harassed and abused in public as a result, and a couple of times I was assaulted. I understood that this wasn't my fault, that the men who attacked me were responsible for their own behaviour, that I should be able to dress how I liked and be myself. But when I wore my 'normal' clothes, ditched the lipstick and let my moustache grow out, people would leave me alone.

For me, being honest about my identity and my experience means two things. First, I am not intrinsically a man and a large part of my social experience has involved being disciplined for being insufficiently masculine. On the other hand, I am usually read as a man and can choose to some extent to opt out of being marginalised because of my gender – that is, to opt in to male privilege. Confusingly, I am both marginalised and protected by masculinity. As a result I've always felt that womn's spaces aren't for me, but I will always support womn struggling to end a patriarchal system that oppresses not only them, but people like me - on the margins of masculinity, or outside the gender binary altogether. I feel it's important to acknowledge the privilege that being understood as a man confers, instead of denying it, and to use that privilege in service of feminist struggle.

Can I buy you a drink?

Georgia Carr learns the bravery and power of saying no to men



“Hi, I’m Steve. Sorry to interrupt, I was just heading to the bar and noticed your glass is empty – can I buy you a drink?”

I was nervous and new to the world of dating. I didn’t know how to make small talk with a stranger or how to use a few brief seconds to assess someone’s looks/clothes/manner/voice to decide if they were someone worth talking to. I’d also just signed a lease, so my disposable income had plummeted, and the cocktails in this swish CBD bar ran at \$19 each.

I said no. Not “no”, but some excuse about being out on a “girls’ night” delivered with a smile.

When he left the table, my friends and I commented on his politeness, applauding him for not being pushy or sleazy. Five minutes later the bartender came to our table with something we hadn’t ordered and explained it had been sent over by the man we’d just been congratulating.

I can’t deny that there was something enjoyable about this exchange. I was flanked by two gorgeous friends and was flattered that he’d approached me. As a recently single girl, I was reminded I still ‘had it’, and there was something superficial yet satisfying about stumbling into a classic movie trope where a mysterious gentleman in the corner covered my bar tab. But this trope, this archetype of dating norms, came with a caveat. At this stage the drink was made, paid for, and presented to me in plain view of the person paying for it – saying no again would only make me seem like a bit of a dickhead.

This is something we do almost intuitively when we reject men. We are taught that to reject is impolite, and so we give false excuses that don’t sound like rejections.

Maybe he thought he was doing the right thing. Maybe he thought I really was into him and just needed to be a good gal pal because Sarah’s freaking out about the job interview she had today and we need to reassure her that the navy skirt with the white button down was a great choice and that her interviewer definitely wasn’t chuckling when she mispronounced “prima facie”. Or maybe I shouldn’t be making excuses. Maybe men just need to be better at hearing no.

On the surface, this situation is about nothing more than free booze, but beneath that lies a more covert political statement. Dating is a complex social interaction for anyone to navigate, but there are certain social graces expected of women, especially where money is spent or flattery is involved. This guy had heard my polite rejection as “yes, under different circumstances”, and by persisting when I had hesitated, he coerced me into saying yes when I had already said no. Rather than sending the drink back and offending him, I accepted it. Rather than exercising my autonomy, I privileged and protected his ego.

This is something we do almost intuitively when we reject men. We are taught that to reject is impolite and so we give false excuses that don’t sound like rejections. Instead of “I’m not interested”, we say “I’m really busy the next few weeks”. Instead of “I find your advances kind of creepy”, we say “I think it would be unprofessional to date someone I work with”. Instead of “you were really attractive on Tinder, but IRL I can infer from those boat shoes and pastel shorts that your sense of self-importance is too inflated for

me to expect much reciprocation from you in the bedroom”, we say “I’m not ready to date anyone right now”. It’s not that these aren’t valid reasons – it’s that a lot of the time they’re lies.

This predisposition to protect the male ego goes beyond the issue of politeness; we are careful in our rejection of men because we could be offending a potential predator. You can shake your head and say “#notallmen”, but the truth is there is no way to tell the Good Guys from the Bad Guys. People who commit sexual assault are not hermits with seedy moustaches who wear trench coats and hide in alleyways; they are a classmate, a relative, a colleague, a friend, a guy offering to buy you a cocktail. In a society that asks what survivors did to invite the advances of their attacker (“What were you wearing?” “Had you had much to drink?”), it is implied that it is our responsibility to take precautions to prevent sexual assault. My first thought when the bartender presented me with the drink was if he could have put something in it.

Now that I’ve had more dating experience I’ve adopted a policy of absolute honesty; I’m not the kind of person who won’t reply to your messages and hope you get the hint, and I won’t tell you I’m too busy with study if the truth is I’m just not that into you. Being honest isn’t always easy – saying I was out on a girls’ night was certainly simpler than saying “I’m not really sure how dating works yet so unless you look like a cross between Channing Tatum and Justin Trudeau I’m probably going to default to ‘no thanks’”.

You aren’t obliged to provide an explanation if you don’t have one or don’t want to. It is possible to be both direct and polite; there is nothing offensive about saying “thanks for the offer, but I’m not interested”. But if you are going to give an excuse make it an honest one. Using a line like “I’ve got a boyfriend” when you don’t might make someone leave you alone, but probably because they respect the boundaries of a fellow dude rather than because they respect yours.

While being honest is important, it’s not more important than respecting someone’s boundaries. Ultimately the onus doesn’t and shouldn’t fall on women to be direct in their rejection of men – the onus falls on men to understand that hesitation or an excuse still counts as no.

In high school sex ed we are given the mantra that “no means no” when really we ought to be teaching that only yes means yes.

This piece originally appeared on ‘Boobs, Bumps and Blood’, a feminist sex ed blog. Check it out here: boobsbumpsandblood.tumblr.com.

How men dominate space; or, how to take our space back

Caitlin James on the radical idea that women have the right to exist in public spaces

I’m sure we’ve all heard of ‘manspreading’ by now (you know, when men – whether consciously or not – spread their limbs and take up as much space as physically possible in places like trains, buses, and basically anywhere. See mentakingup-2muchspaceonthetrain.tumblr.com for some exemplar spreads).

Manspreading is only the tip of the iceberg in the way men dominate all the room around them and deny space to wom*n. While this piece focuses on wom*n, the bodies of LGBTQIA+ people and people of colour are also adversely affected by men’s inconsiderate, and even downright insulting, use of public space.

Whilst some men are just rude and self-entitled pricks, I’d like to assume that most men don’t actively realise what they’re doing when they take up an excessive amount of space for themselves. Rather, society affirms men, their choices, and their actions. Cis men rarely have to question themselves or how their bodies are situated in public or private. Wom*n, on the other hand, are generally taught to take up less space and always be conscious of what our body is doing. We are taught to be small, even invisible. To close our legs, to cross them,

to sit like a lady. These lessons are drilled into us from the youngest age. One of my earliest memories of such was in kindergarten, when I was told by my teacher to shut my legs and be more lady-like. Never mind the fact that I was wearing shorts and was five years old.

Fast-forward sixteen years and I’m still battling with my validity to take up space, to exist. I’ve taken up a new hobby called ‘walking on the sidewalk and not moving for men who expect I’ll move, and then getting shoulder-charged by said men’. It’s pretty self-explanatory, and

