

HONISOIT

CAN'T EVEN THINK STRAIGHT
WEEK 10 | 8 October 2009

QUEER
EDITION

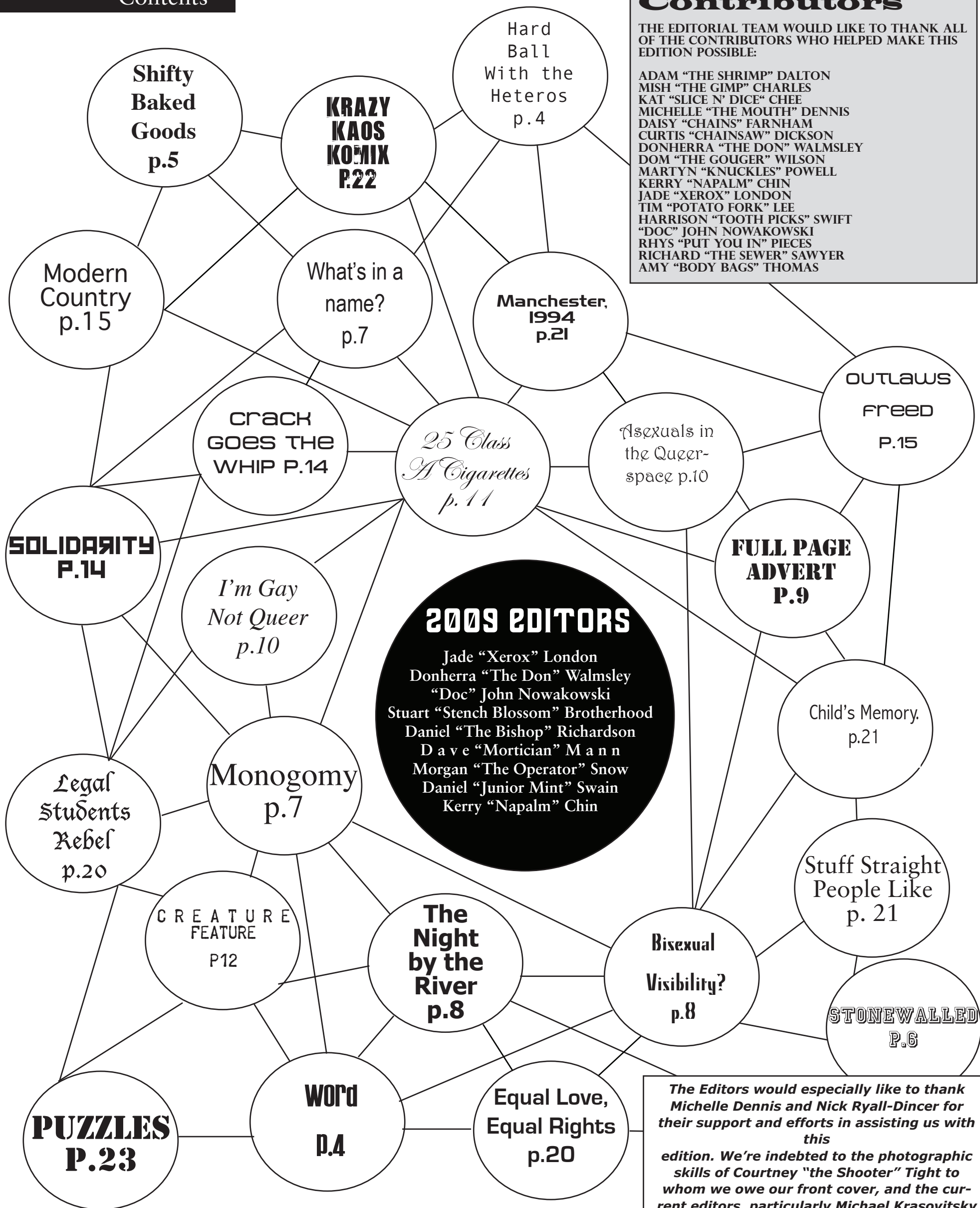
MAFIA



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THE EDITORIAL TEAM WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL OF THE CONTRIBUTORS WHO HELPED MAKE THIS EDITION POSSIBLE:

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LETTERS

Dear Readers of Honi Soit,
We are in control of your basement.
We've taken your publication.
We've silenced your editors and
stolen your fonts.
We are the Queer Mafia, and we've
ordered a hit on homophobia.
Our demands are these: wine (pinot
gris), equal rights, Hillary Clinton's
inauguration as the new President.
Yours outrageously,
The Mauve Hand.

Dear Queer Honi,

I was so excited to hear that this edition wasn't being edited by that other lot, mostly because it means I won't have to write letters of complaint, move to Artarmon, and marry Antares (love you Antares :).

Yours,
John Nowakowski

Dear Queer Honi,
A/S/L?
The Bull, Arts II

Dear Queer Honi,

Last weekend was amazing. How fun are tounes huh? You and I should meet up sometime soon but in the mean time... um... i've got this... well, it's not a "rash"... well, it's a thing ... you should probably buy some cream.

Burning For You, Science II

Dear Queer Honi,

Letting you know in advanced I am angered by things you have written in here;

Elitist, Leftist, Queers.

Dear Queer Honi,

I'm confused. And not in a gay way.

Basically, I'm wondering when my SRC will get around to publishing a straight white upper middle class male edition of Honi Soit. Why won't this fine publication to distil the experience of the future back-room MacBank employee? Who'll record my narrative of oppression?

Everyday as my e-tag beeps while driving from my four-storey house in Lane Cove, I know I'm underwriting the frivolous spending of a Government my parents won't even let me vote for. My frequenting of SUBSKI shindings make maintaining a credit average a constant struggle: I might even miss out on that internship at my Dad's hedge fund. Pretending to be interested in the barbarism of banal contact sports is such a drag. And—also—not in a gay way.

Yours in heteronormativity,
Hugh Huntington-Smyth III
B. Commerce VI I

Dear Queer Honi,

I make out with girls at parties, does that make me a lesbian?

Media Arts II

Editorialis Machine

When asked what Queer Honi's theme will be this year, aside from the obvious answer that Queer Honi will be really fucking mind-bendingly awesome, I couldn't find a common narrative to relate all our articles/poems/filler. It struck me that this was probably because the very nature of queer is so diverse and eclectic it cannot be pinned down and explained as some dumb story. But then we decided at the 11th hour that the rest of the issue should match the front cover, so we hope you enjoy the mobster edition of queer honi.

Even still, it is the celebration of difference that unites us in ink against those that believe in normality; the pushers of beige and grey, and the lovers of symmetry who say everybody must be the same and believe that you're either with us or against us. Queer Honi this year is a big 'fuck you' to ennui, certainty and social lobotomy. So we, the 2009 queer edition editors, present a random sampling of what it means to be different, beautiful and free.

With Infinite Love,
Jade "Xerox" London (Co-editor-in-chief).

As one of the editors-in-chief of Queer Honi this year, I had a very simple vision, which could be summed up in one word: diversity.

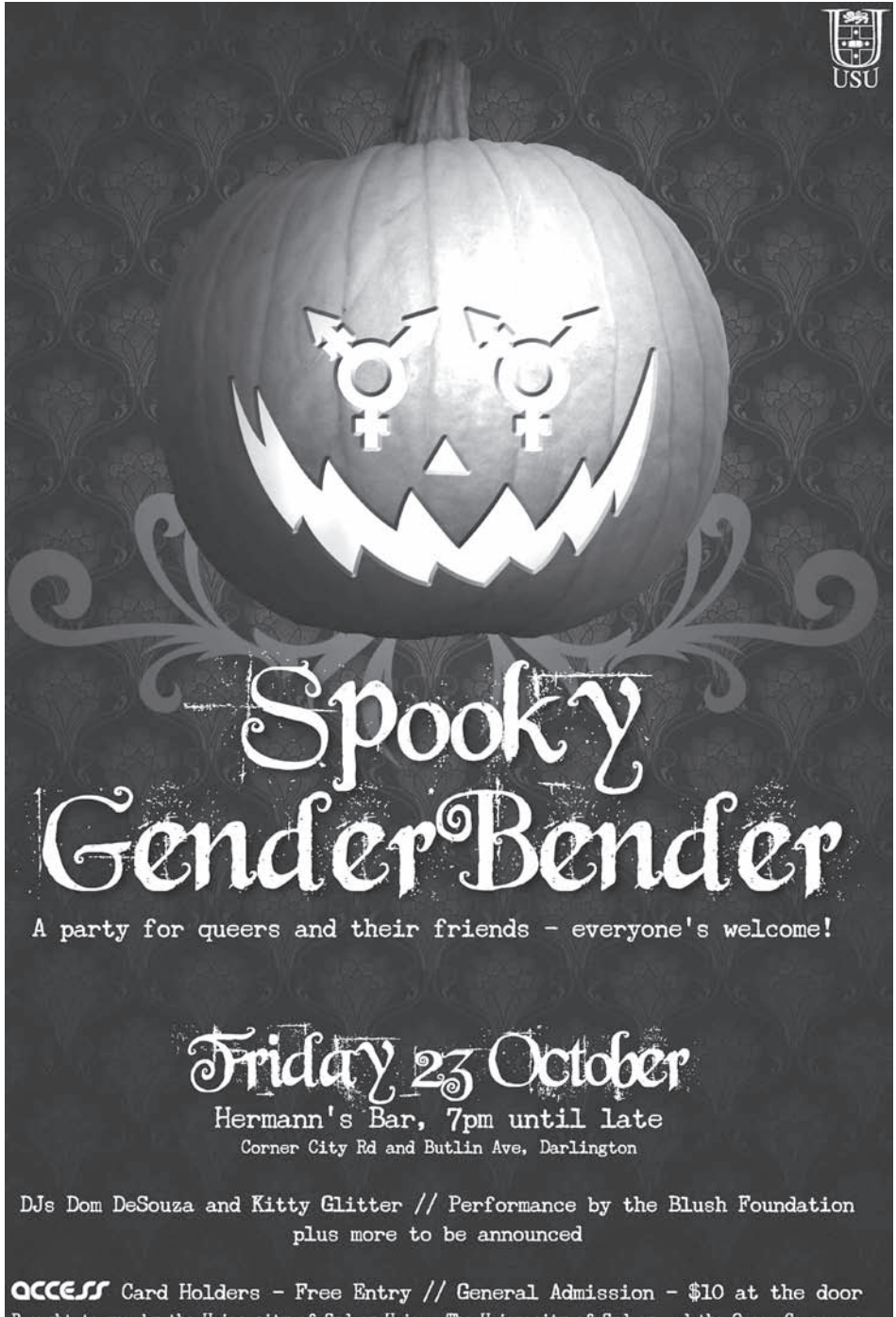
I think that this vision has been realised to the fullest extent that a mere 24 pages will allow.

The queer community, like any other, is made up of a variety of unique individuals: each with their own histories, values, politics and views of the world. In trying to present an accurate depiction of queers, we necessarily had to present a conflicted one.

I do not agree with all of the opinions expressed in this edition, indeed, it is my sincerest hope that no-one does. Rather I hope that the differing experiences and ideas presented in this edition will provoke thought, and maybe even spark debate. Most of all I hope that it will give an insight into and a greater understanding of queer students and the issues they face.

We're out of the closet and into your university newspaper...

- Donherra "The Don" Walmsley (Co-editor-in-Chief & Queer Officer 2009)



USU

Spooky Gender Bender

A party for queers and their friends - everyone's welcome!

Friday 23 October
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Playing Hard Ball With The Heteros

Adam "Brass Balls" Dalton discovers that bats and balls have many uses...

After a couple of alcoholic beverages I become quite the opportunistic gay boy. Call it hedonistic, pathetic, or downright slutty, but if I'm single, liquored up, and an attractive guy shows even the slightest interest in me, you'd best believe an archaic label like "heterosexual" isn't holding me back.

Don't get me wrong: the guys who show interest are usually as gay as Christmas. But just last week, during a party at my house, I had the unexpected pleasure of meeting one of those elusive "bi-curious" heterosexuals my High School fantasies were made of.

It began so innocently. We stole glances across the room, sat together a little closer than we should have, and laughed excessively at each other's mediocre jokes. I knew he was straight and he knew I was gay. Our gin-enhanced libidos didn't seem bothered by such labels though. So, in the wee hours of the morning

when the time came for bed, I offered to share mine.

As you can imagine this is when things stopped being so innocent. Spooning for a couple of minutes I felt his heart-beat begin to race as he turned over and leaned in for a kiss. As passionate as it was, it was short-lived. My wandering hands were a little too adventurous. Apologising, he jumped out of bed. He couldn't do it. Thought I was a great guy, but couldn't do it.

Mind you it wasn't until his belt was off and his fly unbuttoned that he came to this realisation.

Admittedly, I was a little disappointed: the idea of "turning" a straight guy is somewhat appealing, but no harm, no foul. The next day, though, he sent me a facebook message trying

to justify what had happened. He wrote: "I was extremely drunk and a bit randy as I was supposed to go see this girl I've been seeing, but she was too tired."

I would have laughed had I not been so shocked. Not only did he blame the alcohol for almost having sex with a guy, but he also blamed his own heterosexuality. Now, surely anyone with basic functioning motor skills can see that that kind of reasoning defies logic.

After retelling this story to a male friend of mine, he jokingly remarked that it was as if "bi-curious" guys were willing to come to practice and do some ball handling, but wouldn't show up on game day because they didn't like the team mates. I laughed, but in retrospect this analogy is symptomatic of a larger problem.

The question "what team do you bat for?" is as nauseatingly clichéd as it is problematic. Reaffirming the idea that sexuality is only experienced as heterosexual or homosexual, it also implies that once we're on a "team" there's no possibility for alternating between the two.

Clearly this is bullshit. So let's forget the ball game and just get laid.



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Image by Dom Wilson

EXPLORATION



Image by Kat Chee

WORD

Mish "The Mobster" Charles

trans- (prefix)

1) across; beyond : transcontinental | transgress.

• on or to the other side of : transatlantic | transalpine. Often contrasted with cis-

I am trans*.

I wish that statement would suffice but it does not, because you do not know what I mean. How could you, it means a different thing for everybody. If I told you I was taking oestrogen, progestin and antiandrogens (think of them as testosterone blockers) you might think I wanted to transition to become a woman; that I was a transsexual.

transsexual (noun)

a person born with the physical characteristics of one sex who emotionally and psychologically feels that they belong to the opposite sex.

• a person who has undergone surgery and hormone treatment in order to acquire the physical characteristics of the opposite sex.

I am not a transsexual. I do not want to be a woman. Maybe the best way to describe it is that I want to become androgynous. You could say I was an androgyne.

androgyne (noun)

an androgynous individual.

androgynous (adjective)

partly male and partly female in appearance; of indeterminate sex.

• having the physical characteristics of both sexes; hermaphrodite.


I am not an androgyne or androgynous. I am not some in-between gender. I am something else. My gender is not bound by the binary of male-female.

I am trans*. My gender is beyond the binary of male-female. I am trans*.

Do you understand me now?

☐ Male
 ☐ Female
 ☒ **FUCK YOU**

Love, Food and other Disasters



Michelle "The Mouth" Dennis serves a feast for the familia

Cooking, to me, is a lot like love and relationships. Food is sexy, sensual and seductive, and often, messy and complicated. Maybe food can say the things that I find too scary to say out loud. I have tried this to varying degrees of success.

In cooking, there is a lot of trial and error involved and even the occasional complete fuck up! Like the time I set the oven alight because I placed the garlic bread too close to the heating elements, or the time I took the roast out of the oven, to check if it was cooked, placed it thoughtfully onto a plastic chopping board, which then proceeded to melt to the bottom of the backing tray, hitch-hiked its way into the oven and melted all over the potatoes. A bloody disaster!

Some of my relationships have not fared much better. Getting over excited about being attracted to a girl and over texting, over analysing and over talking. So embarrassing! Having a crush that is so debilitating that you just sit at home spending over an hour drafting a text message that ends up saying, "Hey, how are you? The dust storm was intense! I hope you are well" and then freaking out that you might have come across too keen or not keen enough.

As my love language is food, I am often cooking and searching for the perfect "date" restaurant - a place that is well priced, quirky, and intimate, but most of all has excellent food. I am also in constant danger of letting my little inner Master Chef run wild and get so carried away with the intricate and amazing flavours of the food I am creating that I don't realise that spending hours creating an extravagant 3 course meal might end up saying "I love you" when all I really meant to say was "I think you're really attractive and I would like to get to know you better". Eek! Too much too soon!

Cooking for your partner can be a beautiful and fulfilling act. But, if you are going to risk it, please, please find out what they actually like to eat before you embark! So that you don't end up sitting at Mrs Macquarie's Chair, picnic blanket laid

out, wine chilled and a pumpkin risotto, which is still warm because you placed it in a home made esky carry bag thingy, only to hear the words, "I don't eat pumpkin." Not only is this devastating to the current situation, but it can develop a life long complex, in which you compulsively ask each subsequent prospective partner, on the first date, "Do you like pumpkin?"

There are many kinds of foods that immediately scream "sex". However I am more concerned by the foods that scream "stalker" as these foods are not aiding the cause. These foods, to me, are baked goods. Baked goods must be used with caution! If you are in a relationship you have a little more freedom but if you are single baking is a no-no. There is no situation in which you should be dropping off baked muffins and brownies to your crush's house, tutorial, or just keeping a few in your bag just in case you bump into them on the street. Stalking with "kindness" is still stalking. Stalking is bad. There is no sex to be had when you are a stalker. Don't be a no sex, baking, stalker.