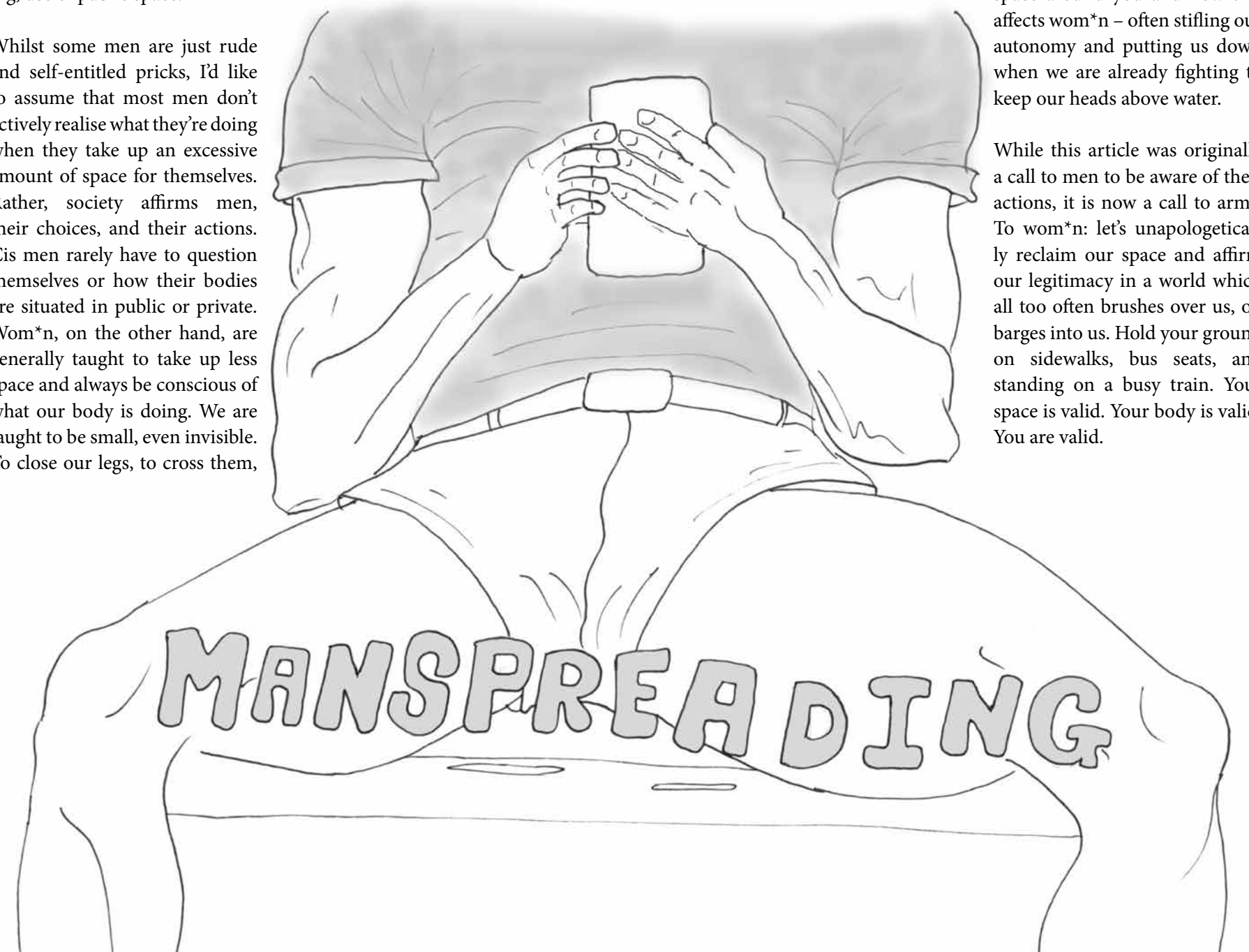
highlights the inherent privilege of men in our society. Before you try to argue with me, I’m not purposely walking in the way of anyone. I’m always on the correct side of the walkway and naturally take up a minimal amount of space with my small build.

This little hobby requires constant thought on my part, and despite being the self-assured, ‘angry feminist’ I’ve been told I am, I always need to remind myself that my body and space is valid – I don’t have to diminish it to accommodate for men. Simply walking on the sidewalk

has become an act of rebellion and resistance. If you like the sound of this pastime, you may also enjoy ‘staring back at men who stare at you, to make them uncomfortable and have to look away first’.

When men dominate all the space around them, it reveals greater issues about privilege and entitlement in our society. If men think they are entitled to all the space, then what’s stopping them from thinking they’re entitled to other people’s bodies? Or thinking that only their opinion matters? Or believing that only they are important? Men, be mindful of how you utilize the space around you and how this affects wom*n – often stifling our autonomy and putting us down when we are already fighting to keep our heads above water.

While this article was originally a call to men to be aware of their actions, it is now a call to arms. To wom*n: let’s unapologetically reclaim our space and affirm our legitimacy in a world which all too often brushes over us, or, barges into us. Hold your ground on sidewalks, bus seats, and standing on a busy train. Your space is valid. Your body is valid. You are valid.



Art: Katie Thorburn

The uterus owner’s guide to reusable menstrual products

Darcy Morgan bleeds all over different objects for our educational benefit

My period started in January 2006. I was camping, our tent was flooding with rain and I was extremely ill with giardia from swimming in a freshwater stream. Suddenly bleeding out of my vagina filled me with the fear of my impending death until I realised it wasn't caused by a stomach parasite but rather the beginning of a beautiful, if fraught, relationship with my uterus. I mean, I always knew it was coming. I guess when you feel like your internal organs are about to explode, blood coming out of anywhere isn't reassuring.

Flash forward to October 2015: I came off birth control. My period, furious after three years of suppression, was ready to bleed through anything in its path. Around that time I stumbled upon the YouTube channel 'Precious Stars Pads' run by the brilliant, enigmatic Bree Farmer, an avid spokesperson for reusable menstrual products (or RUMPs) and the owner of her own RUMP company by her mid-teens.

I learnt that store-bought disposable menstrual products aren't sterile. I don't know why I just kind of assumed they were. Maybe it was because of their perfect hospital whiteness? And that's not natural either. In addition to the bacteria they accumulate in transit, disposable pads and tampons are laden with chemicals to neutralise odours, and are bleached that pure, bleed-all-over-me white. What really got me was when I thought about how many plastic disposable pads get tossed into landfill each month. I realised I've used at least 800 disposable menstrual products in my time on this earth. This was reason enough for me to buy my first reusable cloth pad, and then the next and the next, until I was certain I wasn't ever going back.

There are many kinds of RUMPs but these three are the most popular and the only kinds I've tried so I'm going to stick with what I know. Most of these you'll need to order online; I've named some brands to get you started.

Cloth pads

The phrase “cloth menstrual pad” may remind you of a medieval period rag, but I assure you they’re nothing like this. They operate on the same principle as store-bought pads but are made to be washed and reworn. Reusable pads contain an absorbent core and most often some kind of waterproofing. The wings of the pad are secured with press studs instead of an adhesive backing. They come in a variety of shapes, sizes, absorbencies, and fabrics and most companies have a range of cute prints to make the whole bleeding experience a bit more cheery.

COMFORT

Nice and soft. I saw someone online describe them as “fluffy little vagina blankets”. There is a wide range of fabrics to consider. Minky and velour are super soft, but not very breathable. Cotton is breathable but not very soft. Flannelette is probably the best of both worlds.

DISCRETION

About as discreet as ordinary pads, though if you’re out and about you will need a little wet bag or pad wrapper to carry the soiled ones (you can buy both of these things online or make them yourself).

CONVENIENCE/MAINTENANCE

Requires the most work of the three but this really depends on how concerned you are about stains. Otherwise just throw them in the cold wash. Unless you buy new clothes every week to avoid laundry it won't be much extra effort.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS

If you want to go a whole period with just cloth pads, it's going to cost you a bit of money to start out. That said, you'll easily make back what you've spent within the year so it's economical in the long term. You can sew your own if you're short on cash or just like DIYs – Bree of *Precious Stars Pads* has tutorials for both hand- and machine-stitched pads on her YouTube channel.

CONTACT WITH BLOOD

Not a huge amount more than ordinary pads, but again that depends on how you feel about stains. If you want them stain-free you'll have to get up close and personal with your stain stick before machine washing. Some people “shower stomp” their pads which means only your feet come into contact with the blood.

PROS

Good for people sensitive to the chemicals in store-bought pads. Cute fabrics are also a plus - I have an epic overnight pad with unicorn-print and glow-in-the-dark press studs.

CONS

The staining issue.

PRO TIP

Measure your favourite store-bought pad and try to find a seller that makes them in those dimensions and an appropriate absorbency. Novel Red has a good range. If you buy pads with a dark splotchy pattern the staining won't be as obvious. “Minky” fabric tends to stain less. FYI, Party In My Pants has a “cloth curious” giveaway for the price of postage if you're not ready to commit to a full set.

Menstrual cups

You've probably heard of the Diva Cup, but there are heaps of different brands. Menstrual cups require insertion and a certain amount of contact with your period blood. Basically, you fold the cup in half, insert it and it forms suction around your cervix and acts as a little vessel to catch every drop that comes out. Some cups have a little stem to help you get it in and out. It can take a few tries to find the right one for you as every vagina is different. Sydney Uni Food Co-op stocks two different brands.

COMFORT

It might take a while to find the most comfortable one for you but fortunately there are many sizes, shapes and flexibilities available. A menstrual cup is meant to sit low in the vaginal canal so if your cup comes with a stem you may need to trim it. I own a Lunette and had to whittle carefully away at the stem a few times for it to sit right.

DISCRETION

If you remember to carry around a little water bottle or some cup wipes (sold by the companies themselves) or are content just wiping it out with loo paper (perfectly safe) then you don't have to leave the toilet cubicle to clean it before reinsertion.

CONVENIENCE/MAINTENANCE

Sterilise once before and once after period, either with alcohol wipes or by boiling in water. Make sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions. You don't need to sterilise during your period as long as you use it consistently; you only need one cup for the whole cycle. Make sure you wash your hands before and after inserting but you should be doing that anyway.

COST EFFECTIVENESS

\$30-40 for up to 10 years use. Brilliant. Again, follow the manufacturer's instructions and you'll get a decent mileage out of your cup. Interaction with blood: Quite a bit. You need to remove the cup and empty the blood carefully into the toilet (pour, don't just dump it in because, blood will go everywhere). Rinse or wipe it and then reinsert.