There is no way that I am ever really going to know what the food I make says about me, and I won't ever be able to say everything I want to say through food. But I am going to have a tasty time trying.

SHELL'S TOP 5 PLACES TO GO ON A FIRST DATE

- 1) Buzz Bar, King St Newtown
Café/restaurant/bar
- 2) Café Lounge, Surry Hills
Cocktail bar/pizza place
- 3) Asakusa, King St Newtown
Japanese Restaurant
- 4) Café C, King St Newtown
Cafe
- 5) Well Connected, Glebe
Café (sit upstairs)

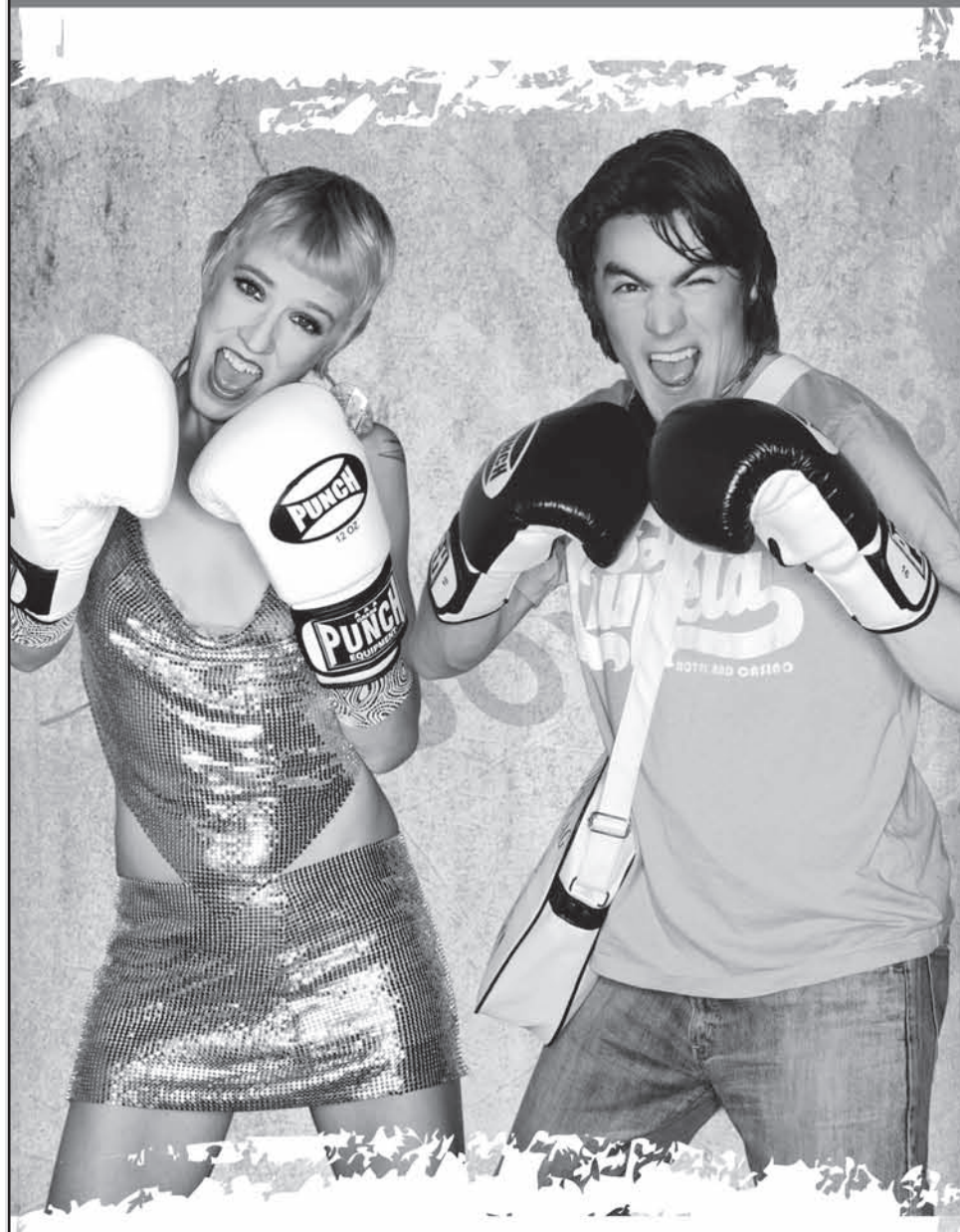


SEXPERIENCE

Image by Kat Chee

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Forty years ago, a riot at the Stonewall Inn sparked a turning point in the movement for gay liberation. It was the first time that lesbians, gay men and drag queens defiantly fought back against repressive attitudes to sexuality. The events of that era and the politics of the movement which ensued remain just as relevant for the current fight against homophobia and social bigotry.

The 1960's was an era of intense repression of homosexuals. Homosexuality was demonised as a 'psychopathic personality disorder', 'sexual perversion' was grounds for being fired from government jobs and sex between two consenting men was punishable with life imprisonment or castration.

The Stonewall Inn was one of the few places gay people could go to and be more open about their sexuality in New York. On Christopher St, in Greenwich Village, it was at the centre of the underground gay scene. The bar was mafia controlled, which meant that there was a cover charge, drinks were expensive, and police raids were regular.

On Friday the 27th of June 1969, eight police showed up for one of these raids. They weren't expecting trouble because it was a 'fairies' bar, but what they encountered was an explosion of years of brewing anger about stark social injustice, police persecution, and profiteering owners of the gay bars.

The police began the 'normal' procedure of arresting gays and loading them into police vans. Unusually, a crowd began to gather around the bar shouting and jeering at the cops. It became hostile quickly as people began throwing coins, then stones and bottles.

As the police were forced to retreat inside the bar, the crowd released the arrested gays from the police van then set the bar on fire. The trapped police called for reinforcements, bringing a heavy duty squad; the 'Tactical Police Force' which sparked the riot.

The rioting continued throughout the night and resumed at dusk on the following two days. Bottles and

Stonewall and the fight for liberation



In 1969, the Stonewall Riots started the largest gay movement known to date. *Daisy "Chains" Farnham* looks back to see how far we've come, and how far we have to go

trash cans were thrown, and police cars were pounded to chants of 'Gay Power'. Graffiti demanding gay rights appeared down Christopher St and during the calmer times people were organised to print and distribute leaflets with statements like "Get the mafia and the cops out of gay bars".

The angry crowd succeeded in forcing the police out of Christopher St, but more significantly, the riot at Stonewall threw the previously dormant issue of gay rights into the public eye. As drag queen Sylvia Rivera said of the night, "Fighting back was the only way to get across to society and the cops that we weren't going to take their...bullshit anymore".

They weren't expecting trouble because it was a 'fairies' bar, but what they encountered was an explosion of years of brewing anger

This was a defiant break with the previous conservative "homophile" groups such as the Mattachine Society who promoted the view that gay people require a 'cure' and encouraged 'outward conformity'. The emerging movement, however, radically challenged this attitude, claiming "it's not me that's sick but a society that calls me sick". Their courage and militancy showed the possibilities of gays worldwide uniting and fighting back.

The GLF and wider social movements

The uprising at Stonewall produced the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), a revolutionary movement committed to challenging the homophobia of society and the capitalist state that perpetuates and benefits from it. Gay Liberation developed as part of a wider social struggle during the 60's and 70's and needs to be understood within this context.

It was a time when the civil rights movement was challenging institutionalised racism, and the Black Panther Party, similarly formed out of the black riots of the 60's was challenging power head on. The women's movement was growing and demanding an end to sexism, while the movement against the Vietnam War became a central focus of the rising tide of unrest, drawing millions into the fight.

The emergence of the struggled from all angles led many to generalise their experiences and demand a radical

change to the structures of society. The very name the Gay Liberation Front was a tribute to the Vietnamese National Liberation Front, indicating the solidarity imbued in the politics of the left at that time. These activists wanted not only to eradicate homophobia in U.S. society, but challenge the entire system responsible for exploitation and oppression.

Unlike previous conservative gay rights movements concerned mainly with lobbying politicians and creating a 'respectable' image of homosexuals, the GLF understood that oppression of homosexuals could not be legislated out of existence. From the start, the GLF was based on revolutionary politics. It declared; "We are a revolutionary group of men and women formed with the realisation that complete sexual liberation for all people cannot come about until existing social institutions are abolished...[we] commit ourselves to one thing...revolution."

Created out of action on the streets, the GLF saw grassroots organising and broad social movements as the only means of forcing the vast social change necessary to eradicate oppression from society. This was epitomised in their slogan, 'Out of the closet and onto the streets'.

The GLF held public meetings; produced a newspaper – Outcome – and picketed homophobic politicians' houses and media outlets, all with the aim of eliminating discrimination enshrined in legislation and in the workplace. They stormed psychiatric conferences which claimed that homosexuality was a 'condition', culminating in the removal of homosexuality from the APA's list of mental illnesses in 1973.

They also held a street parade down Christopher St campaigning against the owners of the gay bars who they saw as exploiting gays and profiting from homophobia in society. Ironically, gay pride parades today are predominantly organised by the owners of gay bars. The GLF understood that having gay bars does not equate with liberation, but ultimately indicates that homophobia persists in society.

The politics of Gay Liberation spread

The GLF heralded a new kind of gay politics which spread to gays and lesbians worldwide. Gay liberation groups grew across the US, UK and Australia. Here in Australia, the Melbourne Gay Teachers Group, inspired by the politics of gay liberation, was at the forefront of the movement that won the right for gay people to teach in schools.

Workers at Melbourne University cafeteria went on strike after student Terry Stokes was expelled from a campus college on the basis of his sexuality. A similar incident at Macquarie University inspired the Builders Labourers Federation to put a 'pink ban' on all construction work at the university, winning student Jeremy Fisher his place back.

Although the revolutionary social change that the GLF had fought for has not yet been achieved, it won significant changes. It was the generalisation of the fight for law reform, anti-discrimination legislation and pro-gay union policies that was able to broadly shift public opinion, create a decline in bigotry and a more secure life for lesbians, homosexuals, bisexual and transgender people.

The initially radical politics of the GLF were hampered by the later progression into an era of politics based on identity which ultimately fractured the movement and led to its degeneration. The focus shifted from forcing change through unity in struggle to 'living the revolution' and single-issue groups such as the Gay Activist Alliance which avoided "involvement in any program of action not obviously relevant to homosexuals".

Gay liberation today

Today across the world lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people remain oppressed. Here in Australia, gay people do not have equal parenting or marriage rights. Rudd broke a key election promise when he prevented the passing of the ACT Civil Partnership legislation, claiming that "marriage is between a man and a woman". Gay people suffer heightened suicide rates- an Australian report, *Don't Ask Don't Tell*, estimated it to be 6 times that of the general population.

A recent survey showed that violence during Sydney's Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras is increasing, and many attendees admit to 'toning down their appearance' for fear of assault. The fact that a lesbian kiss on soap opera *Home and Away* can cause a public scandal indicates that the fight against homophobia has a long way to go.

The legacy of the Stonewall riot and the gay liberation movement it produced remain central to understanding how we can build a movement for real equality and the eradication of homophobia. A united fight that builds solidarity between all struggles against oppression holds the key to building a new kind of society.

What's in a name?

So I'm describing my latest girlfriend/interest/fling/one night stand/undefined relationship to a friend. "She's about 5'4", short blonde hair, blue eyes and fair skin", I say. My friend replies "Butch or femme?" to which my response is an extremely well thought out and intelligent "Uh...I dunno", coupled with a shrug.

Why do I almost never know the answer to this seemingly straightforward question? Well, put simply, I find these stereotypes problematic, and it just doesn't occur to me to think about people in terms of them. Butch, femme, lipstick lesbian, baby dyke – these are a few of the classifications I've heard bandied about within the community. So what's the big deal? Aren't stereotypes useful in describing people?

In my opinion, no. Why not?

First of all, because the definitions of these stereotypes vary wildly. You might think that describing someone as "femme" just means that they present as feminine, that is, they wear jewellery, clothes bought from the women's side of the store, and would prob-

ably be assumed to be straight if you didn't know better after a wild night last night. Meanwhile, for the person you're describing your new lover to, the term "femme" conjures up the image of a woman with a long, luxurious mane of hair, perfectly manicured nails, flawless make-up, and a wardrobe completely devoid of pants. Obviously when your friend finally meets your new partner, only to discover that rather than looking like someone who just stepped out of a Marilyn Monroe film, they're actually just a normal woman, they're probably going to be somewhat disappointed. Clearly the use of a stereotype to describe someone was not that helpful in this instance.

Furthermore, I think that it's very rare to find someone who conforms to every part of any stereotype all the time, and if people, irritatingly multi-dimensional creatures that they are, don't completely conform all the time, what's the point in identifying either yourself or others with the stereotype at all? People are constantly seeking to label other people and themselves, and these labels almost always fail to encapsulate the varied

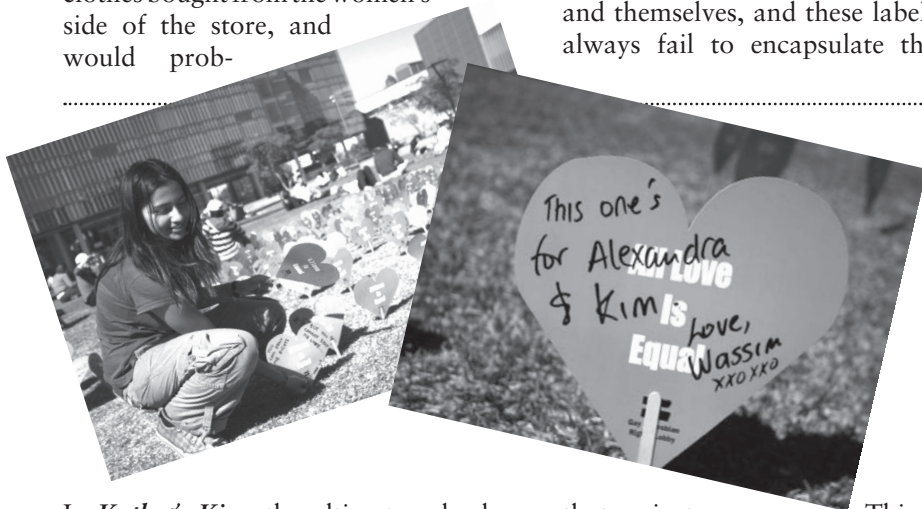
characteristics which make up unique individuals. Some people even get upset when others don't perceive them as being a part of the stereotype with which they self-identify. This seems to me to be one of the most ridiculous notions I've

So what's the big deal? Aren't stereotypes useful in describing people?

ever come across. Surely you should be celebrating the fact that someone perceives you as a unique individual - as YOU - rather than complaining about the fact that their conceptions of a particular stereotype don't mesh with your own.

I refuse to identify with any of the stereotypes – partly because I'm not sure what half of them mean – but mainly because on any given week I will rock up to uni presenting in a variety of different ways: make up, no make-up, a dress and

heels, jeans and cons, a skirt and thongs, a shirt and tie, the permutations are endless. The feminine side, the masculine side, the "this is the only clean pair of pants and top that I have and I'm running late so I don't think I'll bother with hair and make-up today" side – all of these are part of my identity as me, not as butch or femme or anything else. If others want to label me as butch because I have short hair and enjoy karate, or femme because I'm never seen without at least 4 rings adorning my fingers and I have at least 20 dresses in my wardrobe, I don't really care – others' opinions have never bothered too me much. Next time, however, you're seeking to categorise someone into a narrow yet ill-defined stereotype, maybe you should stop and think for a second about how useful it's actually going to be. Maybe it would be better to expend the extra effort and provide a list of adjectives which accurately describe the person, rather than trying to put them into a box which will almost certainly be cramped and ill fitting. Either that, or you could just show them a photo of the person in question on Facebook.



In *Kath & Kim*, the ultimate suburban conversation topic comes up: Renovations.

Kim: I've got the concept for the new kitchen. We've decided we want solid monogamy!

Kath: Oh no, monogamy's so old fashioned! You just need a veneer of monogamy. That's all people care about.

Despite Kim's malapropism, does this scene reflect a changing attitude to relationships in the broader community? Could the cultural barometer of *Kath & Kim* show us that Australian suburban heteros are finally catching up to progressive queer relationships? Whether queer or not, monogamy has been the target of satirists and comedians for many years. As Oscar Wilde once said "Bigamy is having one wife too many. Monogamy is the same."

At this point I should make a disclaimer. This article is largely based on my own thoughts and experiences. I am a gay Christian man who has been in a monogamous same-sex relationship with David (my very first boyfriend) for the past five years. I could be accused of being a little 'white bread', but don't hold

that against me. This piece is highly subjective for a couple of reasons. First, there is a dearth of queer theory and popular discourse in favour of monogamy. Second, I believe that, given my experience, I have some wisdom to impart to you, dear reader.

Generally speaking, monogamy is the state of having one sexual partner at a time. One of the biggest criticisms levelled against monogamy (along with the institution of marriage) is that for centuries it has been central in the oppression of women. While this is true, it seems bizarre to dismiss an institution for what it has been. Why not search for the possibility to reform monogamy, basing relationships on mutual love and respect, rather than completely dismissing it for being oppressive.