Period underwear

I could gush (sorry) about these for hours. They're like regular underwear except waterproofing is built into the gusset. Different kinds have different absorbencies, usually listed on the packs measured in tampons-worth. These really work. If you have the funds and opportunity to try them, do it.

COMFORT

Just like normal underwear.

DISCRETION

Again, just like wearing normal underwear. Genius.

CONVENIENCE

Wear them, chuck them in the cold wash, hang them out to dry. Choose a brand with a black gusset to avoid needing to stain treat.

MAINTENANCE

Low. There's very little about them that's different to regular underwear. Just don't forget and leave them in your laundry basket for too long.

COST EFFECTIVENESS

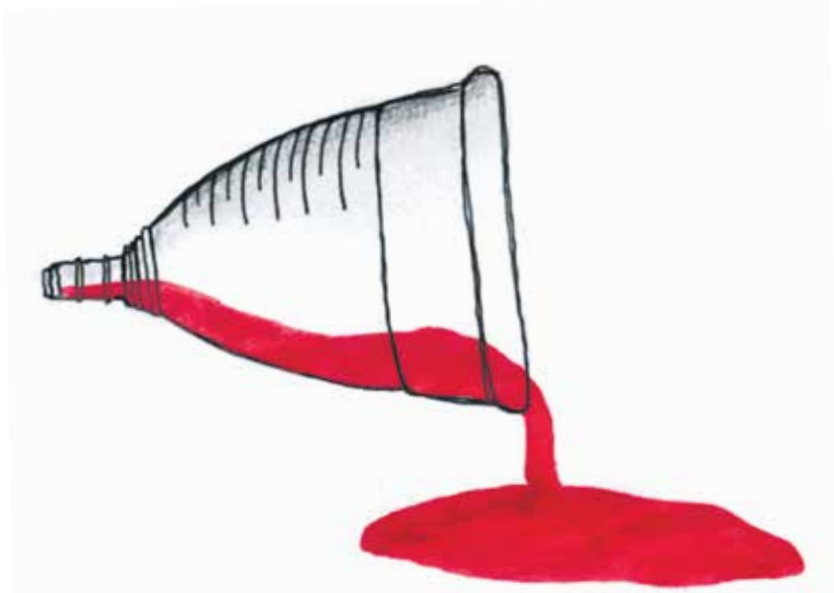
There's an expensive initial cost at \$30+ a pair. You'll need at least 5 for an average period but over time they save you big \$\$\$\$. You could even just buy a pair as back-up to a tampon or cup on your heaviest day.

INTERACTION WITH BLOOD

Next to nothing. You can soak before washing to get some of the blood out of the absorbent layer if you're concerned about it staining other things in your wash.

PROS

It bears repeating: they are just like normal underwear. I also found a lot



Art: Anna Hush

Some cups have little measurement marks on the side, so if you're like me you can have fun seeing how much blood you produced.

PROS

Best bang for buck; you only need one. Once you suss out how to insert and remove it's pretty much foolproof. Comes in a range of colours and styles and are non-gendered in appearance.

CONS

Not great if blood bothers you or if you don't want to/can't use insertables. Takes some research and tinkering to get it right.

PRO TIP

Watch a couple of videos on the different kinds of cup and the different methods of inserting them. And whatever you do, don't drop it in the toilet.

of companies are passionate about including all people who menstruate and offer no-frills non-gendered products. Thinx and Bloody Marys are the two I recommend, though Thinx does have some gendered language on their website.

CONS

Expensive start-up cost.

PRO TIP

Consider a pair with a black gusset if you're concerned about stains – Thinx makes these. Special mention goes to Bloodv Marvs Undies, which give you the opportunity to bleed in the face of your least favourite anti-choice American politicians, both literally and figuratively (meaning they print Trump, Cruz or whoever's smarmy visage onto the absorbent gusset and then donate \$3 from each sale to rebuilding Planned Parenthood clinics). Each pair also comes with two attachable heatpacks for both front and back pain - winning!



Art: Katie Thorburn

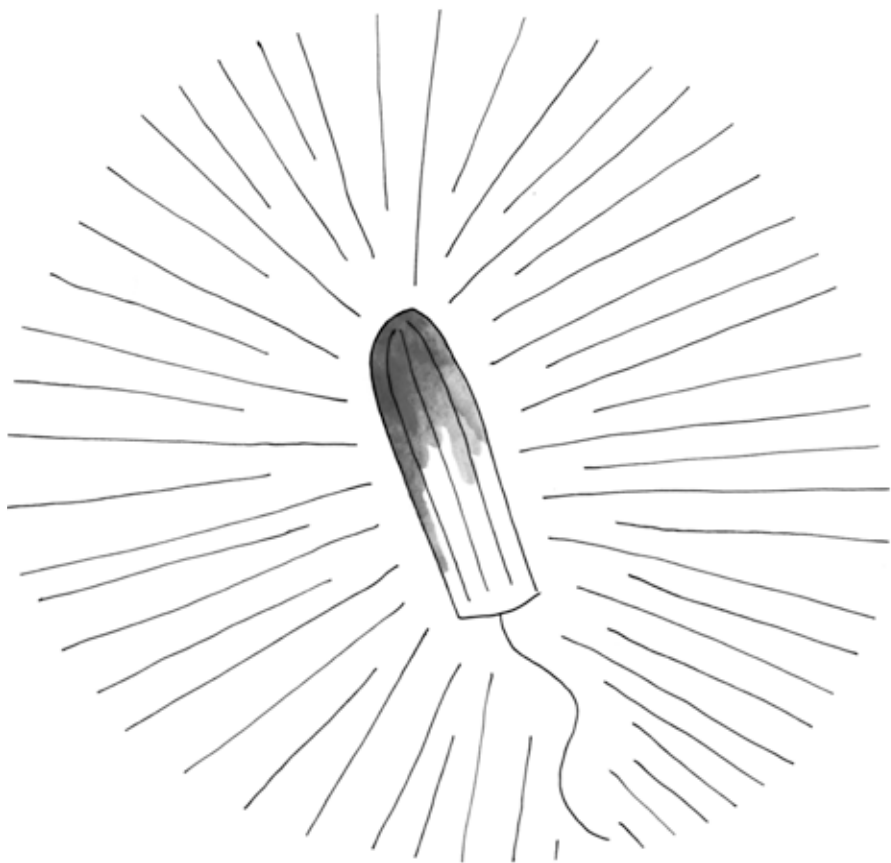
Darcy Morgan on RUMPs, continued

Writing this article, I'm well aware that I'm going to come across as some eccentric get-in-touch-with-your-natural-secretions hippie, but I'm willing to accept that label if it means at least one of you decides to google reusable menstrual products. RUMPs aren't some weird primitive set of rags. They've been modernised; they're streamlined. They're cost-effective. They're liberating.

The biggest hurdle for me was having faith that these products would work. The first day I wore my menstrual cup I ran from bathroom to bathroom checking it was in place (it was) and if it had leaked (it hadn't). Ideally, this information would have been in Dolly's sealed section 10 years ago when I started this whole period thing. It would have saved me so much money and pain. It would have saved me from all those emergency dashes to the shops wearing my thickest underwear and blackest jeans...

I've been on this bandwagon for four cycles now and I'm not getting off any time soon. I'm slowly reaping the rewards of the money I invested, but most importantly my period isn't that big of a deal. Weirdly, I'm starting to enjoy it.

This article goes out to my period. It's been 10 years and I feel like we're still just getting to know each other.



Art: Anna Hush

fEMPOWERing with love

Arabella Close, Anna Hush, Courtney Thompson and Subeta Vimalarajah on working with an ethic of love

In her seminal work, *All About Love*, African-American activist and author bell hooks writes, “All great movements for social justice in our society have strongly emphasised a love ethic.” Now, we’re not saying we’re a “great movement for social justice”, but at the core of our activist organising, fEMPOWER aims to practice an ethic of love. We embrace this ethic as it is not only vital to the sustainability of our program, but our relationships with each other as co-organisers and our ability to communicate the message of fEMPOWER to young people.

fEMPOWER started as an initiative of the Wom*n's Collective last year and since then, it's grown to have over eighty registered volunteers and we've developed workshop content about the construction of masculinity, safe relationships, “myths” about feminism and many other topics. We've travelled to schools across New South Wales and spoken to feminist collectives and full year groups. We've kept the program completely free, relying on the generous contributions of community members.

We attribute the success of our program to our centering of love as the driving force behind our work. Working with an ethic of love means acknowledging that when boys make sexist comments in our workshops, it's because they have been socialised in a culture of misogyny. It means acknowledging their potential to change and grow, and responding to these comments with compassion, rather than anger. While it can be infuriating to encounter what seem like young Men's Rights Activists who leap to excuse catcalling, objectification and even violence against women, we have learnt that anger will not

change them.

Anger, in those situations, polarises both parties and undermines any ability for students to listen and learn. Instead, we are counterposed and rather than negotiating and acknowledging each other's viewpoints, both people are engaged in a futile contest of views. Often we have less than an hour to spend with over thirty students. Given our goal is to communicate as much information as possible so students are passionate enough to learn more in their own time, an argument with one student not only wastes that precious time, it undermines the willingness of all students in the class to engage with feminism at all.

The greatest harm of failing to practice an ethic of love is it stops us from learning and growing ourselves. We started fEMPOWER thinking there was some “feminist law” we needed to communicate to young people, but soon realised, they have a lot to teach us. With anger and defensiveness, we never open ourselves up to the wisdom of young people. We become complacent and our work becomes stale. If we responded to all negative feedback with a vehement belief we are always correct, we'd never have developed to the stage we are at now - going to boys schools to talk about masculinity and including male volunteers in our project.

When we enter schools with an ethic of love, we are able to embrace teachers who have gone above and beyond to make space for us in their schools. We are able to encourage students who have the right inclinations, but have not had the opportunity to discuss and clarify their political thoughts in a classroom environments and so

may say something 'problematic'. When we enter schools with an ethic of love, we leave empowered and passionate about where else fEMPOWER can take us, instead of feeling disheartened and immobilised by the fight still ahead of us.

As four young women with various other commitments and obligations, it is love for one another that allows us to sustain this project. All of us give countless hours of unpaid labour to activism, so when we meet late at night in the few free hours we have in our week, it is only by working to support each other that we can confirm the value of what we do. When someone is too busy, we accept their apologies and if a mistake is made, we recognise it was just a mistake. We thank each other wholeheartedly for work done and give criticism from a place of mutual respect.

fEMPOWER forces us to challenge our assumptions about what it means to be an activist. It requires a particular form of politics that we'd probably have shouted down a few years ago. We force ourselves to be understanding and empathetic, not because it's easy or our first inclination, but because it is necessary. As four young women who are privileged in more ways than not, we have no justification for being angry. We have been benefited by the system and so it is with love that we hope to fEMPOWER those who don't have the privileges we do.

If you'd like to know more about fEMPOWER or become a volunteer with our program, visit fempow-eraustralia.com and follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/fempowerworkshops](https://www.facebook.com/fempowerworkshops).

Baby retail as a site of activism: a social experiment

Penelope Tsoutas describes her (not strictly scientific) experimentation with gender norms in the realm of baby retail

INTRODUCTION

My latest addition to the ‘What Will She Do With Her Arts Degree Next?’ epic was a six-week stint in charge of a shop that sold clothing for babies. After my initial (irredeemably privileged and entitled) fit of disappointment about my latest non-vocational direction, I realised something.

I had been entrusted with a steady, albeit demographically limited, stream of vox populi. Furthermore, I was suddenly queen of a (small and poorly ventilated) kingdom, whose fields - a positive hotbed for problematically gendered conversational fodder - just begged to be overturned with the fresh, shining seeds of change.

Joy of joys! On a platter - my very own Social Experiment.

HYPOTHESIS

Retail shops for babies (enchanted creatures who are about as recognisably gender-distinct as potatoes) naturally lend themselves to discussions about society's active role in constructing gender. Thus, my newfound environ would be the perfect setting for innocuously challenging instances of normative gender regulation as they arose.

CONTROL

One (trying) week of taking gender norms as fact whilst interacting with patrons.

METHODOLOGY & RESULTS

I firstly re-arranged the entire contents of the shop into categories of size (which, for babies, is dictated by age) instead of gender. The intention was to quietly confuse the premise that the sex of a baby must be binary, known or relevant in order to appropriately clothe them (scandalous!).

I then proceeded to test different responses to the recurrent scourge of a question: ‘Is this *dangles minuscule garment aloft* for a boy or a girl?’. Approaches included:

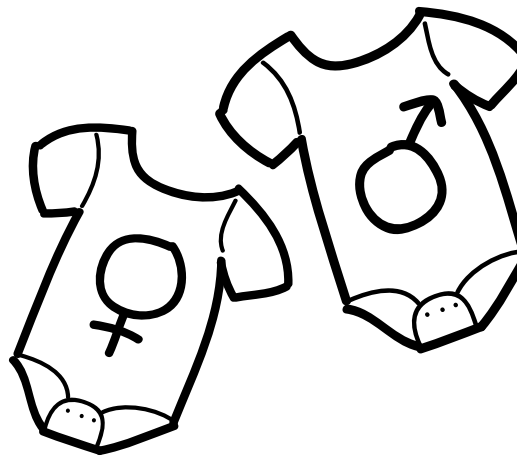
‘Well, that’s completely up to you.’ The wildly unhelpful “agency-emphasis” approach, favoured on my more optimistic days. Closely followed by a sprightly onslaught of assertions to the tune of: ‘because rules about gender are formed through mass repetition of choices, each behavioural

and affective decision is a potential site for norm-disregarding creativity’.¹ While this method did prompt the odd critical discussion, it in no way approached success. In fact, when attempted with anybody over fifty this answer instead precipitated a barely concealed who-is-this-recalcitrant-shopping-centre-employee brand of exasperation.

The more gently suggestive technique: *‘I’m not sure what you mean. What would you specifically define as girls’/boys’ clothing?’*² Their definition typically engendered a shopping list of normative pink/blue characteristics, from which I would springboard into the following approach:

‘In my opinion, all colours, styles and designs are unisex.’ - The unabashedly young, open-minded sales assistant angle. Moderately effective; sometimes even resulting in a constructive ‘these days’ kind of acknowledgement. Nevertheless, more often received with prolonged eye contact of the quietly dramatic I-am-still-waiting variety (eyebrows poised on the arch, exhale withheld). When I refused to oblige with a yes or no definitive, the customer invariably delivered a swift judgement of my complete incompetence on such matters, typified by the unmistakable and ever-terminating “polite laughter”.

“Sigh That is designed for the girls’/boys’ range.”* The “activism-fatigue” response (don’t judge me). My most popular answer. Consistently met with a bright smile, a satisfied nod and sometimes even a sale to add to my Productive, Capitalist Worker Bee badge of honour.



DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

The sample included a disturbingly small number of men, as only a handful even entered the premises. The few that I was lucky to observe surveyed the stock from a minimum distance of two metres, necks craned, before either walking away, or honing in on one specific product to briskly purchase. Although I expected less men than women, I was pretty astounded not only at this behaviour, but also at the distinct absence of seemingly every partner/grandfather/male friend that must surely exist (given that these babies could not all have been miraculously conceived).

It's possible that I didn't catch many people at their most receptive moments whilst shopping, for such reasons off the top of my head as the weight of a foetal human crushing down on the Boost Juice in their bladder, or the nagging knowledge of mere minutes remaining on their parking ticket.

It's also likely that I am not gifted with an abundance of tact, and that the efficacy of this experiment was consequently somewhat compromised. However, based on my experiences I am generally inclined to conclude that despite the consistent tide of progress, gender norms relating to babies in particular appear to be grossly ossified and in dire need of some Good, Feminist Influence.

Happy to oblige.

¹ This spiel ignored of course the regulatory effect of norms in the hope that my matter-of-fact explanation might sweep this power dynamic under the rug.

² To initially open up the conversation my response would meet them on their premise of the boy/girl binary, before traversing the topic of intersex babies if all went well.

The last polite woman

Tina Huang reflects on a less-than-satisfying sexual experience

CONTENT: ISSUES OF CONSENT

Dinner took place on a rainy Saturday, with the traffic islands of King street empty and colourless, people having already gone home for the night. We went to a Chinese restaurant where he mocked me for using a fork. I mocked him for not using one, and spotting the table with grains of rice. I was eager to assert myself. I had been here before only with women.

We had met at an ALP breakfast. He was a waiter, I was a Greens Voter. In a room of red-blooded political hacks we were pushed to the fringes, the only ones to appreciate how the total sum of patriarchal oppression would unlikely be decreased by the serving of overpriced scones. He studied at my uni, the exact same major. I watched all morning as he walked around the room, filling water jugs and directing confused patrons to the toilet. He was calm and even, like a horizon. When he asked me out for dinner, I agreed immediately, mouth still full of politically-incorrect scone.

We left the restaurant just after 9pm. Walking around Newtown, I found myself looking at our reflection in the wet footpath, the image of a boy and girl going home heavy in my steps. We arrived at his apartment and the evening lurched inside. Slowly, he moved towards a desk chair while I, still supposedly asserting myself, sat on the edge of his bed, clutching a pillow. I talked about the book on the bedside table and he fidgeted with a loose string falling from his jumper. The fridge hummed and the pipes gurgled. The apartment waited for us. Finally, having nearly unravelled an entire elbow, he said more to himself than anybody else, “I’m not really sure how to do this.”