Monogamy is also commonly seen as being unachievable or unnatural. That is, the biggest problem with monogamy is that you have to be monogamous. After David and I had been seeing each other for two and a half years, it came time for him to study overseas for a year. It was a compulsory part of his degree and something that we'd known was going to happen since we'd started dating. We then had to make the decision faced by every couple entering a long-distance relationship. We didn't want to break

In Defence of Monogamy

Curtis "Chainsaw" Dickson finds one more than enough

up, so should we enter the murky waters of an 'open relationship'? I must admit that we thought about and discussed the possibility, but eventually decided against it. We made an agreement that we would stay faithful to each other. A key element of this fidelity was that if anything did happen with someone else, we would call the other to tell them, knowing that we loved and trusted each other and wanted to spend the rest of our lives together. It was a lonely and difficult year, but we survived and we were stronger for the experience.

Within the queer community there seems to be an impression that there is something distinctly un-queer about monogamy. It is often portrayed as a value belonging solely within the realm of heteronormativity. At the Queer Collaborations conference in Canberra, one

presentation suggested any queer person in a monogamous relationship was a homosexual conservative, or homo-con. The implication was that any queer person desiring a long-term monogamous relationship was trying to emulate heterosexuality, and, of course, we know better than that. There are reasons that heterosexual couples aim to mate monogamously that do not always apply to queer couples, such as procreation. But that does not mean we should through the IVF baby out with the bathwater. There are a myriad of other social reasons to develop a long-term relationship with one person. For me, a monogamous relationship is a space where one can completely open their entire self up to another person, and allow themselves to be shaped and changed for the better. And if that makes me a homo-con then so be it.



By Kat Chee

Where are all the Bisexuals?

Dom “The Gouger” Wilson investigates the dearth of bisexuals in mainstream media

Swinger, fence sitter, promiscuous, horn dog, confused, greedy...the list goes on. Chances are that if you identify as bisexual then you are well aware of the pervasiveness of these stereotypes. At some point you may have had people make assumptions about the credibility of your bisexual orientation and question the validity of your capacity to be attracted to both males and females. Indeed, there seem to be plenty of people who deny the existence of bisexuality altogether.

I was fifteen when I first heard one of my friends suggest to me that there are some people out there who actually believe that bisexuals don't exist. At the time, as someone who was on the verge of coming out to myself as bi, I could not comprehend how it was possible for some people to simply reject the incredible capacity of humans for sexual fluidity.

Since then I've grown to realise how pervasive these ideas really are in a society which favours neat binaries and continues to overlook the numerous shades of grey (or the shades of a rainbow, to use a more colourful metaphor). To illustrate, I dated men for a few years before I eventually met my first girlfriend. You would not believe how quick some people were to label me exclusively as a 'lesbian' as though during my previous relationships with men I had somehow been hiding a closet homosexuality and would primarily be attracted to women in the future.

Although there are a small number of people who are open minded enough to appreciate the wonderfully broad continuum of human sexuality, and re-

alise that a same sex relationship does not automatically equal a homosexual identity, nor does dating someone of the opposite sex necessarily require them to flip a switch and become hetero or conversely 'creep back into the closet', there are seemingly far more people in wider society who get stuck in the mindset of categorising people as either 'gay' or 'straight'.

Bisexuality is often regarded as that awkward, perhaps prolonged state of confusion which may come before choosing a more legitimate or 'fixed' orientation. It seems that the media has been a major culprit in drumming such attitudes into us from a young age.

Whilst bisexuality has gained much more acceptance in the past decade, these stereotypes are still alive and well. The popular portrayal of the cool teenage bi-chick has surged in recent years. Shows targeted at the teen/early twenties demographic such as 'Neighbours', in which the character Donna is portrayed as the cool, seductive bi who enjoys flirting with other female characters, and 'Grey's Anatomy', which features the bi doctor Sadie, who is also rather flirtatious (and a tad on the crazy side) are prominent examples.

Certainly, bisexual characters give producers more romantic possibilities to work with, but their depiction as more sexually confident or inclined to experimentation than straight or gay characters does little to challenge stereotypes.

It's also interesting to note the inherent sexism in the perceived "trendiness" of female bisexuality when compared to the dearth of male bisexual charac-

ters in mainstream media. While, there are some shows such as 'Nip/Tuck' and 'Desperate Housewives' which have male sexually fluid characters, producers just don't seem to employ the use of bisexual men as a plot device quite as often as they do female bisexuals.

This extends to mainstream movies as well. Take the film 'I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry' for instance: aside from its irritatingly superficial stereotyping of gay men, it seemed to blatantly ignore the possibility of a bisexual identity for either of the two lead characters.

Bisexuality is often regarded as that awkward state of confusion which may come before choosing a more legitimate orientation

Most of the laughs in the film centre on the premise that both Chuck and Larry are actually straight. They are just pretending to be gay lovers in order to get a civil union so that Chuck can become Larry's primary beneficiary in the event of his death. In order to be recognised as an official couple by their city, Chuck and Larry are forced to prove that they are truly 'gay' (cue the shallow stereotypes). This is despite the fact that Larry was in love with a woman for several years and that Chuck shows overt sexual attraction to women. The plot makes sure that the bisexual identity is ignored

in favour of sticking to a gay or straight paradigm.

This is a mainstream screwball comedy so I suppose it's not so surprising that it makes use of rampant generalisations about the queer community.

The more niche hit sitcom 'The L Word' gives more visibility to bisexuals, with key characters such as Alice and Jenny being bi. Here too, however, notions of bisexuality as just an experimental phase are supported by Jenny's short-lived bisexuality, whilst Alice's only male lover on the show was a lesbian-identified man. Neither character is really shown as having any serious relationships with men. Granted, the show is more focused on lesbians but through its depiction of the character's seemingly transient bisexuality it is yet another program that reinforces those negative stereotypes of bisexuals as promiscuous and/or in a transitional phase on the way to homosexuality or heterosexuality.

All in all it would certainly be nice to see a less stereotypical exploration of bisexual characters in both sitcoms and films. Unflattering stereotypes of bisexuals are just as rampant as those of homosexuals so here's hoping that the burgeoning bi love plots in popular sitcoms at the moment don't descend into one-dimensional characterisations.

It would be great to see some more bisexuals who aren't portrayed as overtly sexual or mischievous and whose orientation isn't depicted as causing them to be non-committal, easy or confused. Most of all, it's important to reassert that bisexuality can indeed be a valid sexual identity that lasts a lifetime.

The Night by the River

I remember saying "No". I remember saying I didn't want to have sex in my mothers' car. I remember the tears in my eyes as I bobbed up and down on his penis. I was 20 years old when I was sexually assaulted. The night had started off well. We had gone to the movies and watched Adam Sandler make a fool out of himself. The night was going so well; I had been away for 3 weeks and we were reconnecting. It had been our third date since I had been back. We hadn't had sex since I left.

After the movie we drove around till I parked by the river; he whispered sweet nothings into my ear. We started making out, the windows steamed up around us. He pulled off my sweater, I nibbled on his neck, as I pushed him out of his jacket. He went to remove my t-shirt and I pushed his hand away. We continued making out. He put his hands on my crotch, I said "No," he backed

off and we talked about nothing for a bit. He kissed me again and I pulled away; I said I wasn't comfortable, that this wasn't my car. He said that's fine and kissed me some more. He took my hand and put it on his crotch. He held it there and said he had missed me so much. He said that he was going away the next day on vacation with his family, that he was really horny and that I could help with that. He grabbed my head and kissed me again. I felt guilty for holding back, for not wanting to have sex. I rubbed his cock through his pants. I unzipped his pants and started jerking him off. In my mind I just wanted to go home. I wanted to be anywhere but where I was. I kissed him and he guided my head downwards. I sucked him off. When I finished he said it was his turn.

To this day I blame my body for betraying me. I was turned on by the making out and my erection hadn't

gone away while I was servicing him. He blew me till I came. I mostly stared out the window thinking that the sooner this was over the sooner I could leave. I drove him home, then went back to my parents' place. I sat in my room unable to sleep, constantly replaying what had happened to me. I felt wrong. I showered, I still felt that something was wrong about the evening. He didn't physically force me, he hadn't threatened me, yet I felt used. I hadn't wanted to have sex.

The next day, still struggling with what had happened, I called the helpline. I explained what had happened. The volunteer on the other end told me I had consented, especially considering that I was a boy and had gotten off as well. She was wrong. I hadn't consented, I was coerced and guilted. A week later I was talking with a friend about it, and she explained to me that what

had happened was sexual assault. She took me to see a sexual health worker. The sexual health worker agreed with my friend and she put me in touch with support services for sexual assault victims. I was turned away - they weren't trained to deal with men. I struggled with it for a long time and I continued to date my assaulter for a month afterward. Sex turned into just something I did for him. I dumped him with the support of a friend. I saw a therapist for 6 months. I moved on and I kept living. Today, I still remember that night by the river, and I am aware of what happens to my body more than ever before. I get really uncomfortable when control is taken away. I haven't bottomed since. I don't drink as much and I can't make out in the car any more. The largest lasting impact, though, is that I no longer trust my partners and that is what I regret the most.

Anonymous



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I'M GAY, BUT I'M NOT QUEER

Martyn "Knuckles" Powell considers the meaning of things

Hello! My name's Martyn, and I have sex exclusively with men.

Seems like a strange opening line, doesn't it? How often do you meet a new person and feel an urge to share, along with your name, your sexual preferences? I certainly never have. This is because, much like my hair colour or my favourite brand of soft-drink, it is not a defining part of my character. I would not expect someone to refuse my friendship based on my sexuality anymore than I would expect someone to hate me because of my preference for Solo over Sprite. In the Venn-Diagram of me, the circle labelled 'sexuality' is simply one of many hundreds that intersect to form that unique area at the centre that is 'Martyn'.

Of course, I come at this from the privileged position of having a loving family and a strong group of friends who care more for my happiness and wellbeing than about with whom I choose to spend the nocturnal hours. I appreciate, of course, that this is not the case for many people, but would suggest that it is likely the case for a fair majority.

My family is pretty average; my mother had a more liberal upbringing than that of my father, who was raised in the country, but they are both relatively conservative in their views. Besides the initial concern from my mother around the assumption that she'd never have any grandchildren, my parents were very accepting of my sexuality. I have introduced them to guys that

I have been dating; they simply treat them like a second son that they never had. This scenario will be as familiar to some readers as it is alien to others, but I believe that the great majority of people are like my family. They are accepting of me because of what we have in common; my difference is what makes me unique and interesting, but is not something for which I should be shunned.

I admit that back in the 1970s, with homosexual acts outlawed throughout the tattered remnants of the British Empire, homosexuality needed visibility. Uttering those unspeakable words; "we're here, we're queer"; was a necessary step in the fight for acknowledgement in a society that liked to pretend that "the other" didn't exist. Focusing on difference was a useful tool for those trying to draw attention to the injustice and inequality that was being faced, but that same focus can be damaging to our cause as we now ask for not only equality but the much deeper notion of acceptance.

Whilst I understand the attempt to reclaim the word "queer" and remove its offensive connotations, the problem I have with it is this; it means "strange or odd" and is synonymous with the words "freakish", "weird", "unnatural" and "abnormal."

For the majority of people in these present times, meeting a gay person is about as "freakish" as meeting a red-head. Placing ourselves in the role of the outsider is rebuilding that wall of segregation that our forebears fought

so virulently to demolish or, at least, break through. By maintaining this ridiculous "us and them" mentality, we are not only doing a disservice to all those who have pressed for the rights and freedoms that we are enjoying today, but we are also pushing away those who are most able to help us attain that equality and acceptance for which we ask.

We do not become close to others through difference, we become close through similarity. Think of those tentative first steps in a romance; we do not ingratiate ourselves with our prospective partner by concentrating on what we don't have in common, but on what we do. Similarly, we do not ingratiate ourselves with a predominantly heterosexual society by rubbing difference into their faces.

The society we live in, despite its many flaws, is the one with which we must work. Vast sweeping theories and ideologies about the inadequacy of marriage as an institution and the problems surrounding the accepted binary of gender may be a suitable domain for the follies of student politics, but they have little value in the real world that people experience each and every day.

Those we need to persuade are people like my family; ordinary people who care little for big ideas, but focus on their lives and what affects them personally. They have little concern for what makes us different; they want to see what is similar, what they can relate to.

There will always be those who do not agree with the way we live our lives, but we must remember that they are as entitled to their viewpoint as we are to ours. Let us not risk alienating those who would otherwise support us by making them feel uncomfortable; focus on the many things that we have in common with our heterosexual allies as opposed to highlighting those few and slight ways in which we differ.

For my part, I can't wait for the marriage, the house with the white picket-fence, the 2.4 children, the cat, the dog and the family sized station wagon. Once the rest of society realises that I'm just as boring as them, there'll be nothing more for them to complain about...

See? Focusing on the similarities.



ASEXUALS IN THE QUEERSPACE

Kerry "Napalm" Chin speaks on her experiences

By definition, "queer" refers to anyone who is not heterosexual, which includes asexuals. The sign outside the Queerspace even specifically includes "asexual" along with other queer identities.

But why would an asexual want to go to the Queerspace? While asexuals are queer by definition, there exists a debate amongst the asexual community about whether asexuals belong in the queer community.

In terms of meeting people, while some asexuals might want to seek each other out, they tend to do so on the Meetup Mart on AVEN (Asexual Visibility and Education Network, an online community for asexuals at <http://www.asexuality.org>). In practical terms, asexuals are a quite a small minority, and so the chances of finding other asexuals in Queerspace are not that high anyway. That said, I'm asexual and I'm often in the Queerspace, so if any asexuals are reading this, don't be put off by the last few lines.

For many queer people, the Queerspace is a good starting point for all sorts of queer-related information in

various forms such as flyers and discussion sessions like Identity. This information, however, tends to be focused on issues such as relationships and safer sex, which is often irrelevant to asexuals, though to be fair, there are few sources of information about asexuality other than the internet anyway.

For some, Queerspace is also a place for activism, but in terms of activism, asexuals tend to have different priorities from other queer groups. The main focus is visibility because many people don't even know (or believe) that asexuality exists; asexual people tend to get asked repeatedly "so, when are you going to get a boyfriend/girlfriend?" despite mentioning their lack of interest. Some also get asked "are you gay?" and are criticised for denial when they say no. As silly as it might sound, many asexual people are mistaken for gay because they aren't having sexual relationships with the opposite sex (and therefore some people assume that they must be having sexual relationships with the same sex). In some cases, this comes in the form of an attempt to be accepting, as

in "it's OK if you're gay (so stop denying it)". In contrast, while people of other queer identities may also aim for visibility, the focus tends to be for acceptance and rights (such as marriage equality) as people are at least less likely to actively deny the possibility that said non-asexual queer people exist.

Many asexual people are mistaken for gay because they aren't having sexual relationships with the opposite sex

And most relevant of all to the Queerspace itself is the many "safe-sex" posters that adorn the walls of Queerspace. Now, don't get me wrong, the posters are undoubtedly very relevant to many of the people who go to the Queerspace. It's just that... it is exactly what most asexuals are not interested in seeing. Indeed, if one looks on AVEN one will find that many asexuals

are frustrated by the prevalence of sex in our culture. And yet, as an asexual in the Queerspace I am reminded of exactly what I try to avoid.

Before this draws any criticism similar to that on a recent (at the time of writing this) thread on AVEN, I must clarify that this is not intended to imply that the Queer community is all about sex. Indeed, it is very much about the community. We hang out together, play games together, sing together, and this is great.

After all, why do I keep going back to the Queerspace?

Why wouldn't I? I've made lots of friends there. While I have yet to meet another asexual person in Queerspace, everyone I've met there is friendly, and they also tend to understand or at least try to understand asexual perspectives. I can always go to the space knowing that some my friends are likely to be there, and that I will often meet new friends.

I'm glad that there's a wall with relatively few posters though.

Made in Germany: 25 Class A Cigarettes.

It would be an egregious error to say that the term 'queer' is an umbrella term for all sexual identities other than heterosexual because it is the opposite. Ideally, queer is nothing less than the destruction of those sclerotic identities. To be queer is to recognise the performative nature of gender and sexuality and to realise that everyone is so ridiculously (and beautifully) different that simplistic labels are dangerous because they divide us into camps and trick us into forgetting our shared humanity.

I'll explain.

A long time ago, when the human race was slightly more ignorant, people believed that the junk between your legs were the assets that defined how you would behave, how you would act, for the rest of your life. This was somewhat limiting because at the time, everyone was wearing blinkers and could only see two different types of genitals. So we ended up with boys and girls who became men and women. But they didn't realise that they were taught to become men and women, everyone thought it came naturally.

A little later on, people started to cotton on to this idea and we ended up with early gender theory which acknowledged that masculinity and femininity were learned behaviour. This opened up new avenues for people to rebel against the inscribed hierarchies that were revealed to be based upon lies.

For example, the notion that women were inherently irrational and incapable of surviving in the public domain (work, politics etc) was proven not only wrong, but that the dissemination and perpetuation of this idea was for the express purpose of keeping women down. However there was still a lingering problem: even though people had started to take charge and question what it was to be a woman/man, we were still stuck

with the binary.