And that was how it began. He moved to the bed, got on top of me, and then undressed. We kissed with his teeth gnashing against mine. Grinding, grinding, grinding. And then stop. He would abruptly, awkwardly sit up and ask with all the understanding of a kindly faced scone server if everything was okay. When the pain started, he stopped so quickly one might have felt offence, or maybe, if they truly cared about his enjoyment, shame. Apologetic, I gave a quick, clumsy hand job. I let him stay on top of me until we came. Far too quick, far too silent.

Afterwards, he looked at me and I was reminded of the look little children get at athletics carnivals. When life’s hurdles are still just cheap, plastic rungs. The entire night he was like a little boy who had won a ribbon. I couldn’t bring myself to tell him otherwise. I felt like I would be taking away something so hard-won. I agreed to sleep over and let him make me post-sex tea. I stayed up in his bed and nursed a mug of Earl Grey, my

fingers persisting cold and clammy against the ceramic.

The next morning, a quiet Sunday, I left his house. I dressed quickly and put back the book on his bedside table, the lips of the pages now slightly crumpled. Hungry and tired I found myself in Woolworths. While trying to buy parmesan cheese I burst into tears. My best friend answered on the third ring. Why didn’t you just tell him to stop?....Well I did, but then he looked so embarrassed. It was alright, I came? I sat on the floor for a long time. A grown woman crying in the Woolworths’ diary aisle, surrounded by cheeses and happy families doing their weekly shop. A portrait of empowerment crumbling.

Until that morning, it had always been my friend calling me when a boy did something stupid. It was always the same. She would call me, shower, cry, take one morning-after pill and then block the boy on Facebook. It happened all in time for us to get Maccas breakfast. We would eat our hash browns and I’d comfort her with all the reassurance that I’d never be that kind of woman. I was confident about sex and consent. I was vulnerable on my own terms, and believed this would stop me from being cracked upon and plundered by external forces. And yet, there I sat, on the Woolworths linoleum floor, shifting uncomfortably because of an aching crotch.

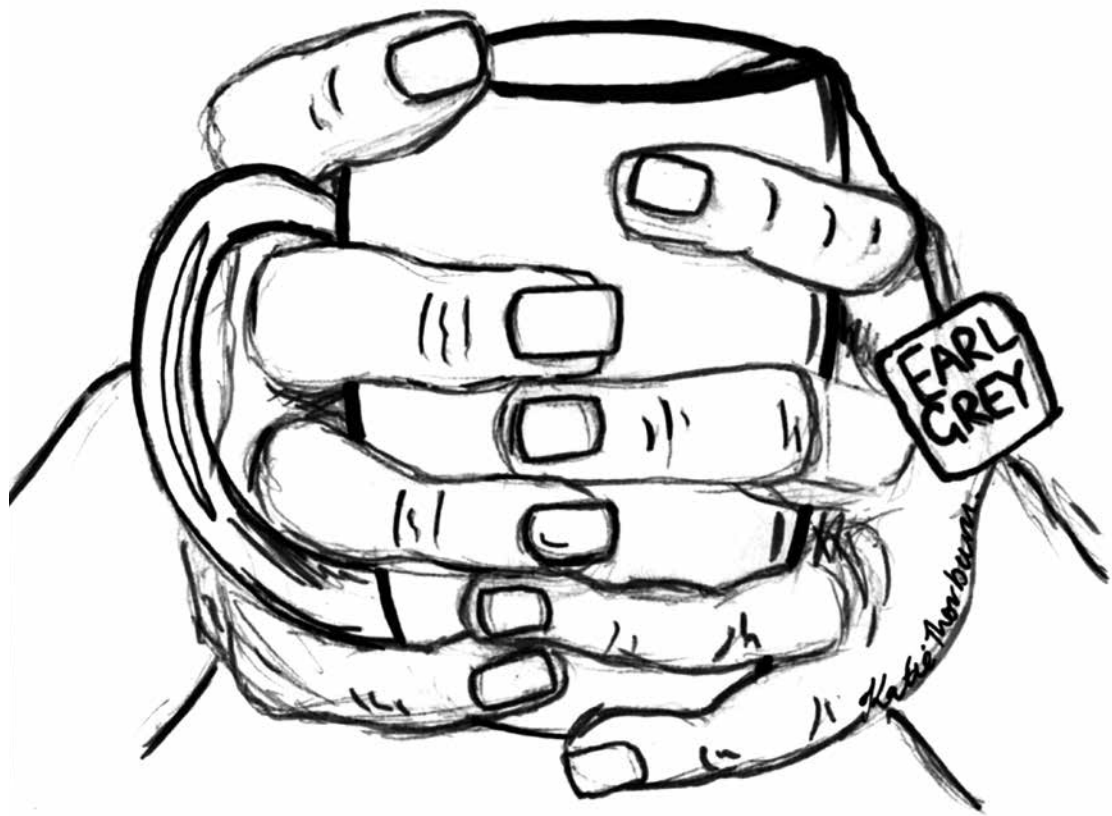
By the evening I was on my way home. There had been only a handful of times I had returned

since leaving when I was 18. Once when my grandma got sick. Another time when my girlfriend of 2 years left. And most recently, to recover from dental surgery. My roommate had offered to drive me, but I knew she’d want to talk about it and I still wasn’t ready to tell her about what had happened. So instead, I walked home. The sound of wind and crunching bitumen my only company on the lonely Hume Highway.

As I walked home, one by one road lamps all along the road turned on. I breathed in the warmth of the lights. They flooded my insides yellow and everything softened. Slowly, my walk turned into a jog. I was wearing nothing, but shorts and a t-shirt and the clothes flapped cool against my skin. I felt the night air burn my nostrils.

When I finally got to my neighbourhood, I ran straight past my house. I had arrived just before midnight and was unexpectedly greeted by a thought near the driveway. The inertia carried me down the road and onto a local park, the pain of movement slowly becoming meditative. I sped along dirt and grass and gravel still heated from the day’s punishing sun. Thump, thump, thump. I ignored the thoughts of him and our date and all the unwelcome looks of strangers. Thump, thump, thump.

I ran on into the night, cracked and plundered and fearless.



Art: Katie Thorburn

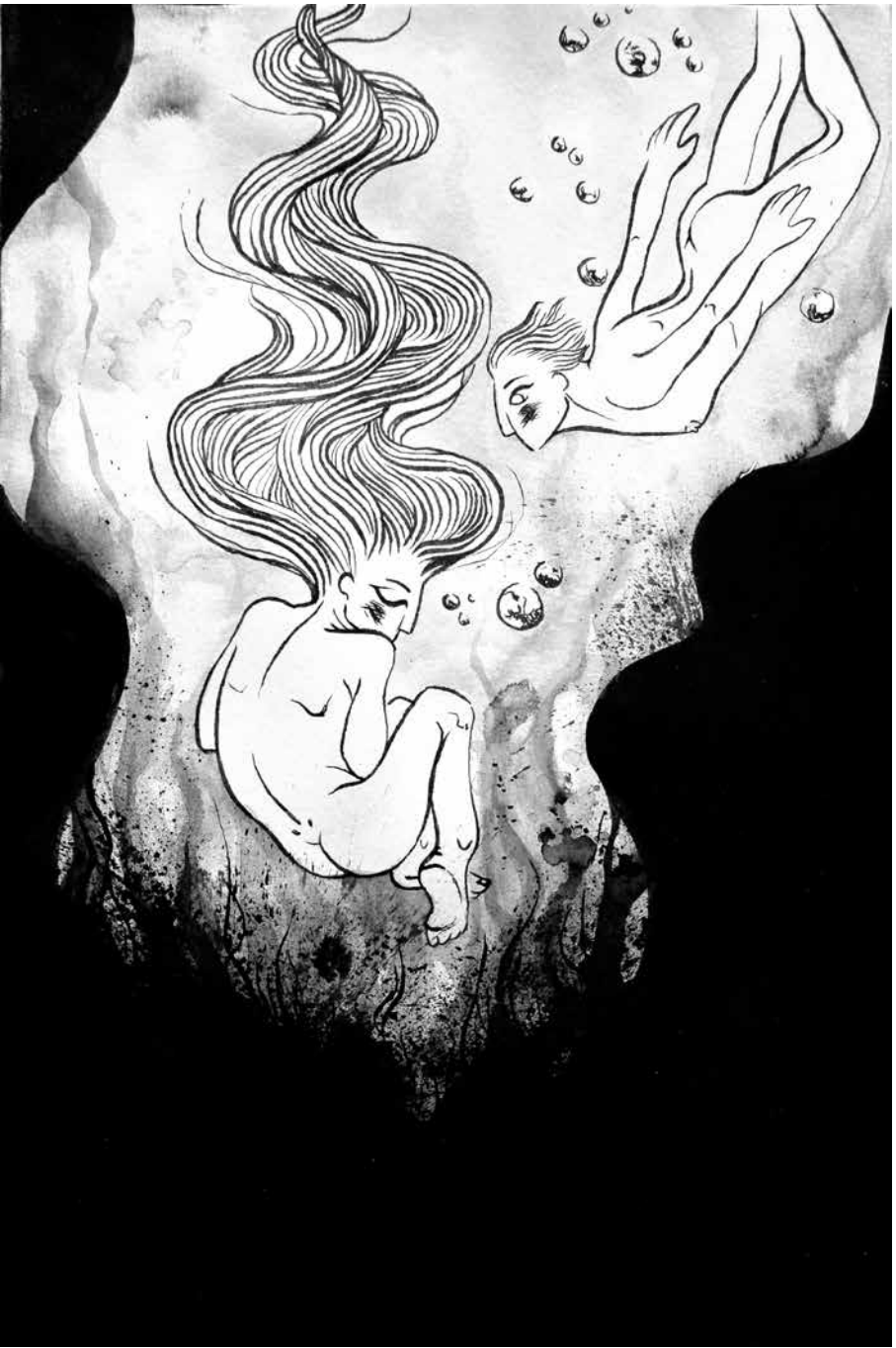
Amandine Le Bellec

Amandine is a French queer wom*n who has a complex about her accent and doesn’t understand how mispronouncing everything could possibly be a “cute” thing. She studies in the Department of Gender and Cultural Studies and, when she is not too busy analysing people, she likes to draw feminist and queer stuff. You can find more of her art at sparkletilia.tumblr.com.



A(u)stral Melancholia

“Better remorse than regrets” is an odd saying – as if everything in our lives was about success or failure, and as if we needed to blame ourselves for those things which didn’t happen. So, friends or lovers, fantasy or real couple... Please read this drawing as you wish. And remember that melancholia is beautiful too.



Better than Bondi

I don’t have a lot of affection for Bondi Beach. To be honest, having studied it, I actually really dislike the power relations structuring this beach –highly gendered and not really queer-friendly. So what? So, we need to build new spaces. Safer. Queerer. Better.

POETRY

Man of the House
Maani Truu

No limits to her ability,
In one night she could hem my school skirt
And pound nails into timber.

She wasn’t even fifty kilos

At eleven years old I was taller
Her limbs frail from Osteoporosis

Marking our heights on the wall of the
entrance way
Mine moving eagerly towards the ceiling
beams
As hers shrunk towards the carpet.

Not even fifty kilos

Pushing the lawn mower across our back
yard
Stopping only to come in and beat slabs of
meat with a mallet on the back step
She made schnitzel from scratch.

And the same night, sitting, shrinking,
behind her table
A menthol cigarette between her lips
She would chastise me for my bitten nail
stubs

It was not ladylike; she said
Grabbing my hand to redress them the best
she could
An artist, she made the best of the poor
quality canvas I provided.

She came here by boat
Once telling me she still dreamt in her
native tongue,
Even seventy years later

Every sentence she spoke involved a silent
translation.
Sometimes she would stay in bed for weeks,
Her walls stained yellow from tobacco,
An opaque mustard, once painted cream

Dark chocolate, always dark chocolate from
her bedside draw
Next to the Tiger Balm and under the
witches
This and Russian vodka her only sustenance
for these weeks.

Closer to forty kilos

She slept like a corpse, composed
Her single bed bowing when I would sit
down next to her, late at night
When I would fear death.

She was an artist;
She only gave hand-made cards

When I am complemented on my
handwriting,
Which happens often,
It is she

Her skillfully delivered calligraphy strokes
on the envelope of my birthday card
Her extravagant penmanship listing
groceries to be bought
Everything was deliberate.

Layers of black, on black, a black hat
She wore her hair long, into old age
Defiantly.

She once told me she wasn’t afraid of death.
Which was good, because she was about to
die.

She said it with complete composure, a slow
drag from a menthol cigarette;
“It’s too late now.”



Art: Jenna Schrodos

not yet titled
Katie Thorburn

We have all the possibilities afforded to us
by being at the beginning of a life yet to be
lived.

We cradle each other – the four young
twenties housemates – we who’ve given
a middle-aged man forty three grand in
less than a year, for doing nothing and not
fixing our cupboards.

The possibilities are endless and we feel
stuck. There’s a plaster wall we have to
punch through to access who we could be.
We don’t know what we want.

We’re locked out of the property market;
the environment is dying; 80% of our
income is going to rent; how do we navigate
a dating world hungover from outdated
expectations?

We feel like we’re treading water, infinitely
gazing at the shore.

CREATIVE

Oh no, not real life!
Talía Meyerowitz-Katz

Alex gripped the crumbling rails of her balcony, ignoring the
mundane portrait which the stormy city below her painted with
brushes of ambulance sirens and the frustrated cries of those
caught in the downpour. She then embarked on this afternoon’s
mission: an exercise of imagination which would allow her, if
only for a minute, to stand atop this balcony and become the
all-powerful weather goddess she knew nestled within her.

She licked the residue of rain off her lips, as if it was pure heaven
water and not the polluted travesty it probably was. Then she
reprimanded herself for licking her lips; that wasn’t very
goddess-like behaviour. Unless it was done in the sultry manner
of Cleopatra impersonators and Oscar nominees, of which she
was neither.

Distracted again! Irritated, she tried to immerse herself back
into the daydream. She imagined the wind barrelling into her
like a frantic stampeding elk, which she felt was an apt symbol
for the hardships of life. But since elks are no match for celestial
beings like her, she withstood its attack, silently commanding it
to continue its superb display of pathetic fallacy elsewhere.

Alex then decided that she didn’t like the wind-elk simile, and
struggled to think of one which was more sophisticated. How
about: ‘the sky pulsed like an infected wound and enclosed
her within its furious grasp, as if she were not a solid being but
a mere pillar of midst in its terrible path. And yet, despite its
overwhelming angst, she pulsed back’.

Slightly better; it would have to do. It occurred to her that people
generally don’t pretend they have divine power over nature,
unless they feel they have lost control over their own lives. She
wondered whether fleeing from the veterinarian practice earlier
that afternoon had indeed been a good idea, especially since
her old balcony was not offering her the glamorous, tortured
artist-like reprise she had imagined. All it had done was inspire
insipid language devices and make her fairly cold.

Unfortunately for her she had come to realise that ‘liking
animals’ did not equate to being a good vet. Children who
wish to be vets because they just adore fluffy animals do not
comprehend that vets spend most of their time putting said
fluffy animals down, or neutering them so that more cuteness
cannot pop into existence - something that becomes painfully
clear when vet students intern for the first time.

The result was Alex’s sense of youthful optimism dying with
all the many youthful animals she helped kill, which in turn
caused her to slide into a general state of lethargy. Apart from
that moment, which was better described as ‘manic’.

She stamped her foot against the balcony floor, frustrated by
her inability to conclude a simple daydream without having
an existential meltdown. It was almost as if part of her thought
she should actually confront her problems, instead of seeking
refuge in fantastical nonsense.

But if she could withstand the hyperbolic terror of the storm,
she could certainly paint over the tyranny of her own brain.
Armed with her brushes of fantasy, she resumed the task of
erasing reality.

A translation
Agnes McKinley

A lot of my brain space is occupied by unfocused ponderings
surrounding the links between every day life experiences, and song
lyrics. Today, I was thinking of these:

*‘La rivière coule, coule,
Sans se lasser.
Elle roule, roule, roule,
Les yeux fermés.’*

- La rivière (a children’s song)

*‘Old man River,
Old man River,
He must know Something,
But don’t say Nothing.
He just keeps rolling.
He keeps on rolling
Along.’*

- Old Man River, Showboat, Oscar Hammerstein II

The first set of lyrics, in a language other than English (oh, no!)
translates itself into some similar themes to Old Man River. It
speaks of a river which keeps rolling: It never gets tired, it keeps
rolling, with its eyes closed. The song might speak of tiredness. It
might speak of lassitude, of weariness, or a kind of sorrow. But why
are the river’s eyes closed?

*‘He must know something,
But don’t say nothing.’*

The song Old Man River was part of a musical of the 1920s called
Showboat. *Showboat* took place in 1880s America (yes, the United
States) in the context of a set of the Jim Crow segregation laws. The
1920s were a rich period to be talking about segregation in the US.
We shake our heads at the whole thing, really. But, I wonder to what
extent we still close our eyes to injustices in each corner of our lives,
day by day. Time has moved forward, but are we more righteous
now, as a society, than we
were a century ago?

There’s a fatalism to
the image of the river
running, never stopping,
eyes closed, unable to
change course. How
about us? Can we change
course?



Art: Brigitte Samaha

Harrassment at Uni – What are your rights?

The University defines unlawful harassment as any type of behaviour that:

- the other person does not want; and
- offends, insults, humiliates or intimidates them; and is either:
 - sexual, or
 - targets them because of their race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, transgender, sexual preference or orientation (including homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality and heterosexuality), disability, age, carers' responsibility, political belief, lack of a political belief, lack of a particular political belief (including trade union activity or lack of it, and student association activity or lack of it), religious belief, lack of a religious belief, and/or lack of a particular religious belief; and
- that, in the circumstances, a reasonable person should have expected would offend, insult, humiliate, or intimidate.