More recently innovations and renovations of gender theory have polished off the remaining sharp edges so we can stop running into them and maiming ourselves. And this is where it gets slightly tricky, so props to those who stay with me. Judith Butler has this amazing theory of performativity. She agrees that our behaviour is socialised and not naturally determined, but rather than behaving according to certain fixed sets of gender roles, our gender is far more fluid; it is performed. By this she means that we are constantly learning, reinterpreting, changing and displaying our gender, sometimes consciously, mostly unconsciously.

This is where ideas of masculinity and femininity, of man and woman blur. Whilst there may be many who attempt to imitate (Butler's word) masculinity and femininity, one may be sceptical as to whether anyone actually embodies them. Emphasis is taken away from your genitals and is placed upon your behaviour and the way that you feel. Making gender possibilities both flexible and limitless; it is this diversity and fluidity (not the fluids) that queer refers to.

If you can believe that gender possibilities are limitless, then it must follow that possibilities for sexuality are also limitless. With the epiphany that it is quite silly to think about people as men and women, comes the realisation that it makes little sense to think about sexuality in the same way. Diversity has killed off sexual identity. How can anyone be attracted to the same or opposite gender if neither exist. This is what queer is, as far as I can tell anyway. Queer is the celebration of diversity.

Queer is also a political force.

This is where I think some people become confused and started believing

that 'queer' is an umbrella term for various gender/sexual identities. The problem with celebrating difference is that it becomes incredibly difficult to build a cohesive argument (we pride ourselves on difference of thought) or set up an autonomous space (who would we exclude?). So we end up with lists trying to define what falls under the category of 'queer', which seems a bit counter-intuitive to me when the aim was freedom from the forces that impose identity.

Diversity is what makes queer politics strong, but divided. There are a multitude of queer political theories and movements; the subtleties of which often escape me. Once again, all I can give you is a brief overview of what I understand.

I don't want people to get the impression that I believe that there is a binary between queer people and everyone else because that is not the case. As I said before, queer politics is not one movement and conservative forces are not uniform.

I like to think of life as a pool table where all the balls are trying to stay on the table and everyone is a different colour. Some balls take offence to the difference, the queerness of some of the other balls. They band together based on false ideas of similarity and use the power of their majority to set the rules, so it is easier for them to knock the different balls into a pocket. The sad irony of course is that the dominant ones cannot see how different they are themselves.

Not gay as in castrated but Queer as in exiled.

Those who have suffered understand suffering and thereby extend their hand...
(Patti Smith)

Outlaw love is the love of those who are placed outside of society for fault and fury in the selection of their

sexual/infective-affective partners. We beautiful others who are exiled for the nature of our love are well placed to see the faults in the system that has rejected us. In seeing these faults hurt us and by seeing how these same faults hurt others; realise that something fundamental has to change. This is what makes us dangerous. We have something powerful, perhaps not unique, but at least a position, a perspective; and if nurtured properly, a force for systematic change.

I cannot begin to tell you everything about this world that is completely fucked. Poverty, exploitation, famine, racism, sexism, nationalism, homophobia, transphobia, queer phobia, all phobia, all hate. All these problems stem from the creation of privileged groups based on the fallacy of a sameness that can only be defined by excluding others.

This systemic exclusion is why I find the notion of gay marriage a betrayal. Accepting gay marriage is indulgent; it amounts to at best little more than appeasement and at worst the acceptance and perpetuation of sameness and exclusion. By taking the bribe of institutional equality on such a comparatively small issue, same sex marriage enthusiasts are willing to abandon those who are still suffering under a flawed system. They are turning their backs on everyone else who feels dispossessed, mutilated and screwed over by the status quo.

Furthermore, it seems folly to give in when we are winning. Why should we ingratiate ourselves with the fex urbis, pretending to be the same, when we have the power to tear it to shreds? The fact that they are willing to grant us such pittance surely proves that we are on the right track. We should keep pushing till we have the patriarchy by the balls.

Awesome Queer Films

Nowhere (1997)

The film is part of a series of three films by Araki nicknamed the "Teenage Apocalypse Trilogy" by his fans and described as "90210 on acid". It tells the story of a day in the lives of a group of high school kids in Los Angeles and the strange lives they lead. It is highly sexual and contains scenes of graphic violence.

Doom Generation (1995)

Two troubled teens, pick up an adolescent drifter. Together, the three-some embark on a sex and violence-filled journey through an America of psychos and quickiemarts.

Totally Fucked Up (1993)

About a group of gay and lesbian teenagers living in Los Angeles.

Their parents kicked them out, they're broke and bored, their lovers cheat on them, and they're harassed by fag-bashers.

The Living End (1993)

Luke is a gay hustler. Jon is a movie critic. Both are HIV positive. They go on a hedonistic, dangerous journey, their motto "Fuck the world"

Splendor (1999)

A feel good romantic comedy about polyamorous relationships.

Mysterious Skin (1994)

A teenage hustler and a young man obsessed with alien abductions cross paths, together discovering a horrible, liberating truth.

It's a Queer World after all

Writer Charles Mortimer got it right in 1947 when he declared “I think by now it’s pretty clear, most animals are somehow queer”. *Tim Lee* decided to talk a walk on the wild side...

Our knowledge of same-sex sexual behaviour in animals is growing rapidly: in the last five years it has been recorded in hundreds of new species, and the list is getting longer all the time. But all this raises its own questions. What sort of species exhibit same-sex sexual behaviour? Exactly what sort of behaviour are we talking about anyway? How does all this fit in with natural selection? And what does it mean for humans? To answer these questions, we may as well start with an example from home: the black swan.

The Birds...

Swans tend to form stable breeding partnerships, and in black swans (*Cygnus atratus*) about one fifth of such partnerships are between two males (Braithwaite (1981) *Ecological Studies of the Black Swan III*). One member of the partnership will mate with a female. When she lays her egg, the father will chase her off it and bring the egg back to the nest he and his partner have made. The two will then raise the egg as their own. The advantage for the partners here is clear: two male swans are far more capable of defending their territory than a male/female pairing is.

The Laysan albatross (*Phoebastria immutabilis*) exhibits another kind of same-sex partnership. Last year, a comprehensive study of Laysan albatrosses in Hawaii revealed an unusual imbalance- only 41% of the population there is male (Young, L. C. *et al.* (2008) *Successful same-sex pairing in Laysan albatross*). In many cases, females have paired up with one another. These partnerships, like opposite-sex albatross partnerships, were found to be long-term and stable. The chicks raised by the pairs can be either of the parents, and the same-sex pairs were found to be much more successful than lone females in raising their offspring.

Surely the most famous same-sex animal couple in recent times was Roy and Silo, two male chinstrap penguins (*Pygoscelis antarcticus*) kept at New York’s Central Park Zoo (Zuk, M. (2006) *Family values in black and white*). The keepers provided them with an egg, which they hatched, and the female chick was named Tango¹. Sadly, after six years of being together, Silo left Roy for a female penguin², which underlines the fact that sexual ‘orientation’ in animals is usually extremely fluid.

...and the Bees, (well, Invertebrates).

Switching focus to another branch of the animal kingdom, amazing same-sex sexual behaviours are found in some insects. This year, the male flour beetle *Tribolium castaneum* was found to be able to pull off an incredible reproductive trick (Levan, K. E. *et al.* (2009) *Testing multiple hypotheses for the maintenance of male homosexual copulatory behaviour in flour beetles*). One male beetle, the ‘top’, approaches another male, the ‘bottom’, and mounts him as he would a female. After depositing his sperm he leaves. This might be the end of the story, except that sometimes, when the bottom male subsequently mates with a female, some of the sperm that he passes on to her is actually from his previous top male partner. Astonishingly, the female impregnated by the bottom, in some instances, produces offspring which are progeny of the top male. Without ever having gone near a female, a top can produce offspring simply by copulating with another male, and allowing the sperm thus deposited to make its way to a female indirectly. This is one of the few documented cases in nature where exclusively same-sex sexual behaviour can lead to the production of offspring.

The tiny nematode worm *Caenorhabditis elegans* was one of the first organisms to have its genome completely sequenced, and the developmental pathway of each of its exactly 959

Circuitry for Sexual Attraction in *C. elegans* Males). If the nerves of hermaphrodites are changed to resemble those of the males, they become attracted to other hermaphrodites. By altering the worms’ genes, scientists were able to change the development pattern of nerves in some hermaphrodites, thereby inducing homosexuality. Similar results linking specific genes to same-sex sexual behaviour have been discovered in another well studied species, the fruit fly *Drosophila melanogaster*.

Do YOU Suffer From Reptile Dysfunction?

It’s an awful pun, I know, but bear with me. In the last few decades, scientific opinion has shifted from seeing same-sex sexual behaviour in animals as dysfunctional to seeing it a positive adaptation. One famous example of this shift is the case of the ‘lesbian lizard’. In 1980, David Crews and Kevin Fitzgerald published a paper detailing their observations of the American whiptailed lizard species *Aspidoscelis uniparens*⁴ in captivity (Crews & Fitzgerald (1980) “Sexual” behavior in parthenogenetic lizards (*Cnemidophorus*)). Their Latin name gives a clue to the reproductive behaviour of this extraordinary animal: each individual has only one parent, a mother. In fact, no male *A. uniparens* exist. Each female clones herself, in a process called parthenogenesis, and lays eggs which are genetically her identical twins. Crews observed pairs of *A. uniparens*

production.

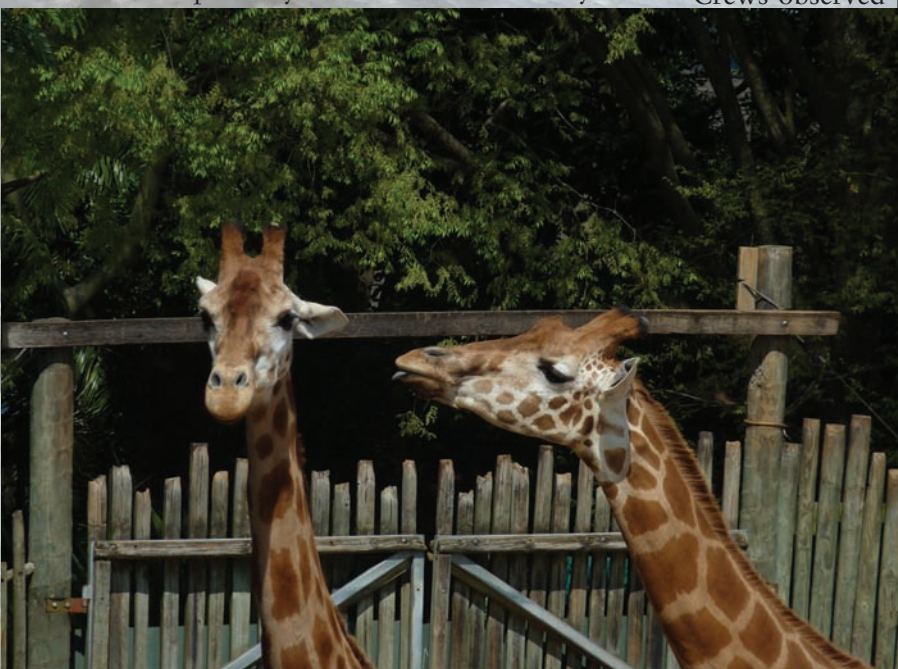
Milk

The ability to produce milk defines the group that we ourselves belong to: the mammals. Although by far the most famous examples of same-sex sexual

Surely the most famous same-sex animal couple in recent times was Roy and Silo, two male chinstrap penguins kept at New York’s Central Park Zoo

behaviour in mammals are dolphins and bonobos, I wanted to mention giraffes here because I think their behaviour ought to be better known. Male Masai giraffes (*Giraffa camelopardalis tippelskirchi*) engage in a beautiful and unique activity called ‘necking’. There are two types of necking. In the first, males approach one another head on, and entwine their necks repeatedly, sometimes with violent jabs directed at the other giraffe’s flank. This seems to be for the purpose of establishing dominance, but the second type of necking is more sexual in nature (Coe, M. J. (1967) “Necking” behaviour in the giraffe). Here, the giraffes are aligned head to tail, and the necking is less aggressive. The two males rub their necks and heads together, occasionally licking one another’s flanks. Both males usually become quite aroused by this necking, and following it, it is quite common for the rearward male to mount the other. Giraffes tend to live in groups separated on sex lines, so for male giraffes living in a ‘bachelor group’, the majority of sexual behaviour is same-sex⁵. As in dolphins, this behaviour may enforce hierarchies, or be socially cohesive, or both.

Dolphins and apes are some of the most sexually exuberant animals on the planet. Male bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops* sp.) have been known to, amongst other things, penetrate each other’s blowholes, and female bonobos (*Pan paniscus*) greet each other by rubbing their genitals together. The full range of bonobo and dolphin sexual activity is too broad to be explained fully here, but it all seems to be in aid of social cohesion. Sex requires and fosters trust between individuals, which can be very handy if the group needs to stick together to survive (Bailey, N. W. and Zuk, M. (2009) *Same-sex sexual behaviour and evolution*).

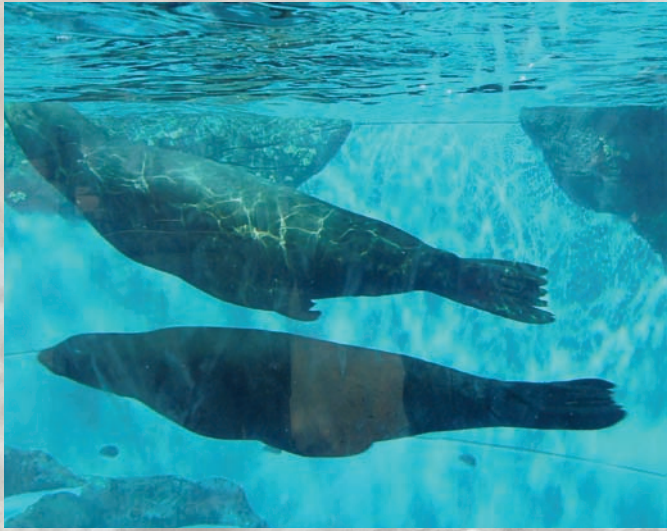


cells³ is precisely known. Overwhelmingly, *C. elegans* are hermaphrodites, capable of producing both eggs and sperm, and fertilising themselves. A tiny fraction of the *C. elegans* population, however, is male. Males can only produce sperm, so they must seek out hermaphrodites to reproduce, tunnelling through the soil to chase after the hermaphrodite’s alluring scent. In 2007, scientists working at the University of Utah discovered that attraction to hermaphrodites is literally hardwired into the nerve centre of males (White, J. Q. *et al.* (2007) *The Sensory*

relic from the time when *A. uniparens* had both males and females? By 1986, Crews had his answer. By conducting further tests, Crews determined that the copulation, despite not involving the transfer of any genetic material, dramatically increased the chance of successful ovulation in the submissive female, perhaps by causing changes in her hormones (Crews *et al.* (1986) *Behavioural facilitation of reproduction in sexual and unisexual whiptail lizards*). Far from being a useless throwback, the same-sex sexual behaviour of *A. uniparens* is critical to their re-

Evolution Revolution?

Well, this year marks the 150th anniversary of the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, and the theory of evolution by natural selection remains the most powerful explanatory force in biology. Even



so, on the face of it, it is hard to reconcile natural selection with same-sex sexual behaviour. Traditionally, most sexual behaviour in animals has been explained through Darwin's theory of sexual selection, but the mounting evidence of non-heterosexual animal behaviour has caused Joan Roughgarden, (arguably the world's leading specialist in non-heterosexual animal

Dolphins and apes are some of the most sexually exuberant animals on the planet.

behaviour), to believe that sexual selection theory should be discarded.

Roughgarden, I think, goes a bit off the rails in her book *Evolution's Rainbow* - she often strays far from science and into politics - but her essential point is important (2004, *Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People*). Under the weight of all this evidence, shouldn't sexual selection be thrown out the window? When I first read *Evolution's Rainbow*, I didn't think so, but now I'm not so sure. This year, Roughgarden published *The Genial Gene*, which talks less about non-heterosexual behaviour in animals and more about her alternative theory to sexual selection: social selection (2009, *The Genial Gene: Deconstructing Darwinian Selfishness*). Social selection is controversial idea in biology, but Roughgarden provides a logical mechanism for it. Although it would take too long to go into the details here, Roughgarden's theory might one day be seen as the best explanation of same-sex sexual behaviour in animals. Until then, the jury is out.

Putting the *Homo* back into *Homo sapiens*.

What are the consequences of all this for us? Should we even be asking that question? Some might feel that trying to find evolutionary explanations for

human behaviour is at best futile, and is at worst dangerously unscientific. I don't think so. We are, in the words of

Jared Diamond, 'the third chimpanzee', and as long as we tread carefully, we stand to learn a great deal about ourselves from our evolutionary history. With that said, a few theories have

recently emerged explaining homosexuality in humans. In June this year, Nathan Bailey and Marlene Zuk published an excellent paper summarising same-sex sexual behaviour in animals, including humans. They identified three front-running theories on human homosexuality: Overdominance, Kin Selection and Sexually Antagonistic Selection. Kin Selection, the least supported of these theories, states that gay humans might be a little bit like worker ants: non-reproductive individuals who support closely related family members to ensure that closely related genes are passed on to the next generation. Overdominance is the idea that one copy of a 'gay gene' might give individuals an edge over those who have no copies of the 'gay gene' in relation to mating with the opposite sex. Two copies, however, cause homosexuality. Sexually Antagonistic Selection, which I think might be closest to the truth, indicates that a 'gay gene' in one sex increases fecundity, and in the other sex causes homosexuality. Of course, none of these theories may prove to be correct, but in any case, they all provide a logical mechanism for genetic predisposition towards homosexuality in humans.