This includes actual, potential and perceived (imputed) race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, etc.

Some types of harassment, such as sexual harassment and other forms of physical assault and/or stalking, are also illegal under criminal law. These types of harassment may result in criminal prosecution.

“All staff, students and affiliates at the University have a right to work or study in an environment that is free from unlawful harassment and discrimination, and to be treated with dignity and respect, irrespective of their background, beliefs or culture.”

Other types of harassment may not be 'unlawful' under anti-discrimination legislation, but may nonetheless contravene the University's staff and student Codes of Conduct or the University's Workplace Bullying Prevention Policy and Resolution Procedure.

What is Unlawful Discrimination?

The University defines unlawful discrimination as any practice that makes an unlawful distinction between individuals or groups, so as to disadvantage some people and advantage others. Discrimination may be 'direct' (specifically acting against someone) or 'indirect' (inadvertently acting against someone who has a particular characteristic).

What is stalking?

The Crimes Act says that “stalking includes the following of a person about or the watching or frequenting of the vicinity of, or an approach to, a person's place of residence, business or work or any place that a person frequents for the purposes of any social or leisure activity”. This may be by another student, staff member, or someone not involved in the university community.

What should you do?

If you think you are being discriminated against or harassed make detailed notes about days and times of the incidents noting any potential witnesses. Talk to an SRC caseworker about how to make a complaint and what possible outcomes there are. Remember that a caseworker will not force you to take any action you don't want to take.

If you are being stalked report this to University Security or the Police. Your safety is an immediate concern. An SRC Caseworker may also be able to accompany you while you make a complaint.

Contact us on help@src.usyd.edu.au or call to make an appointment on 9660 5222. We can arrange to meet with you on any campus.

'The University of Sydney (2010). Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy and Resolution Procedure. Retrieved 13th February, 2015 from <http://sydney.edu.au/policies/showdoc.aspx?recnum=PD0C2011/168&RendNum=0>

Ask Abe



SRC caseworker HELP Q&A

Dear Abe,

I need to leave my home because I am scared for my safety. I have been looking for somewhere to crash while I find something more permanent, but none of these places will let me bring my dog. I'm not leaving without her. What can I do?

Dog Lover

Dear Dog Lover,

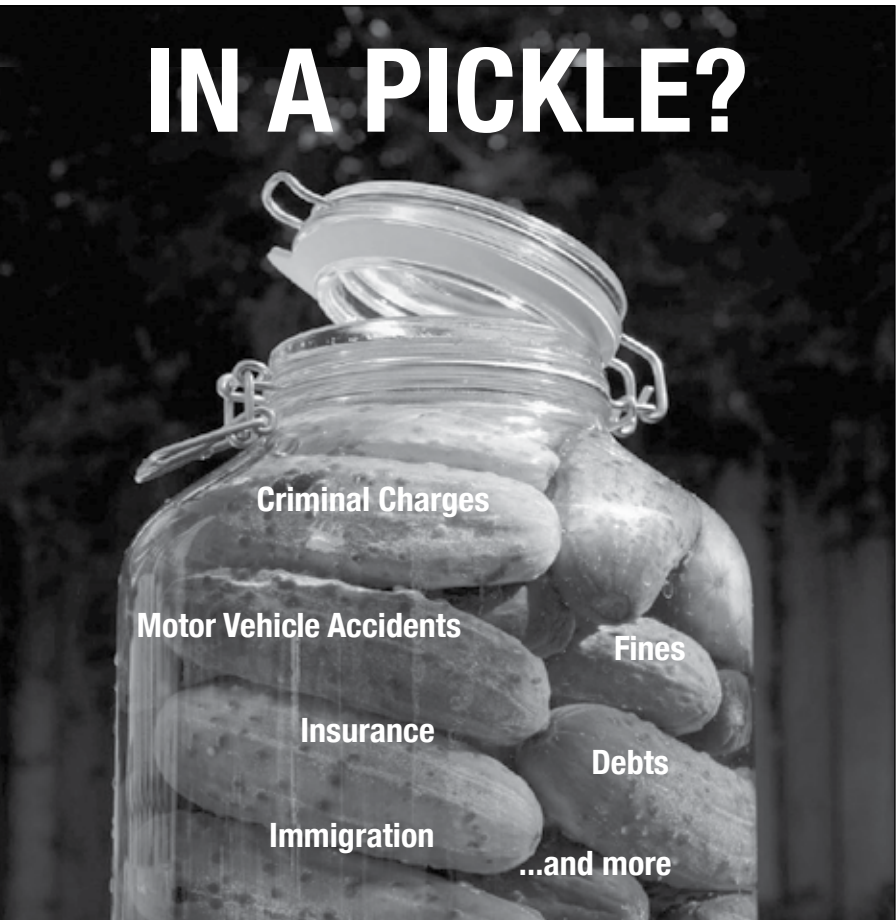
I am sorry to hear about your situation. If you are fleeing domestic violence, but are concerned for the safety of a pet you have to leave behind, you can contact the RSPCA for help. They run a “Safe Beds” program, which gives temporary accommodation to your pet, while you seek more permanent housing. I'm sure there are conditions and stuff that you would need to consider, so give them a call (9782 4408) or email safebeds@rspcansw.org.au.

Please know also that there is a range of services that may be able to help you in your situation. A good starting place for resources is Domestic Violence NSW. Call (02) 9698 9777 or Google for other contact details.

Abe



SRC Caseworkers offer advice and support on a range of issues including: Academic Issues, Tenancy issues, Centrelink and more. 9660 5222 or help@src.usyd.edu.au



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



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WHAT IS THE RESTRUCTURE?

The University is continuing its corporate shift cutting alumni and staff representation in the Senate. Management wants a larger portion of their funding to come from industry. To foster this aim the university wants to bring industry on campus with new infrastructure like the Sydney Knowledge Hub. The Government's plan to defund the sector by 20% will only encourage this shift further. We must fight back.

GOODBYE HONOURS

The University has explicitly outlined its intention to remove honours. The strategic plan outlines the Masters program as the preferred pathway into the PHD. Unlike honours, Master degrees are generally not covered under commonwealth funding and are charged at a deregulated rate, this means the University can charge whatever it wants.

The University has announced major reforms that puts our education quality last over profit and prestige.

FACULTY MERGERS AND JOB LOSSES

The faculty mergers have already begun with most being fully merged by January first 2017. Education and Social Work, as well as Sydney College of the Arts are both due to merge with Arts and Social Sciences. Veterinary Science and Agriculture are merging with Biology under the faculty of Science, and Dentistry, Pharmacy, nursing and Medicine will merge together.

THE BACHELOR OF ADVANCE STUDIES: 4 YEAR DEGREES

The new Bachelor of Advance Studies is designed to undercut the existing three year and honours programs. In 2015 the University proposed a complete shift to a four-year degree model with no indication of increasing staff numbers to compensate for the increased student load. This would see students pay 33% more.

The University will use heavy marketing to pull people into the B.Advance Studies to use the enrolment figures as justification for cutting the three year degree program. Academics have criticised the structure of the Advance Studies honours streams highlighting it would not prepare students for the PHD.

Small and medium sized schools will struggle to offer 4000 level units essential to the new curriculum. Concerns have been raised that this could lead to further department mergers, loss of curriculum or a shift to casual and teaching only positions. The University has been unable to answer these concerns.

JOIN THE EAG

2PM TUESDAY

ON LAW LAWNS

President

Chloe Smith

This past week has seen some disturbing reports and allegations come to light concerning rates of sexual assault and harassment on campus. Claims of slut shaming of female students at colleges, of a culture of publicly documenting and rating sexual experiences between students, of feeling unsafe on and around campus, not only at parties but also while studying and traveling through. It's important, and depressing, to stress that these incidents don't appear to be restricted to one or two parts of the university, but unfortunately are widespread experiences for students, particularly women.

Perhaps the most concerning aspect is the almost universal feedback that, of the students who did report their experiences to university and college management, the response was lacklustre at best and non-existent at worst. Sexual assault and harassment at universities is not new. Only a few years ago, students at St Paul's College were found to have set up a "pro-rape" Facebook page. Just last year a student was accused of distributing a recording of a sexual experience with a fellow student without her consent, whilst residing in university housing. The Talk About It survey run by the National Union of Students has found that, at campuses right across the country, experiencing sexual harassment and assault is almost part and parcel of going to uni.

And yet, despite all this, it seems the majority of staff still don't really know how to respond to such cases. The university has set up a working group to look at how to improve responses to harassment and assault, and yet the findings of a university-run survey from last year still haven't been released. Despite repeated requests from the SRC and other student reps, the working group has only met once this year with no follow up since. It is vital that universities ensure they have procedures in place to support victims and punish perpetrators, as well as educate staff and students on what sexual harassment and assault is, how to report it, and how to respond if you witness it. Students need to know they will be believed and provided with the appropriate support networks if they come forward, and unfortunately at the moment that cannot be said at the University of Sydney. This must change and your SRC will be working to ensure it does.