'Endless Forms Most Beautiful and Most Wonderful'⁶

In the end, if we are hoping to look at the animal kingdom and see a reflection of human behaviour, we are going to be disappointed. Applying labels of human sexuality to animals only confuses the issue: we can't ask animals how they feel, we can only study how they behave. But even if we can't ask, we can still observe and be astounded. Diversity in human sexual behaviour pales in comparison to the utterly staggering diversity of sexual behaviours throughout the animal kingdom. This article has barely scratched the surface. I've really only discussed same-sex pairings, without even mentioning simultaneous and sequential hermaphroditism, the 'penises' of female hyenas, intersex grizzly bears, and five distinct genders in one species of fish. Non-heterosexual behaviour in animals is

FIVE EXAMPLES OF INTERESTING NON HUMAN SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSITY

by Harrison Swift

5) SAME-SEX SEX

Among giraffes, nine out of ten sexual pairings are between males. Stuffy zoologists, unable to accept this as part of their paradigm, documented examples as 'dominance behaviour', while males and females sniffing each other was documented as sex. Bonobos are mostly bisexual, using sex to resolve social conflict (and have a matriarchal society). Whip-tailed lizards are almost all female, and almost always reproduce asexually through parthenogenesis. However, the females still have sex with each other to stimulate ovulation, with top and bottom roles determined by hormonal cycles. Interestingly, levels of same-sex activity among female Japanese macaques vary among different communities, which some have interpreted as cultural difference.

4) CROSS-SPECIES SEX

Whilst most humans view bestiality as abhorrent and unnatural, many cross-species sexual behaviour occur naturally. For example the role of pollinating insects in plant sex, or the exchange of genes between different species of bacteria. A more spontaneous example has been documented between a butterfly and a rove beetle. The rove beetle was perched on a leaf with its abdomen elevated. The butterfly approached and for several seconds explored the beetle's anogenital organs with its proboscis.

3) NUMBER OF SEXES ≠ 2

Almost all plants are hermaphrodites, as are many animals. This effectively means there is only one sex for these species, one which happens to produce two types of gametes. Fungi are even more interesting, with most species having thousands of sexes, and one, *Schizophyllum commune*, has over 28,000 sexes. This doesn't actually mean too much - basically there's 28,000+ different combinations of genetic markers that can determine who can reproduce with who - a mechanism which seems to have evolved to prevent inbreeding. It's still damn cool though. As Hird puts it, "Non-humans eschew the assumption that sex involves two (and only two) dis-

tinct (and opposite) entities (female and male) and further that these two sexes behaviourally complement each other".

2) DARWIN'S BARNACLES

Charles Darwin's most important contribution to biology was his study of barnacles, which turned out to actually be kinda cool. Darwin found that most species of barnacle possess both male and female sex organs. Some specimens only had female sex organs and a large parasite load, until it was discovered the parasites were actually male barnacles. The males are much smaller, completely differently shaped, and in some cases thousands live inside each female. If there's a word for this arrangement, I was unable to find it. However, another cool word describes some other barnacle species: androdioecy. Androdioecious species have two sexes in the population: one hermaphrodite, one male. It's theoretically improbable for such a system to evolve, however it has done so independently for barnacles and several other species of plant and animal. The reverse, gynodioecy, has also been observed in a type of desert shrub.

1) PENIS FENCING

Certain types of flatworm (such as *Pseudobiceros hancockanus*) practice penis fencing as a mating behaviour. The species are hermaphroditic, so either organism in a mating pair can produce offspring. Because childbearing consumes a lot of resources, it's preferable to be the inseminator instead, so each attempts to be the first to penetrate the other.

That's right, they duel with their penises to determine who gets to be top and bottom. That is the gayest thing I've ever heard.

OK, ONE MORE -

0) ANIMAL SEX WORK

In some penguin species the females engage in sex with unfamiliar males in exchange for pebbles to build their nests.

no impossible, illogical dysfunction: it is integral to the lives of more than a thousand species.

Somewhere out there, male giraffes entwine their long necks, female whip-tailed lizards make love in the sand, bonobos make people blush and black swans guard their broods. The full picture of these diverse sexual behaviours is only now emerging. To finish, let me go back to this article's title. In 1927, the celebrated evolutionary biologist J. B. S. Haldane, astonished by the strange facts about the world that science was uncovering, wrote: 'the universe is not only queerer than we suppose, but queerer than we can suppose.' Perhaps today we understand his words better than he did.

¹ Tango, by the way, went on to pair with another female penguin named Tazuni.

² Roy took the breakup very hard. As reported in the New York Times, after Silo left, 'Roy [had] been seen alone, in a corner, staring at a wall.' Poor little guy!

³ This figure is for the hermaphrodite: the males have exactly 1031 cells. Despite having more cells than the hermaphrodite, males are physically smaller.

⁴ The classification of this species has changed since Crews and Fitzgerald's paper: they called it *Cnemidophorus uniparens*.

⁵ It's interesting to note too that while same-sex sexual behaviour is more common than opposite sex for male giraffes, female same-sex sexual behaviour is rare. Throughout the animal kingdom, it is often the case that same-sex sexual behaviour in any given species is more common in one sex than in the other.

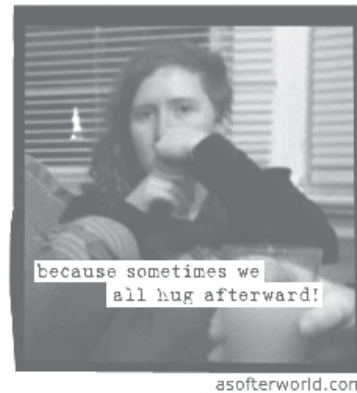
⁶ From the last line of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*.

SOLIDARITY

ONE CAUSE, UNITED?



e horne and j comeau



asafterworld.com

We often think everyone should fight together, but what is the worth of solidarity sometimes? “Doc” *John Nowakowski* opines

Idealist – A man who thinks the world can be saved by writing a pamphlet

Benjamin Disraeli

In 1988, as a 3-year-old petulance in my parents’ lives, we were travelling through the South of Poland when we stopped in a town centre to watch the passing parade. This was no normal parade, it was my first experience of a protest march – the Solidarność protests that helped make Poland free. Since then, I have often considered solidarity, and what it means to me.

Zip through time 21 years, and this year I made a trek to Canberra for the ever-thrilling Queer Collaborations (QC), an event which is the highlight of any queer activists’ calendar. For some, it’s the socialising; for others, the political action; but for a select few, it’s poking fun at the Socialist Alternative and their views that makes a week of chilly temperatures, early mornings, and late night drinking sessions all worthwhile. At this event, SAlt (Socialist Alternative) were determined to force solidarity upon us, align the event with the Palestinian cause and seek for freedom from the horrific Israeli oppression. I am not well versed in the ancient battle between the Arabic and Israeli cultures and appreciate the tenderness of this issue. What struck me most, though, was the comment of a Queer Palestinian, Randah, one of the two QSN Officers: “This is a problem caused by white people, and most people in the area don’t think that white people can, or should really solve it”. This article is about SAlt’s flawed perceptions – what is solidarity? Why should we be in solidarity with anyone else? And, critically, what can we learn from these concepts that will actually be useful in our lives?

The Oxford English Dictionary (one of my favourite sources) defines Solidarity as The fact or quality, on the part of communities, etc., of being perfectly united or at one in some respect, esp. in interests, sympathies, or aspirations. So, on a base level, to be in solidarity with, say, the Palestinian Liberation Movement would suggest that we, as oppressed people (the queers, womyn, disabled, etc) have the same aspiration – to be free of oppression. A noble cause, yes, but from the outset, problematic: what sort of oppression are we seeking freedom from? To join in solidarity with someone would suggest that you can identify with them: be it through the same government, same community, or for the same rights and recognition.

As the Bible suggests: “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye” (Matthew 7:3)

An article on the SAlt website loudly espouses the view “The Palestinians need our solidarity”, juxtaposed with a piece on how the “system stifles our sexuality”. Two worthy causes, definitely, but how interrelated are they? 75% of Palestinian people on the West Bank and 98% of those in the Gaza Strip are estimated to be Islamic, which has strong guidelines about expressions of sexuality and gender, especially when it comes to femininity and homosexuality. However, we can’t just take two articles next to each other as a sign of the views of the people, as Antares found out in Week 7’s issue of Honi Soit.

In the earlier stages of 2009, an argument erupted over the Queer e-list about the (ac-

cidental) deletion of an article calling for solidarity with the Palestinians through Students for Palestine. This continued on through to QC where I was engaged in an argument with some members from SAlt about whether it was a queer issue. It is important at this point to remember that many members of SAlt identify as “queer”, though they do so to recognise their solidarity with the queer movement and to “subvert heterosexuality”, not because they necessarily fall under the queer umbrella. To their point, the people I was talking to saw Palestine as a queer issue because they were looking for recognition as equals and freedom from the “Zionists” in Israel who are taking traditional Palestinian land (as per the agreement settled by that man of wonder, Winston Churchill – professional fucker-upperer and former UK Prime Minister). This compares with seeking solidarity for Poland with Solidarność: freedom from the oppressive communist (which is comparable to socialism) regime. Each of the groups: queers, Poles, and Palestinians, seeking freedom for something, and thus, natural allies.

Poland, a country with approximately 90% Roman Catholics, is staunchly conservative. Their recent PM-President twin team (they were identical twins) denied many rights for queer Poles, a group which is only now coming forward. Through their fight for solidarity, they were happy to ignore the queers. Unfortunately, not much is written on the perspective of Solidarność on queer rights, so this is where this part of the story ends. Solidarity, though, goes on...

We are now left with Palestinians and queers, and their solidarity. Particularly queers who are students at Sydney University, a group made up of diverse backgrounds. I won’t deny, I am appalled that Israel is taking land from the Palestinians, though I am certainly not in a position to

make a solution. Nonetheless, Israel is significantly more queer-friendly than Palestine, and many queer Palestinians seek asylum in Israel to avoid severe penalties for being queer. I’m torn now – is it about land or keeping myself safe? Palestinians also are somewhat opposed to the idea of more Caucasians interfering – the last one to do so successfully was Bill Clinton.

So, tell me again, why am I, as a queer, in solidarity with Palestine when it doesn’t accept my identity, it refuses to allow for my friends’ sexualities and genders to be represented as equal, and it feels that I, as a Caucasian, was part of the problem and will not be part of the solution? And yet, the cry continues – PALESTINIAN SOLIDARITY IS A QUEER ISSUE, WE MUST BE IN SOLIDARITY WITH THEM.

The next argument I took with them as to why we shouldn’t focus on Palestine was that we are still addressing many rights for queers at our own place. Over this year, the Queer Action Collective has worked on the issues of equal marriage rights and queer domestic violence, to improve the conditions for queers within our community. As the Bible suggests: “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye” (Matthew 7:3). But, of course, the Bible – who reads that any more?

Ultimately, for me the question of solidarity comes down to this – when two oppressed groups with similar views seek freedom from similar groups, their fight should be together as one. Most definitely. I cannot, however, fathom why I or the majority of other queers would align with Palestine given the severe disparity in views about homosexuality. This is not to say their fight is any less important, but moreover, is not our fight.

Crack Goes the Whip...

Rhys “Put you in” Pieces has ways of making you talk, and you just might like it.

As hir fingers run down my back, electric, and I feel my whole body warm up, my cunt tingle with anticipation and readiness, for hir, for this. Hir breath, soft and hot, quickens as hir heartbeat does- as both of our heartbeats do. Every fibre of my being is excited as I raise the whip to strike hir. The anticipation, the crack, the sting of pain, the redness of hir back, the pleasure for both of us every single time. The moans, the giggles, the occasional check in to

make sure sie is ok.

I switch my choice of weapon to a cane, my face beaming with delight as I see the marks on hir skin, the delightful shudders of hir body. I drop my tool, our mouths meet, sheer heat and wanting, hard, and intense, I reach for the bottle of lube with my hand, my hand, now nearing hir cunt, feels its warmth and wetness, it starts playing with hir clit... I feel my cunt get even

warmer, wetter as hir body responds to my touch.

I now move to lube up, my hand now ready to plunge in. I ease my way into hir, gentle first, then harder, as hir body rocks against my fist and my fist goes in deeper, I am creeping up, consuming hir. Reaching places insider hir that send hir to heights we hadn’t anticipated.

Play continues, and then hir body

expels my fist, and a lot of lush fluid, all over my stomach. The aroma is intoxicating, sends me giddy, I run my finger across my lips, sie tastes salty, addictive. Sie lies back, contented, unable to speak. I cradle hir head, also feeling rather contented.

Note: *hir* and *sie* are gender neutral pronouns sometimes used by some people who identify as trans*

OUTLAWS FREED TO RESOUNDING SUCCESS

Richard “The Sawman” Sawyer, SULS Queer Officer, spent an evening with Michael Kirby

On August 31, the Honourable Michael Kirby AC CMG, former High Court judge, launched the OutLaw Series at the new Law School Building. The OutLaw series is a program of forums and keynotes organised by the Queer Officer of the Sydney University Law Society. The Series aims to showcase the achievements of excellent queer persons and also to critically engage in legal issues that affect queer people.

The Queer Portfolio is a newly launched portfolio under the guidance of Richard Sawyer, who was joined by SULS colleagues Alison Cranney and Camilla Green at the launch. Also in attendance were UNSW Law Society Vice President (Equity) Giancarlo De Vera and Queer Officer Veronica Mason.

Attendance at the event was high and students of all ages and from different backgrounds enjoyed wine and sushi with members of the Faculty of Law and the Dean of the Law School, Gillian Triggs.

Mr Kirby’s speech was casual and engaging, and he took the time to answer many audience questions. He spoke about his time in High School and University as a gay man, about meeting his partner of forty-years and about ‘making ripples’ – each person doing what they can to change the world for the better. As an example, Mr Kirby spoke of a speech he gave at a conference in Hong Kong that would be used in the reasoning of the Indian High Court in declaring anti-homosexual sex laws invalid.



Sex Workers and the Media

The most media portrayed image of a sex worker is that of a street based worker despite the fact that street based sex work accounts for only 1-2% of the industry. Street based sex work is very flexible compared to other sex work, and as such sex workers may engage in the industry at multiple areas at once, e.g. a street based worker may do also private work and private workers will also work in brothels – and vice versa. Media representations of sex work imply hierarchy of sex work from private work at the top, to brothel work, and with street based work on the bottom. This hierarchy is damaging and based on stigma and misunderstanding about sex work. The diversity of the sex industry is one of its strongest attributes, providing a variety of different ways to work within it.

Mish Charles

MODERN COUNTRY, WITH HUGE WALK-IN CLOSET

Queer Honi’s *anonymous* inside-tip looks at the secret workings of the overcrowded closet...

Recently I found myself entertaining a friend in my college room at about 3am. The difference between him and other people I entertain is that he was doing his best to have his way with me, a fellow member of the male sex. What makes this scenario distinct from the ‘gay’ experience is that he is a self-confessed heterosexual, has sculpted his image as a blonde jock, and is very publicly dating a girl from the University. The truth of the matter is that this is in no way novel.

In our society there is a massive commonality when it comes to the notion of remaining ‘in the closet.’ Surely, many readers may have come across the concept, perhaps whilst watching the whimsically homophobic father at the end of American Beauty, struggling to further suppress his sexuality.

This exists in the real world in great prevalence, and is something that I find confusing and at times upsetting. Whilst I have not yet fully come out, and hence write anonymously, the truth is that there are middle-aged men in society who have suppressed their sexuality for years, raised families and then come to a point of self-hate in later life. The speculation surrounding Alan Jones is perhaps an undesirable case in point, though he most definitely does

not hate himself, quite to the contrary! The message that should be sent is that in coming to terms with your sexuality, and in enabling yourself to be who you are, you can become so much happier. I personally find myself in a position where I have told friends I am gay, but have chosen to do so in only

One can only guess that perhaps thousands of Australians suppress their sexuality due to a similar fear

a few cases, primarily out of fear of retribution within my college and the wider university community. I already feel happier, and know that eventually it will simply be a part of who I am, publicly as opposed to privately.

One can only guess that perhaps the very fact that thousands of Australian men and women suppress their sexuality is due to a similar fear of what society’s reaction will be. I am in the closet for the whole part by choice, knowing that one day all of my friends will know, along with my family. This

is not unhealthy, especially when compared to my aforementioned sexually active friend who still holds the firm belief that he is a ‘hetero.’ Not gay, not even bisexual, but a full blown Australian heterosexual. Many agree this is unhealthy, and that this stems from a wider societal perception of homosexuality.

Hopefully this Honi Soit, being completely different to Queer editions of the past, will make some sort of a difference to the perception of Gay, Lesbian and Transgender members of the university, and of the wider Australian canvas. In the past, the queer edition has allowed the gay community to self-ostracise in a negative way, poking fun at heterosexuals and implicitly defining themselves as a different group with different needs, not to be mixed with straight people. Whilst this is partially true, gay marriage and adoption laws being a case-in-point, this edition, I believe, is about creating a better relationship between these two different cross-sections of society. I myself have found that my closest friends, whom I have ‘come out’ to, have gained a much better understanding of the difficulties faced by the queer community, even perhaps gaining a greater level of comfort with their own sexuality. Not yet has someone lost respect for

me, which affirms my belief that good friends are people who will stick by you through thick and thin. In writing this article I only hope that perhaps one day queer people will be able to feel more comfortable in society, and will gain a little bit more understanding and acceptance from their own communities, their own friend groups and most importantly, within their own families.

Dissent 2009 LAUNCH

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY LAW SOCIETY SOCIAL JUSTICE JOURNAL

ARTICLE 6.

GUEST SPEAKER: HON. MICHAEL KIRBY QC
DETAILS: 6:00PM MONDAY OCTOBER 12,
GRADUATE REFLECTION LOUNGE (LEVEL 1, NEW LAW SCHOOL)
DRINKS, REFRESHMENTS AND FREE COPIES OF *DISSENT*
WILL BE PROVIDED.

Queer Report

Report of the Co-Queer Officerz, Donherra Walmsley & Morgan Snow//queer.officers@src.usyd.edu.au

This report is quite brief, because unlike in previous years, we've been fortunate enough to have a number of Honi reports throughout the year.

So what's happened since our last report?

We had some great events at Verge Arts Festival, including an open mic night and a Sea of Hearts installation on Eastern Avenue. We also had a stall at the night markets, which has become an annual tradition.

This has been a fantastic year for the queer collective, with a mixture of social, educational and political events being held. Such a

successful year has only been made possible by the involvement of all members of the collective, and we'd like to thank everyone who's come along to an event, a meeting, or helped out with organisation. We love you!

The year is far from over, however, and this week is set to be a big one. Why?

Because week 10 is Anti Violence Week!

The Women's Collective and Queer Collective have collaborated to bring you Anti-violence week this week – week 10! It is the first time that the two collectives have put such a week together and we look forward to continuing it into future years.

The week's events are:

Tuesday 7th October

11am – 3pm, The two collectives paint a banner - "we demand a response to sexual violence". A social event with some yummy snacks provided on the slanted lawns opposite Manning Bar – what could be better?!

Wednesday 8th October

11am – 3pm, The Queer and Women's collectives run an anti-violence awareness stall at the monthly markets at the Jane Foss Russell courtyard.

3pm – 4:30pm, Sen Raj talks about male same sex domestic violence;

and Nina Funnell speaks on sexual violence. It should be an incredibly moving and intimate experience! McCallum Room, Holme Building.

Thursday 8th October

2pm – 4pm, A free self defense workshop has been organized for both collectives at Holme Common Room. We are very lucky to have Chin-Liang Beh offer to run such a programme pro-bono. Places are limited, so if you're interested in coming, email queer.officers@src.usyd.edu.au ASAP.

Women's Report

Report of the Women's Officer, Tamsin Dingley//womens.officers@src.usyd.edu.au

Break the Silence, End the Violence

Violence affects women in all areas of our lives. We live in a culture that permits violence against women and silences victims who come forward. With conviction rates of 1% for rapists I challenge you to tell me our culture doesn't permit sexual violence. Survivors are branded with a stigma of shame and survivor doubt; rapists are given the benefit of the doubt and women are "lying" or "were asking for it". Our cultures complete disregard for women who have been raped is shameful and reporting rates as low as thirty percent is evidence of this disgusting truth.

Most sexual violence against babies, girls and women occurs in the home and is almost always perpetrated by a man known to the victim. These women and children are trapped and often face years of abuse at the hands of men who have them financially trapped-as the only income earner or the one who can access the post etc; physically trapped-with fear of beating if an escape attempt is made or with locks; geographically trapped- in isolated/remote/rural communities where distance itself or the inability to drive/access to a car is a factor; or trapped with her children- where a woman cannot escape without leaving her children behind chooses to stay to face abuse

and protect them. Women who finally do escape these abusive situations are then abused by the system itself. Fifty percent of women and children who present at women's refuges are turned away as refuges are underfunded and at capacity. These women are doubted when they report the abuse to the police, and friends as our society is trained to ask "what were you wearing?" Seriously men? You're okay with that? She was raped by a man... yes but if she was wearing what you think was a provocative outfit then we as men support his decision. For Shame! Women who come forward are treated badly by society and the system- cause to not come forward perhaps? They are silenced.

Our society needs to change our attitude to sexual violence. We need to treat women who come forward to report sexual violence with respect and be repulsed by the crime and the offender. The world has a foul stench of a "boys will be boys" attitude and it is evident in our legal system, our language, our society, and indeed our governments funding arrangements for services like rape crisis centers, women's refuges and women's community health centers. Society needs to change.

Come to Reclaim the Night, Friday 30th October, Victoria Park, 7pm and Say No to Sexual Violence!

Enviro Report

Report of the Environment Collective//environment.officers@src.usyd.edu.au

It seems obvious that if we want to deal with the climate crisis we're in, we ought to be transitioning away from emissions-intensive technologies, like coal-fired power, to large scale solar and wind power. We ought to be reducing the use of cars by engaging in a mass expansion of public transport—and making it free would certainly help. We have a government that came to the election with a promise to 'act'. Vague as it was, many expected something better than what has been delivered by Rudd Labor. The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) has rightly been called the 'Continue Polluting Regardless Scheme'. Over \$16 billion dollars of free permits will be given to the most polluting industries. The more pollution a business spews out, the more money they'll get. It puts no

limit on the amount of permits that can be bought from overseas and relies on deceptive carbon 'offsetting' schemes, many of which can be cashed in for yet more permits. It will introduce a 'cap and trade' scheme of the sort that saw Europe's emissions actually rise. As markets around the world collapse, we're expected to believe that market mechanisms can work to save the planet.

Greg Combet, the Minister Assisting the Minister for Climate Change, has proudly boasted that "the coal industry will continue to grow" after the introduction of the scheme. And just last week the NSW government announced that it will go ahead with construction

of two new coal-fired power stations. They'll increase the state's emissions by 6%. All this while one of the most advanced solar factories in the world is being left to collapse in Victoria. Solar Systems employed over 100 people, and was to be the factory that provided for Australia's first ever large-scale solar power plant in Mildura. But the private investment has pulled out, the workers have lost their jobs and there is a lock on the gate at the factory. The Mildura project is in jeopardy. Both the Victorian and federal governments are refusing to step in to guarantee the project and save the jobs.

Something has to shift. The solutions to climate change exist. We

can invest in green technology. We can provide hundreds of thousands of green jobs and train those currently working in polluting industries for safer, well-paid, unionised jobs. But Rudd has increasingly shown we're going to need to fight to get them. That's the reason why the Sydney University Environment Collective is holding a Student General Meeting this week—to vote that the Student Representative Council (SRC) takes a stand against the CPRS and joins the climate movement in calling for what's needed. Come along and hear guest speakers explain why Rudd's climate policies will lock in failure, and how you can get involved in the campaign for an alternative. This Wednesday October 7th, 12pm, Eastern Avenue Lecture Theatre.

Education Report

Report of the Co-Education Officer, Elly Howse//education.officers@src.usyd.edu.au

Hope you've all enjoyed your break! Unfortunately it was only a week so you're probably sitting in your lecture, pondering over this awesome edition of Honi Soit. Just before the break, it was SRC elections, and you all voted because (as I outline in the last issue), your student organisation is important!

It's particularly important when it comes to things like Queer Honi. Progressive student organisations around the country recognise that sometimes, going to uni, everyone assumes you are well-off, rich, white and male, and therefore somehow able to cope with the demands of university study and life. Indeed, universities in the medieval, renaissance and classical periods were created on the sole premise of serving the rich white guys in society to become more learned.

So thank god universities in 20th

century started opening their doors! In somewhere like Australia, you are able to go to university because of what mark you get, not because of what you look like, who you are or where you're from (although you have to pay more if you are not 'Australian', which I won't talk about or this will descend into a rant on the terrible treatment of international students). This means university is accessible to women, queers, indigenous people, people with a disability, people from ethnically- and culturally-diverse backgrounds, and people from low socio-economic backgrounds.

I'm not disputing that university is accessible, but the question right now is 'How accessible?'. If you go to a school that has great teachers and a lot of facilities and resources to help you throughout Year 12, it's basically assured you will achieve a UAI that is good enough to get into university. But what happens if

you don't go to a school like that? I'll agree with the VC, Dr Michael Spence, and say that a UAI isn't a real reflection of someone's potential or even their 'intelligence'. Rather it's a very real reflection of a) what subjects they did in Year 12; b) how hard they worked; and c) how well-resourced and supportive their high school was, and also how the rest of their year did.

Do universities need a different way of accepting students? I say yes, otherwise universities will find they do not get an increase of students from, say, indigenous and low-SES backgrounds, mainly because these students are predominantly concentrated in suburb areas and schools where teacher resources are limited, family support could be minimal and so on. Universities need to encourage these students to come to places like USyd, but it's hard to do it when everything is based solely on UAI. Luckily there are programs

such as the Cadigal program, which is a flexible entry scheme for indigenous students. But we need more of those, and a lot of this ties back to funding of universities.

Universities are seriously underfunded. Government funding makes up less than half of a university's income. The result? Universities have to function like businesses. So what you get now is a degree from an institution based on making money, not on the best quality of education, learning and teaching possible. The best students don't always go to university, so why is it taking the government (and universities) so long to recognise that?

If you'd like to hear and talk more about this, feel free to come along to the Education Action Group, every Tuesday at 1pm on the Law Lawns (outside the New Law Building) or in the SRC (if it's raining).

Ask Abe...



Abe,

I am in my first year at uni and have come out as a lesbian to my friends but not my family. I have been in a relationship for about 8 months and really love my girlfriend. However, I'm really worried that she's going to leave me because I keep doing stupid things. I've made her so angry that sometimes she has to push me to remind me to behave right. How can I make sure I remember all the things I'm meant to do when we're together? I really don't want to mess this up.

True Love

True Love,

Congratulations on coming out to your friends. I hope they are supportive and helpful to you. The relationship you are in sounds interesting. It seems that you love her very much, but I am concerned that you think you do stupid things or that anyone has the right to hurt you emotionally or physically just because they feel you made them angry. Chances are you need to talk to someone in the counselling unit or maybe at Twenty10 (a queer youth service) to talk through these issues you are facing. This will allow you to have a better relationship with this and future partners, and will most importantly help you to feel great about yourself. If you're unsure where to start, talk to a caseworker at the SRC. They are helpful, friendly and will certainly never judge you.

Abe

Students' Representative Council, The University of Sydney

Elections 2009 Electoral Officer's Report

I declare the following persons elected:

PRESIDENT: Elly Howse

HONI SOIT: ACE

NUS DELEGATES: (in order of election)

Noah White, Andrew Coleman, Michael Buckland, Thomas Clement, Elly Howse, Matt McGirr, Tom Green.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL:

(By Ticket Order on the Ballot Paper)

B Activate to Stop Climate Change

Tui Swinnen

C VOX for Economics

Andy Thomas

D Activate International Students

Gillian Gan

F Ace for College

Victor Ghitescu

G Liberals

Adrian Pryke

H Spark! for Arts & Law

Efrem Blackshield

L Spark!

Phillip Boncardo

M Ace for Comedy

Scott Brownless

N Ace

David Mack, Joe Smith-Davies

O Vox for Engineering

Elizabeth Dowsett

P Vox for Manning

Alistair Stephenson

Q Ace for Engineering

Edward Rigby

U James Flynn Independent

James Flynn

Activate for Arts

Gabriel Dain

AC VOX for Arts

Kairen Tan

AE Free Parking

Lucy Saunders

AF VOX for Science

George McClintock

AJ Ace for Arts

Melissa Brooks

AL Progressive Punch

Timothy Scriven

AQ Activate for Fair Education

Matthew McGirr

AS Whigs for Economics and Business

Nicholas Wright

AU Whigs

Chris Ho

AX Activate

Phoebe Drake, Sebastian Weller, Kate Taylor, Elly Howse

AZ Left Focus

Emma Dook

BK Tom Clement for Prez for SRC

Thomas Clement, Terry Tin Wai Miu

BL Science for SRC

Liam Byrne

Christine Kibble Electoral Officer 2009
2nd October 2009

A recount of the HONI Vote has been requested and it will be held 11.am Wednesday 7th October, 2009 in the Honi Room, SRC Office, Wentworth Building.



Exorcising Some Demons

First things first, this piece is about my experience as a rape survivor. Although it happened three years ago it still resonates to this day. I am writing this for a number of reasons; firstly, as a form of reclaiming what happened to me. So few people know about this experience and, selfishly, I have been allowed a very public forum to exorcise some demons. Secondly, the issue of male-male rape is so seldom discussed in the queer world (at least MY queer world) that I feel survivors are uncertain of where to turn post-rape. Most importantly though, if this inspires just one rape survivor to talk about their experience, either to friends, family or professional counselling services, then it will have achieved it's aim. An important note: each rape survivors' experience, and way of coping with the horrible aftermath, is of course extremely subjective and I am not speaking for any survivor other than myself. Also, I am in no way wishing to trivialise rape or diminish the utter devastation that one feels after being violated.

In the second week of November I'm going to have to sit in the same room as the bastard who raped me. The occasion won't unfortunately be him strapped to a chair as I wreak my revenge (and I can't begin to tell you how many revenge fantasies I have concocted. Think the movie "Hostel". On steroids.) No, the occasion will be the marriage of my best friend to his fiancée; I will be best man and aside from the nervousness I am feeling about having to deliver a lengthy speech, I am becoming increasingly disturbed by the fact that my rapist will be among the guests. In fact, more than that is the growing unease that both the bride and groom know almost every nasty detail of the rape. I was sharing a house with them at the time and my rapist was a neighbour and 'friend' that we had collectively known for over 5 years. They were the ones who saw me stumbling through the front door, clothing torn, bottom-lip bloodied, and they were the ones who I (eventually) confided in once the utter shock had worn off. They were of course concerned, but I am still questioning why they didn't call the police. Or encourage me to talk to a professional about it. Or even call my mum.

I cannot even begin to describe the abject terror that flooded my entire body.

The day itself is seared into my brain. Mostly because I have spent countless hours re-running the confluence of events that lead up to it. Thinking of how I should've seen it coming. How if only I had fought harder. And most disturbingly, blaming myself for being stupid enough to put myself in that situation in the first place. You see, I entered my rapist's house knowing that he had been drinking alcohol. A lot of alcohol as it turned out. His eyes were glassy, his speech turning

slurry. And yet I sat next to him on his couch, watching something mindless on TV, as we had done so many times before. I even accepted his offer of a beer. Something was different this time though. I could see him out the corner of my eye paying more attention to me than the TV. Some inner instinct was making me uneasy and knew I should leave. I turned to him to announce my exit. But, before I could say anything... "Dave, I'm really lonely," he said. "Can I have a hug?"

There was something so utterly pathetic about the way he said it and the puppy dog look on his face that I actually had to swallow a snicker. Here was a man in his late 30s, pouting at me like a child. Evidently, the very slight smile that had crossed my lips hadn't escaped his attention though. His face clouded over. "What are you laughing at? You think you're too good for me?" Uh-oh. "Ummm, no of course not. But I think it's probably time for me to go..."

I hadn't even managed to raise myself off the couch when WHAM. He punched me in the mouth. Hard. I was reeling and in complete shock. I could not believe that he'd just done that. Who the hell did he think he was? Being an argumentative lad my first instinct was to verbally tear him a new one. "What the fu..."

He was on top of me before I could finish the question. I was pinned to the couch. I had never really noticed how much bigger than me he was. I mean I am almost 6 foot tall but here I was feeling like a child being smothered by a bear. But, the reality of the situation still hadn't dawned on me yet. I honestly thought he was holding me down to threaten me not to tell anyone he'd punched me. His face full of fury, he then did something that chilled me. He spat right in my face. "You're not going anywhere..."

I cannot even begin to describe the abject terror that flooded my entire body. The enormity of the situation I was in struck

home. How on earth had I ended up here? So I fought. I screamed. I squirmed and struggled and twisted my body trying to get out from under him. My legs were pinned but I tried move so I could knee him. Anywhere. It didn't matter. I just wanted out of his grip and out of that house. Nothing I did made a bit of difference; it just infuriated him further and he pushed down on me with even greater force. My heart was beating so hard it felt like it was going to burst right out of my chest.

The horror of what had happened, combined with the seemingly even greater horror of telling people about it, was so enormous that I did the only thing I could think of...

The sense of futility I felt at this point is something that I can clearly recall to this day. Something very awful was about to happen and I had absolutely no control over it. None. This bastard was going to take something that he had no right to. And...he did. I was picked up like a rag doll, slammed face first into the couch and...well...I don't think I need to draw a picture.

The next 10 minutes or so felt like an eternity. But the pain, the humiliation, the degradation are things that almost seem like they happened to someone else. They are real, but not real. Like watching home movies of yourself. I don't know if the disassociation is healthy, but that's how I've dealt with it. When the ordeal was over I collected my things, rearranged my clothes and left the room in utter shock.

The bastard made no move to stop me, and I remember feeling the tiniest bit of gratitude that he was letting me leave. I'll never forget his parting shot, though... "What would your boyfriend say if he knew you were such a slut?"