Co-General Secretary

Georgia Mantle

Imagine this, there is a pie, you get half of it and a man gets the other half, equal right? Expect you weren't allowed to make the pie, you weren't allowed to decide what goes in the pie you only got handed that one half. So what do we do with this pie? We chuck it in the bin and make our own! In a world that is created and continued by ongoing patriarchal structures and oppression we can no longer just pursue equality because equality in a patriarchal world is not true equity.

Struggling for equity in this world is different for each wom*n - while some may be fighting for a life free of sexism, some are fighting for their lives and some are fighting to be recognised as the wom*n they are. It is essential in our understanding of feminism and sexism that we consider the way in which intersectionality affects all wom*n differently and not assume we are all fighting the same oppressions in the same way.

Sexual Harassment and assault on campus has reached the point of epidemic and the University has been dragging its feet in dealing with this. As students I urge you all to make it know to university management that you demand more from them. It is every student's right to feel safe on campus and to not live in fear of assault. The high rates of sexual assault on campus are not being ignored by the SRC as a number of your female student representatives are working hard to put pressure on the University to do more for students. Remember if you have experienced sexual assault there are people who can help you, you can call 1800 RESPECT to speak to someone who can help you. You are not alone and you are not responsible for what has happened to you.

Interfaith Officers

Aya Mustafa and Zahra Makki

As interfaith officers, our aims are to ensure students practice their faiths comfortably on campus as well as promote understanding and appreciation of the many faiths and cultures present on campus. Throughout 2016, we hope to fulfil these aims.

During O Week, the Muslim Wom*n's Collective managed to interact with many current and new students. The Muslim Wom*n's Collective supported the Mummies Paying it Forward group, a group that supports local non for profit charity organisations, by setting up a donation drive in support of

their Essential Packs appeal. The donations collected were toiletries which were created into packs then sent to refugees to help women on arrival as they usually arrive with minimal belongings.

The collective also held a Meet and Greet to get to know the members as well as talk about ideas and thoughts that supports the collective in choosing the events that will be held in the future. An interfaith picnic was held at Victoria Park between the Australasian Union of Jewish Students (AUJS) and the Muslim Wom*n's Collective. Students from both groups participated and got to know each other. The picnic resulted in good outcomes and friendships were formed, with hopes of another picnic together.

In semester two 2016, the Muslim Wom*n's Collective is planning on creating a cross cultural events such as a Meet and Greet for students from different religions and cultures, picnics in a local park discussing different issues that are relevant to our everyday life, having regular meetings to help students around the university with academic and general information's aiming to make students feel comfortable around campus meeting different people. Besides the face to face interactions there will be more social media updates and use to make all students interact regularly even if they were busy to attend an event!

Environment Officers

Lily Matchett and Maushmi Power

The USYD Enviro Collective has been in full swing these past few weeks with supporting UNSW's incredible occupation of the Chancellory (Go Fossil Free UNSW!), going to BreakFree with 350.org, preparing for Students of Sustainability and planning for upcoming Forums!

Firstly, UNSW absolutely nailed their civil disobedience in raising awareness for the University's investment into fossil fuels!! We are seriously proud of our fellow comrades :D We hope we can do you justice in our own Fossil Free campaign in the upcoming weeks!

BreakFree organised by 350.org was incredible! On Sunday 8 May a bunch of people from the Collective participated in blocking one of the world's largest coal ports in Newcastle! Blocking any coal from coming in or going out for an entire day was thoroughly empowering and really brought together people from all over the community. Participating in this mass mobilisation really highlighted

that communities all over Australia are fighting for a fairer and safer environment for our future.

Students of Sustainability (SoS) is fast approaching and the Collective is working hard on promoting the conference to as many keen enviro beans as we possibly can! Publicity has been our key issue at the moment and we'll soon be organising logistics for getting people there. For any people interested, check out this event page! - facebook.com/events/540947269408480/.

Upcoming Forums include the ASEN Just Transitions Forums on 20 May @ Carlaw Lecture Room 350 which Lily has been working endlessly on (Thanks Lil!).

Another forum is the Nuclear Power Forum held jointly by the USYD Enviro Collective and the USU on 25 May @ the Common Room, Holme Building. Both have amazing speakers from a diverse set of perspectives and I strongly encourage people to attend! For those interested, details are in the FB group - USYD Enviro Collective 2016.

Wine pairings for your sex

Ellie Rogers *had a lot of sex and*
Oliver Moore *drank a lot of wine.*

Missionary

Affordable enough to support frequent use and tasteless enough that you don't care, we recommend a Shiraz Cab.

Doggy style

Spice it up a bit with some sexy Sangria! As you're letting your sex life off the metaphorical leash, why not do the same for your taste buds and soak up the flavoursome Spanish juices.

That complicated one from the Kama Sutra where you're not sure where your arms are supposed to be

You're thinking big and I like that. Reward your ambition with an equally daring pairing and down a vintage Grange like the fat cat you aspire to be. Just be careful not to spill it on your Persian carpet as you attempt to mimic the rather unhelpful diagram in your leather bound copy of the Kama Sutra.

Standing

The only conceivable reason you're fucking standing up and not in the comfort of your own conventional bed is because you're at an event, and a Sauvignon Blanc or Pinot Noir will be the only wines on offer, so grab one from a nearby waiter and enjoy.

69ing

Let's face it, no-one has ever enjoyed this. There's pubes in your face, you're trying to balance, on your elbows, or alternatively attempting not to suffocate in your partner's genitals. It's unpleasant, and tastes like regret and being 16, so what better to pair it with than some Fruity Lexia? Drink like you've seen this in porn and want to impress someone two years older than you who definitely should be fucking someone their own age.

Spooning

You're sensualists, you like to make weird 180 degree neck bends so that you can make eye contact and also be touching. Rosé is just soft enough, light a candle for some ambiance.

Sexless Night Spent Alone

Someone left a Riesling at your place that no one drunk at the party, and now it's all you have. Swig it from the bottle or sip gently from the glassware that's too nice for everyday use as you masturbate in the ad break of The Block.

Exclusive with Hillary Clinton:

“Why I want to rule the Patriarchy”



Everything is fine

a haiku by Anna Rowe

death death death death death
is is is is is is is
inevitable

*Left unsatisfied by this comedy? Still not sure if wom*n are actually funny? Come to:*

THE 2016 SYDNEY UNIVERSITY WOM*N'S REVUE'S



photo credit: Victoria Nelson Photography and Design

A night of comedy, music and dance on **June 2nd, 3rd and 4th**

TICKETS: Access \$15 | Student \$18 | General \$20

Tickets available at the ticket stall outside Manning House | Monday 16th - Wednesday 18th and Monday 23rd - Wednesday 25th May 11am-3pm

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Yummy Mummy Wanted

Date: 17/5/2016

Reply to: hungrydaddy@honisoit.com

Every “Yummy Mummy” I’ve licked has tasted gross. I don’t understand why this category of people exists. I’m on a mission to find one that actually tastes like the stereotype that has been promised to me. I sampled this so called Yummy Mummy once but she tasted like sweat and I found that highly unappealing. Mothers are so over worked these days with often balancing professional work and the domestic slave labour that is child rearing. But this is no excuse: I demand delicious maternal figures for my own sick enjoyment!

please flag with care

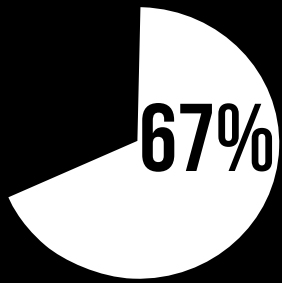
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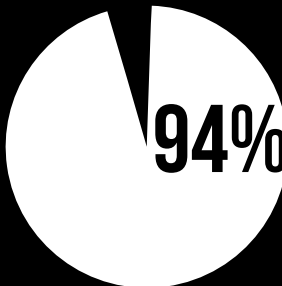
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IT'S TIME FOR THE UNIVERSITY TO TAKE ACTION ON SEXUAL ASSAULT.



of women students in Australia surveyed in 2015 have had an unwanted sexual experience.*



of those students did not report it to their university.*



of students who reported their experience to the University of Sydney felt that the procedures 'did not help at all.'**

ACTIONS RECOMMENDED IN 2014:

- ☒ A survey to canvas prevalence of sexual harassment and assault
- ☒ Centralised information, resources and support on a dedicated University webpage
- ☐ An on-and-off campus University-endorsed campaign to raise awareness of sexual harassment and assault
- ☐ A sexual violence prevention program, including bystander education during O Week
- ☐ A statement of relevant policy and links to key resources included on all UoS outlines

STUDENTS DESERVE BETTER.

* National Union of Students 'Talk About It' survey, 2015

** University of Sydney 'Creating a Safer Community for All' pilot survey, 2015