I said nothing and managed to hold in the tears until I was on the street outside. What WOULD my boyfriend say? What would my friends and family say? The police? I had entered that house willingly. I was of course gay. Everyone would think that I had lead him on. I was obviously a slut and asking for it. The horror of what had happened, combined with the seemingly even greater horror of telling people about it, was so enormous that I did the only thing I could think of. I decided to tell no one. No boyfriend, no family and no police. If you haven't been in the situation it's hard to quantify, and although logically I wanted to be angry, furious, outraged, I internalised everything. I stumbled the short walk back to my house, made my way past shocked housemates and sat under a scalding shower for the longest time. I felt like the dirtiest human being on the planet and I scrubbed at every single part of my body until it was red raw. Later that evening I matter-of-factly told my housemates what had happened and although they were utterly shocked it was seemingly forgotten in a day or two. What I thought would be taken very seriously was turning out to be not such a big deal. Maybe I was doing such a good job of internalising it that it would eventually cease to exist. And although I was kind of hoping that my friends would take control and help me out I guess that maybe they didn't know what to do either. At least that was how I began to rationalise it...

Two weeks later I quit my job, unceremoniously dumped my boyfriend (who still doesn't know the truth; it kills me that I broke a good man's heart) and I moved overseas. Just like that. And I didn't return for 2 years. Aside from the two friends I had told, and the rapist himself, no one knew why I did such a



seemingly crazy thing. And three years on? I'm thinking that it's for the best. I had no point of reference for dealing with the fallout, so I did the best job I could relying on myself. I still feel tainted by the experience, like there will forever be a black mark on me, and that I really am 'damaged goods', but I can go for days now without thinking about it. I never thought I would reach this point but I have. And that makes me happy.

So back to the wedding, and coming face-to-face with my rapist...what to do? You know what? I'm thinking I'll just skip the thing entirely and keep my dignity, revenge fantasies be damned. That bastard doesn't deserve any more of my thoughts.

-David Patrick, SUPRA Subscriber

***If you, or anyone you know, is the survivor of sexual assault or rape you can find support at these places:**

NSW Rape Crisis Centre 1800 424 017 (24 hours a day/7 days a week)

Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service: (5.30pm-10pm)

**General: (02) 8594 9596
Freecall 1800 184 527**

Lifeline 13 11 14

SUPRA presents:

Forum on Women's Reproductive Rights

Thursday 15th of October, 5.00pm at SUPRA offices

Come and hear women's rights activists and researchers discuss the implications of the law on women's legal rights, and your access to reproductive services. What are the possibilities for decriminalising abortion in NSW?

This forum will also be a venue for the election of a Women's Officer for SUPRA. If you are interested in nominating yourself, please contact president@supra.usyd.edu.au.

GUEST SPEAKERS:

KATE GLEESON
Macquarie Uni Law Faculty

MARGARET KIRKBY
Women's Abortion Action Campaign

Harassment & Discrimination Complaints

Harassment or discrimination against you because of your sexuality is unlawful. You have the right to study and work in an environment that is free from harassment and discrimination on a wide range of defined grounds, including on grounds of your sexuality. Complaints against University staff, students, or affiliates about alleged harassment or discrimination are currently dealt with following a policy called Harassment and Discrimination Resolution Procedures. This policy needs to be read in conjunction with a Harassment Prevention Policy, and a Discrimination Prevention Policy. Read together, these three University documents are good policies from the perspective of students wanting to raise a problem, concern or complaint. They are written in clear and accessible language. They include lots of 'Question and Answer' style information about issues confronting students. The policies make provision for students to confidentially approach trained Harassment and Discrimination Support Officers who can listen to a concern and make a confidential report without you needing to put in a written complaint. Clear information on how to raise concerns is included, investigation processes are described in detail, and possible outcomes are listed.

Some of the more technical provisions in these policies are also quite student-friendly. There are strict timeframes for hearing and resolving matters, the policies create an independent Manager, Harassment and Discrimination Resolution position to hear and resolve most concerns, and there is a formal right of internal review to the Vice Chancellor if you are dissatisfied with an outcome under the resolution procedures.

The three policies are currently under review. As part of the review, a draft document that attempts to condense the three current policies into one has been sent to SUPRA for comment. SUPRA is deeply troubled by this first draft. The idea of simplifying and condensing policy is not in itself a bad thing. However in

what looks like an overly zealous attempt to keep the draft policy concise, all the positive elements of the current policies have been removed.

The draft policy is written in legalistic language, the "Question and Answer" information is removed, students are not able to approach the Harassment and Discrimination Support Officers, most of the timeframes are gone, the independent Manager, Harassment and Discrimination Resolution position (which has been unfilled for some time) is effectively disbanded, and the right to an internal review to the Vice Chancellor no longer exists. SUPRA together with the SRC have recently written a submission to the University addressing the details of these and other concerns. In our submission we noted that the current policies were drafted by the Anti-Discrimination Board of New South Wales (ADB), after a thorough process of consultation with stakeholders, including SUPRA and the SRC, from January to April 2000. We have proposed that the University go back to the ADB and engage them as an external consultant to review the effectiveness of current policies and to go through a thorough consultation process.

SUPRA will continue to advocate for retention of the positive provisions in current policy. In the meantime, if you want to raise a concern, problem, or complaint about harassment or discrimination against you, you are strongly encouraged to seek independent advice from a SUPRA Student Advice and Advocacy Officer (SAAO). We can help support and guide you through the process. We can be contacted via phone (9351 3715 or 1800 249 950), email (help@supra.usyd.edu.au), web form (http://www.supra.usyd.edu.au/Adv/Contact_a_SAAO.html), or visit our offices between 9am and 5pm on business days. For information on current harassment and discrimination policies and procedures see http://www.usyd.edu.au/eo/harass_discrim/index.shtml

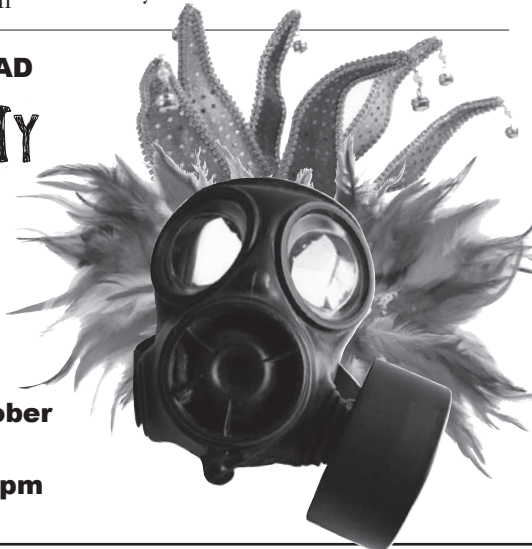
By Adrian Cardinali, Student Advice and Advocacy Officer Coordinator

END OF SEMESTER POSTGRAD

MASQUERADE PARTY

Celebrate the end of semester with SUPRA and USU at the Postgrad Masquerade Party. Come sporting your finest mask.....or take a lucky dip mask at the door! Two free complimentary drinks for all postgrads!

When: Wednesday 28th October
Where: Herman's Bar,
Wentworth building - from 5pm



Subscribe to SUPRA - it's FREE!

By becoming a SUPRA Subscriber you will be able to:

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- Vote or run in the SUPRA Council elections
- Actively participate in your representative student association.

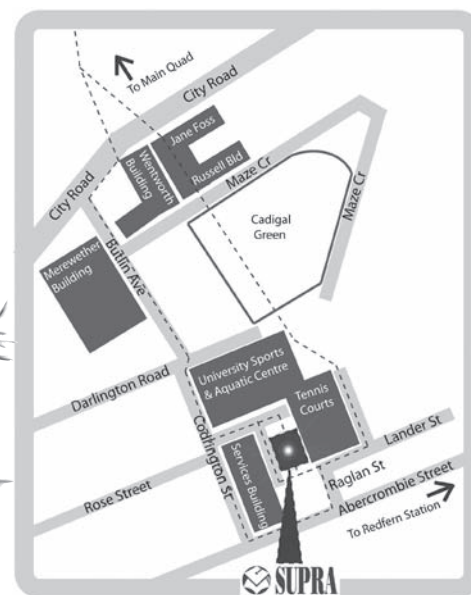
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- Show that you appreciate the value of an independent student run organisation.

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Equal Love, Equal Rights

Amy "Body Bags" Thomas covers the turf tussle over marriage

The ALP national conference was expected to be an organisationally tight ship. But one issue that had the possibility of provoking some real debate was same-sex marriage rights. Five years after Howard lead the charge to ban same-sex marriage by re-wording the Marriage Act, discontent with Rudd's failure to change the tune was beginning to boil over.

A queer Labor members lobby group, Rainbow Labor, headed up a push within the party to change ALP policy. This policy, like the Marriage Act, labelled marriage as something that must be "between a man and a woman", and opposed same-sex rights legislation that would "mimic marriage". This was a very welcome shift from Rainbow Labor, who had previously stopped short of demanding same-sex marriage, or publicly criticising the government's continuation of the homophobic ban.

Lobby group Equal Love organised demonstrations in major population centres on August 1, to coincide with both the anniversary of the ban and the conference. They were the biggest demonstrations for gay marriage in Australian history, with over 8000 coming out across the country. Such a turn out for one-off demonstrations indicates the depth of the mood for change—and the growing frustration at inaction. The rallies themselves were lively, spirited and

angry.

Many had expected the Rudd government to deliver on queer rights once elected, even though they had been anything but strident supporters in the lead up to the election.

As Doug Pollard, executive director of JoyFm, wrote in Crikey: "We voted them in because anything was an improvement on Howard. We accepted their gay policies were less than perfect, knowing that they didn't want to frighten the fundies. But we hoped they would cast off those shackles once elected."

Despite the hopes of many, the ALP conference did not deliver a decision to change the Marriage Act. Rainbow Labor and their allies in the Labor Left agreed to water down their demands, and settled for a slightly less offensive re-wording of the current policy—to take out the explicit reference to marriage being between a "man and a woman".

Cabinet Minister Anthony Albanese brokered the resolution, and said afterward "sometimes you can't always get what you want, but you

get what you need...the resolution before this conference provides the latter."

But empty symbolism is not what queers need or want.

Albanese effectively brokered a get-out-of-jail free card for those in the party still vocal against same-sex marriage, including Rudd. The Prime

Minister used the debate to reiterate his opposition to gay marriage. Instead of standing up strongly, the Labor Left sold the compromise.

This is not a step forward—it is a left cover for an unchanged homophobic position.

Rainbow Labor and the Labor Left should have moved an alternative resolution. Even if this meant losing the debate on the conference floor, it would have massively boosted the pressure on Rudd to act.

The conference agreed to an inquiry on same-sex "relationship registers"—but even this won't challenge the fundamental homophobia embedded in the marriage ban. While it remains law, the ban will signal that queers and their relationships are inferior.

It seems nearly anachronistic that Rudd would continue to enforce such homophobic legislation. But the same-sex marriage ban has a purpose for Rudd. He is anxious to show that he is a socially conservative Prime Minister, ready to stand up for traditional 'family values'.

Instead of social services, housing and support for Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory—the kind of action one might have expected after the historic apology to the Stolen Generations—we have a racist 'pull up your bootstraps approach' with the ongoing Intervention. Instead of shutting down the detention centres, we have outrage about people smugglers ('the scum of the earth'). And let's not forget the moral indignation with Bill Henson's artwork.

We all hoped for better. But Rudd has consistently shown that if we want to get it, we're going to have to fight for it. We desperately need a left capable of turning the sentiment seen at the demonstrations on August 1st into consistent action for real change.

Editor's Note: There will be another rally for marriage equality on the 28th of November. Contact Heidi at queerofficer@nus.asn.au for more information.

HOLDING THE SENATE TO RANSOM

Richard "The Sawman" Sawyer turns the screws on the Senate Inquiry into Marriage Equality

Unjustifiably discriminatory legal regimes besmirch any nation.

Of course, as a trainee of the legal profession, I am not so naïve as to think that equality in all circumstances is fitting.

Nonetheless, be that as it may, it must remain the prima facie position that where the law treats x and y differently there must be some justification that we, as the subjects of the law, can look to in order that we feel satisfied that the law is doing that which is fair and just in the circumstances.

In regards to the position of same-sex couples in Australia, though, such a legitimate justification is missing.

There is no rational basis on which, on the one hand, homosexual couples can be told that they are an acceptable, normal and welcome part of our nation and yet, on the other, are denied equal marriage rights. It does not reduce the matter too much to ask: are same-sex couples equally

valid or not? For if they are, let them have equal recognition. And if any person should answer that they are not, then let the fullness of their opposition to homosexuality be known so that they may be judged by all not as a tolerant, accepting person, but rather in the fullness of their bigotry.

We are told that, perhaps, the religiousness of marriage as an institution justifies the exclusion of same-sex couples. But the cogency of this conception is so frail that it should be obvious that no legally trained mind would accept it for a moment; for, after all, are there not atheist marriages, Buddhists marriages, Hindu marriages, couples where one is agnostic and the other devoutly Catholic and so on?

In fact there are many who have the right to marry who are not Christian. To say that the law should intervene to exclude from marriage all but those passing the test of certain interpretations of Christian religious

canons for acceptability is laughable.

Alternatively we are told that same-sex couples are not any less valid but merely different. That they are entitled to the same substantive rights but not the same name (to de facto status and accompanying benefits, but not 'marriage', per se). Yet, we think that everyone knows the value of words. For a man to call his loved one his husband, or a woman, hers, her wife has a normative power that is clear to all. And we would argue that this is precisely why, in reality, some would prefer to give same-sex couples a different name, since to call them the same would be to truly accept them.

It remains patently clear to young Australians that the exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage has at its heart the strong and lingering bitterness of homophobia.

Are legislators so out of touch? Are they deaf to the stutter of incredulity that echoes through the ranks of

young Australians when the topic is raised?

Many do not speak out strongly on the issue because they believe it to be a) so pre-eminently obvious that same-sex couples ought to have equal rights that they do not bother to consider their plight and b) merely a matter of time until the oldness of the politicians renders them retired and until change will come.

Do not confuse this silence for concurrence. After all, in our interactions with some of tomorrow's brightest legal minds we have yet to find any who could rationally explain the difference with which same-sex couples are treated (in any way other than by recourse to the cynicism of politician's keen to keep their votes).

We, the representatives of tomorrow's Australia, reject discrimination and call for equality in the form of equal marriage rights for same-sex couples. For it will one day be so, let it be so now, lest one day we reflect, and hang our heads in shame.

HETERO NORMS:

Stuff Straight People Like

Twitter’s @heteronorm, and the brains behind it, Daniel “The Bishop” Richardson and Daniel “Angry Pom” Swain run some rings around those straight schmucks...

Camping

In a long-term, mixed-gender relationship? Unsure whether you can live with your partner on an ongoing basis? Want to know? Try camping! The heterosexual’s most useful life lessons are learnt in tents! Consider: where did you learn not to sleep communally with family members? Where did you first realise that ‘fishing’ is an elaborate ploy to escape female relatives? What taught you that iPods only last a day without chargers? Yes.

Camping: we may be camp, but it’s you guys that really go to town.

Will&Grace

Do you work with a ‘gay’? Is he fabulous? Want to hear his humour all the time? Afraid your homophobic boss will promote you away from him? Totally fine with that? Then Will&Grace is for you! You know how, in the 50’s, Texans just loved Little Richard’s music? Like, loved him so much they gave him and all his friends a separate drinking fountain? And a special public bathroom? Yeah. There’s a little bit of that going on here.

Still, campaigning in earnest is so time consuming, and Jack and Karen are just so funny!

Early Elimination from Australian Idol

Anthony Callea, Casey Donovan, Courtney Act, Guy Sebastian --the gays love Australian Idol. Every year we flood auditions with gorgeous gays, lovable lesbians and dreamboats in drag, stand them proudly next to the likes of Shannon Noll and ask ‘Really, him?’ Sure, one year you guys got it wrong, but for the most part you’ve obediently done exactly as the Queer Mafia has asked. But who, you may enquire, brandishes the placards scrawled with adoring messages before ad breaks? Surely not the Gay Mafia? No. Not us. Who, you might wonder, pads out the early episodes with embarrassing performances and uninteresting earnestness? Not us! Who waits for hours in rain just to be in the audience for the ‘Disco’ episode? No one who could go to Stonewall instead! Yes, that’s right, the Breeders do.

Anything with Gay Staff

David Jones? Gloria Jeans? The Apple Store? Gays. IKEA? Pet Paradise? Virgin Records? Gays. Café Sydney? The MCA? Virgin Airlines? Gays. Toni&Guy? The Marriott? Fitness First? Gays. State Library? General Pants Co.? The Ivy? Gays. Steiner Schools? Gays. P&O Cruises? Gays. Christian City Church? Gays, gays, gays!

And you fucking love it.

Sunrise

Is breakfast television over at the the SBS a little too confronting? Do you need to hear all about Di Morressey’s latest before dropping the kids to school? Do you often wonder how Sophie Delizio is doing? Do you want to honour the ANZACs and do the Atkins diet?

The Sunrise is for YOU!

Yes, Kocie, Mel and their gender-balanced cast of advisers offer everything that today’s modern, on-the-go-heterosexual could possibly want. Sports report? Got it. Hollywood? Covered. Weather? Reported. On call.

Whether it’s weighing up the pros and cons of the maxi-dress, or opening a Savings Maximiser, Kocie and Mel have approached it with an open mind, so you don’t have to.

Child’s memory. Manchester, 1994. DanielSwain

Mother said Manchester gave me my cold, and I believe her.
The traffic has its own breath and stifles mine &
The sky mimics sidewalks while I smoke the breeze.

I am starting to think that *Manchester is a cold*:
drowsed, sweaty, white skinned and red eyed.
All fever in the chill, a week without sleep.
And it seems cruel to me
to be here on the ward,
surrounded by drugs,
but sickened by it all.

Mother saves all her sympathy
for James. *We are not here*
for you
she says. But I know this.
We are here for him,
Here, in England, for her friend, James.
Best friends, she had said
University friends, she had said
A sick friend, she had said,
In England, where she had lived
And studied, and made friends.
I wonder if he was her boyfriend.
I wonder, but I am careful not to ask.
It would be rude.

Manchester has given me a jacket.
Green cord, gold button; a slim pocket
to store each bus ticket (return)
from hotel to hospital.
(This is an English jacket,
Mother says—
It does not just warm, it hugs.
And I think—
It is a English hug:
long and tight and kiss-less.)

One day, on the bus, held close by this jacket,
And nothing else,
I dare to ask: What made him sick
if not the city?

And what Mother said startled—

James, she said, is dying from a disease caused by love.
Loving and being loved, she said. He’s dying, she said,
because there’s no cure for love or death. Dying, she said,
like too many other people around the world
who only have love to blame. And so, she said,
we shall go on—loving and dying—and turning up
in Manchester, and to hospitals, because
people go on, like that, like they do,
loving and dying.

SIN(SISTER) CITY

Paul Karp went back to the old country

My family holiday in America in the mid-semester break was spiced up considerably by an impromptu pilgrimage to the Castro, the famous gay district of San Francisco, suggested by my proud father as consolation for the fact the drinking age of 21 precluded me from most of the 'scene' of San Fran.

The Castro has a significance to my family that is much greater than my own interest in it. It was here that my (heterosexual) father lived when he met my mother while working in San Francisco. Even as a kid I remember hearing how the area was so gay that my mother had written him off as a romantic prospect as soon as she discovered his address.

I can believe it too given what I witnessed of it first hand. The best way to describe the Castro is this: a gay club turned inside out. All the gay archetypes are out in force: bears in leather with handlebar moustaches; shirtless gym junkies of all ages, many into their 40s and 50s, sporting tans on veiny biceps; younger twinkles wearing pastel singlets, their hair well joused in an affected swirl. And look! A couple is walking a poodle past a home-ware store, the poodle stops enviously looking in the window at a mannequin dog sporting an 'I have 2 dads' jumper. And in exactly the same way I felt during my first nervous forays into gay venues I was simultaneously intrigued and intimidated, a feeling only enhanced by having my father point out landmarks like the bus stop where he was propositioned routinely on his way to work.

Lest anyone think that this just sounds like Oxford St except on a larger scale, allow me to set you straight, so to speak.

Guys wearing arseless chaps in the street is a qualitative difference between the Castro and anything like it in Australia. In the words of Dennis Finch, of Just Shoot Me fame, it was even gayer than watching Cabaret while having sex with a man. Fantastic in short!

After the bus stand our next stop was the GLBT Society's Castro Museum. Here we found a treasury of the community's history: old political flyers, venue posters, smatterings of erotica. Dad patiently but a little less attentively followed me through the exhibition, but resumed his role as tour guide when he showed off those items relating to Harvey Milk, the first openly gay man to be elected to office in California, a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors shot dead by Dan White along with Mayor George Moscone after the passage of a gay rights ordinance. Particularly striking were the photos of the spontaneous candlelight march through the streets when the news broke.

After that reminder of lingering prejudice came a second bitter note, the presentation of the struggles of the community afflicted with AIDs. Dad is always dramatic on this subject, declaring it killed an entire generation of gay men that lived there when he did. I joked about the subject to cover my unease: 'but Dad, did you see how old some of those geezers out there were?'

'ALMOST a whole generation then' he corrected. I am humbled, The spectre of AIDs is not to be taken lightly, death on that scale is necessarily tragic. But fear inspires caution, and the bustling suburb outside reminds me that gay culture

has and will outlive the realisation that precautions are not just something that straight people take to avoid getting pregnant.

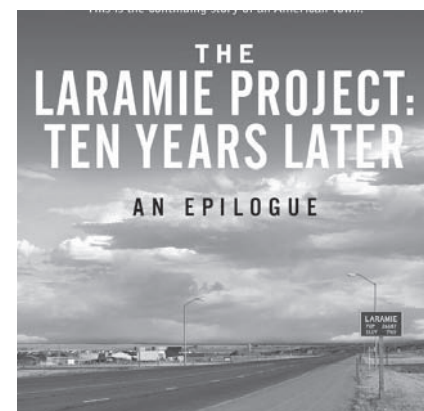
We chat with the gentleman at the front desk for a while. I imagine, perhaps unfairly, that he is triply impressed: because we are Australian; because Dad lived here and still had kids; and because I have taken such an active interest. I buy a few postcards and other souvenirs to demonstrate my piety: this has been no forced march through the South Park tolerance museum. A few less committed tourists have wandered in during this time but are discouraged by the three dollar admission fee. It doesn't matter, they are closing anyway.

The sun is setting and we return to Castro station to catch the MUNI metro under the twin peaks back to the posh suburb where my mum's cousin lives. As the shuttle arrives the residents of the Castro disembark. I smile happily at them, bachelors, or else victims of California's Proposition 8. The rest of our travels in America took us to Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico. Needless to say I would see nothing like the Castro.

My father moved to the Castro because the rent was cheap. He found a community that he moved amongst, shopping at the same supermarket and waiting at the same bus stop, but was not strictly a part of. He gained respect for it because he recognised it for what it was: something constructive, something shared, a place where people experienced the highest expressions of human love, while frequently enjoying many of the lower ones too. In short, a community like any other.

LARAMIE Lives On!

IN A WORLD PREMIERE PRODUCTION, members of the Sydney University Dramatic Society (SUDS) and *So What?* will come together with the creators of 'The Laramie Project' to premiere a compelling and groundbreaking epilogue to the original piece.



Entitled THE LARAMIE PROJECT: 10 YEARS LATER, the play will be given a staged reading performed in Sydney at the Seymour Centre's York Theatre, and over 100 other theatres and university campuses across the US, Canada, Great Britain, Spain, Australia and Hong Kong on October 13, 2009 (Sydney time).

On October 6th of 1998 Matthew Shepard was beaten and left to die tied to a fence in the outskirts of Laramie, Wyoming. He died 6 days later. His murder became a watershed historical moment in America that highlighted the violence and prejudice lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people face.

Ten Years Later will be showing at 7pm on October 13th:

www.seymourcentre.com.au to book your \$5 tickets!

KHAOS KOMIX

GLBTIQ content in the mass media is still mostly constrained by the particular morals or political leanings of its owners, and as such remains a very small and censored minority.

The internet doesn't have those same constraints; therefore it is in the best position in terms of representing the queer community and its experience.

A great example of this is an online web series called Khaos Komix, written by Tab Kimpton. The term 'comic' is usually correlated with a 'daily funny' with caricature artistry, but this is a series of stories explained via graphic artistry. Tab walks the line of incredible storytelling accompanied by beautiful (usually) black and white art.

The story is a series of events, told from the perspectives of six college students, as they find themselves and fall in love. Ordinary

melodramatic teen angst this is not, as the stories revolve around the very fluid nature of sexuality and the possibilities of love.

Each character's story and perspective is dealt with respectfully and with true compassion as they work through their identities. Tom's story explains his experience of being trans and becoming a man, and is the best representation of this that I have found in modern media. The experiences of coming out and first love, as well as family acceptance, are handled deftly and with reverence.

This isn't a public service announcement or a pointed political agenda covered by script, it's an honest and resonant telling of the stories that we don't often hear in the mainstream media. Reading and connecting to these characters provides a community, and a real sense of understanding.

Having a positive portrayal of the trans experience is fantastic, and really provides a window into a misunderstood and often judged experience – which hopefully enlightens and opens minds a little bit. People judge what they don't understand, and Tom's story really brings to the fore how it feels to not be in the right body, how it feels to not like what you see in the mirror. It's a powerful portrayal, and told beautifully: never straying into melodrama or compromising his story, as we see a young man discover his true self.

The most beautiful part of the series is being able to watch the lead up of events – Khaos Komix, unlike most storytelling, does not follow a linear progression. Having such a refreshingly different style allows not only greater empathy for the characters, but also shows the interconnected nature of our stories and community. You get a true understanding of how

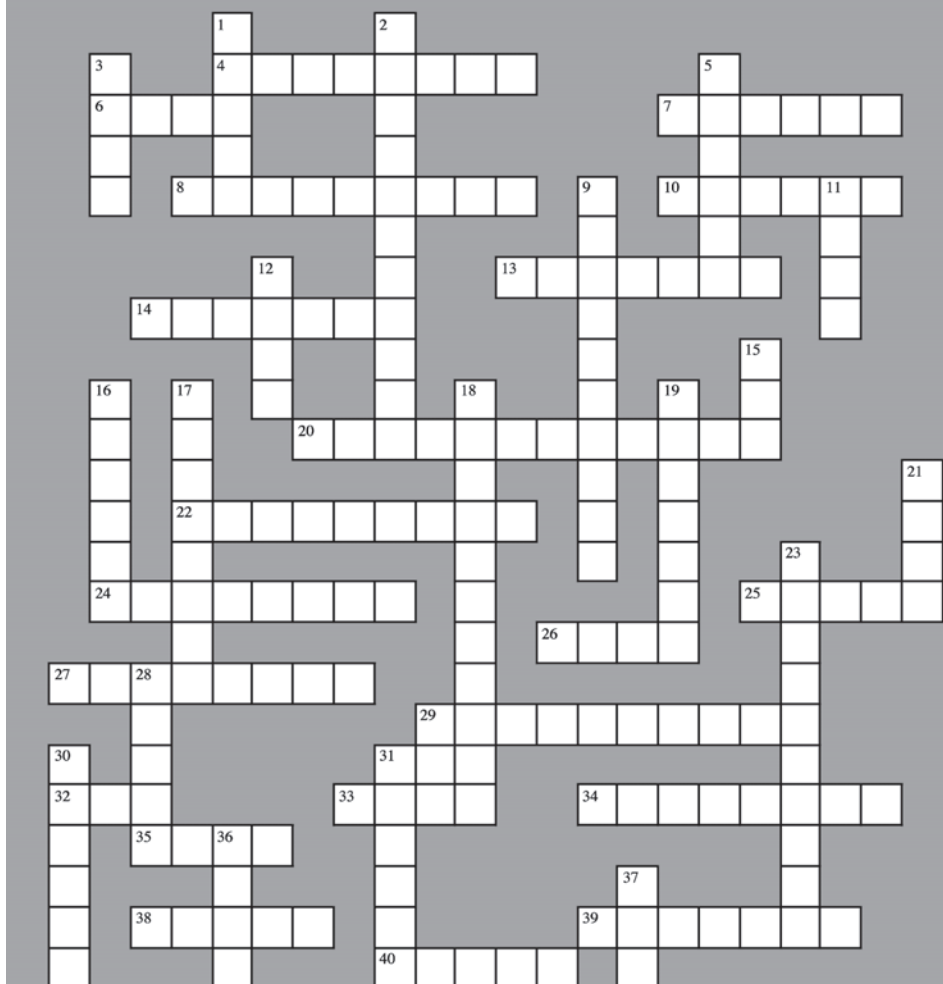
and why the characters are motivated to act like they do – a rare and fascinating insight.

The queer community may not be front and center on your television, but we are here and it is projects like Khaos Komix that provide us with our community and a place to connect for both gay and straight people. It's often difficult to find a connection in the straight community, as the issues gay young people are confronted with are seen to be so different, though that difference is more often related to straight fears and expectations than to any actual disparity. By seeing different stories, and embracing them, we can better bridge the gaps between queer and straight communities.

Khaos Komix can be found at:

<http://www.khaoskomix.com/home.html>

Cross-Gendered



ACROSS

- 4 Has aspects of both genders
6 Advanced immuno-deficiency syndrome
7 Female sexual organ
8 The Smiths Front man
10 Homo sixth sense
13 Not attracted to any gender
14 A type of lube, not water based
20 Large electronic music event, populated with gay men
22 Fuck you, Fuck you very much
24 Film by John Cameron Mitchell
25 Good with lime, alcoholic
26 Mostly Plastic Gay Diva, poor Sonny
27 Upper house member prays for rain during Mardi Gras
29 Fear of Homosexuals
32 Anger
33 Male chicken
34 Sexually attracted to both genders
35 Kids get them, uni students want them, zzzzz
38 Becomes erect
39 Women attracted to women
40 A male purse

DOWN

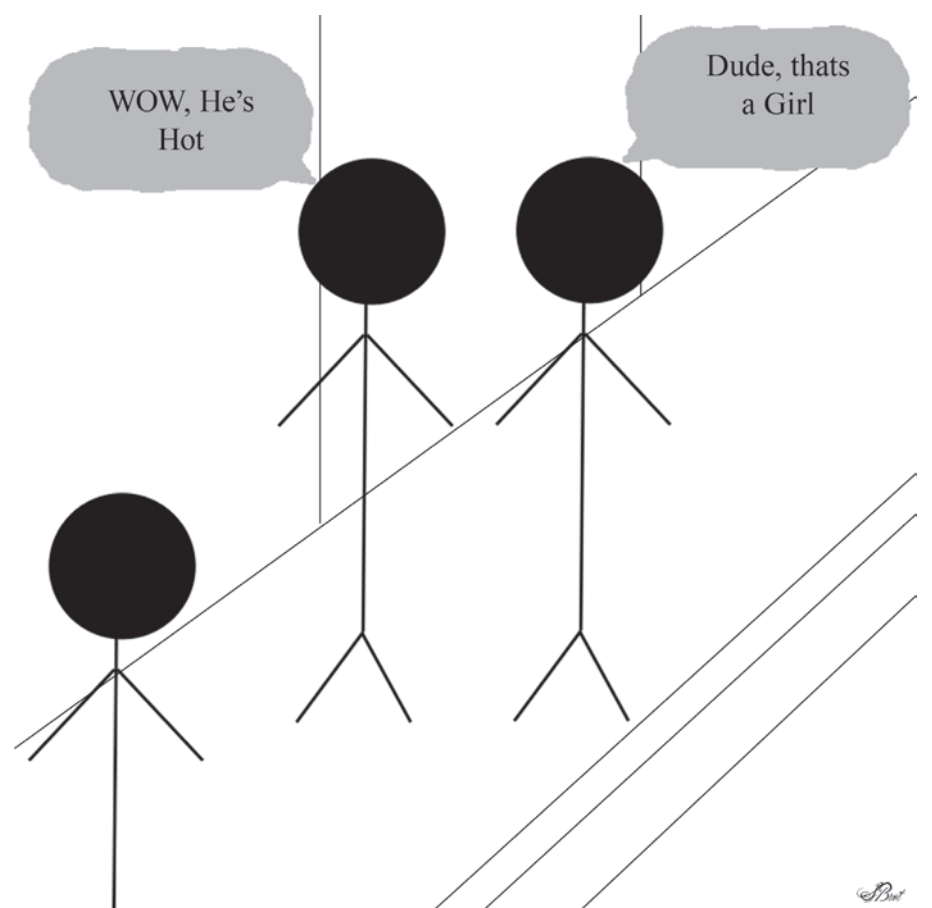
- 1 Your ##### Needs you – Kylie Minogue
2 crossing the bounds of gender identity
3 Gay anime
5 First country in North America to legalise gay marriage
9 The queer place on campus
11 Ads organization of New South Wales
12 Movie about gay American civil rights leader
15 Men attracted to men
16 Time and relative dimensions in the space
17 Lesbianic TV show, die Jenny die
18 Brian, Justin, Emmet, Ted, Debbie, Michael, Lindsay, Ben and Mel
19 Derogatory term for heterosexuals
21 Chemical acronym for ecstasy
23 Sits on the old gum tree
28 Lesbian talk show host
30 A red head
31 Protects you from STI's
36 Artist, you better get this party started
37 Beverage the English love (stereotypically)



Beers for Queers Thursdays, 4pm Manning Bar



	7		5			8		2
2	9			6		1		
	3				8			
	6		1		4		7	
	2	9				5	1	
	4			9		3		6
			7				8	
		3		5			6	1
4		2			3		5	





Students' Representative Council

The University of Sydney

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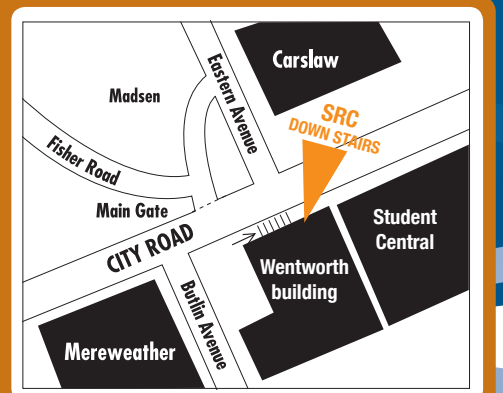
- Honi Soit weekly newspaper
see: www.src.usyd.edu.au/honisoit
- Student Handbooks

Student Rights & Representation

SRC Representatives are directly elected
by students each year to stand up for
students' rights on campus and in the
wider community.

Find the SRC at...

Level 1 Wentworth
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under the City Rd
footbridge)
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The University of Sydney

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