

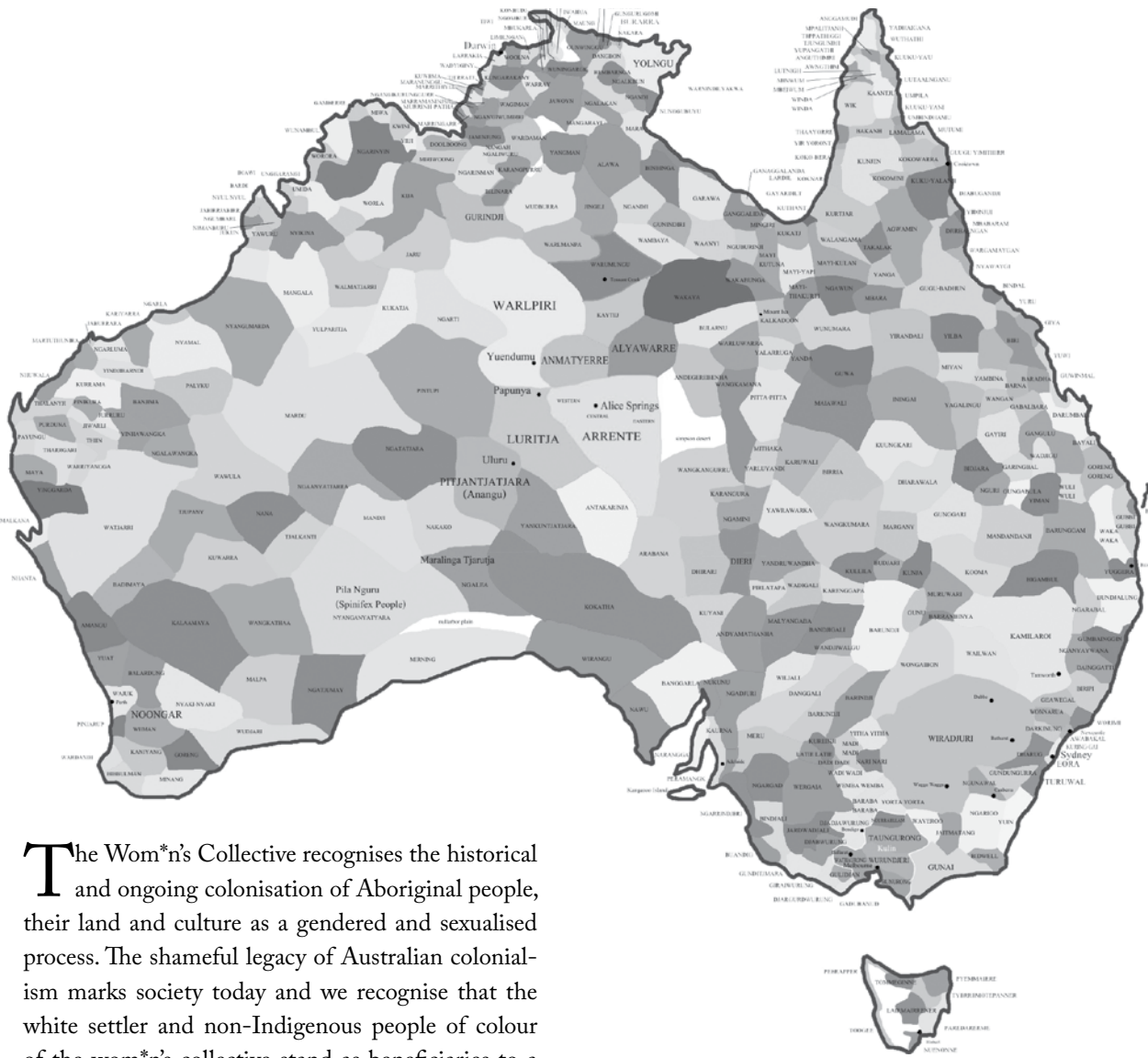
WOM*N'S HONI

SEMESTER ONE, WEEK TWELVE





Acknowledgement of Country



The Wom*n’s Collective recognises the historical and ongoing colonisation of Aboriginal people, their land and culture as a gendered and sexualised process. The shameful legacy of Australian colonialism marks society today and we recognise that the white settler and non-Indigenous people of colour of the wom*n’s collective stand as beneficiaries to a racist dispossession.

We recognise that, as Cherokee activist Andrea Smith asserts, the invasion and violation of Indigenous women’s bodies was used as a tool of colonisation. The violation of reproductive rights saw families and kin ties torn apart as a result of the shameful “Child Removal Act”, now known as the Stolen Generations. The Stolen Generation continues today, with more children removed from families than there ever has been in Australian history.

We recognise the highly disproportional rate at which Indigenous women experience domestic violence and addiction as a result of colonisation. Patriarchal violence and addictive substances were introduced by English imperialists and still mark the lived experience of many Indigenous peoples. We acknowledge the high incarceration rates that Aboriginal women face in Australia as a result of these injustices and racial prejudices and profiling of the Australian Police Force. We stand with powerful organisations such as Sisters Inside who provide an invaluable service in supporting Aboriginal women who have been victimised by this racist system. We want to acknowledge the injustices of the NT intervention which used stereotypes of Indigenous peoples’ sexuality as deviant and in need of control to legitimise neo-colonial violences. The violences are also clear in the coalitions threat to forcibly remove Indigenous communities from ancestral land in Western Australia. We stand wit

Along with colonisation came to whitewashing of diverse expressions and lived experiences of gender and sexuality. We stand in solidarity with queer, trans and non-binary identifying Indigenous peoples

and sistagirls and brotherboys who resist the ongoing co-option of their identity by colonial forces.

We acknowledge the fact that white feminism and settler/colonial feminists are complicit with colonisation. Many suffragettes from the early 20th Century were also part of eugenicist movements that aggressively fought for the Australian citizen to embody whiteness. Racist legacies within the feminist movement permeate feminist spaces across Australia and we acknowledge that we are not exempt from this. As highlighted by Isabel Coe and countless other Aboriginal activists who expend energy educating white feminists, Aboriginal women’s rights have been explicitly excluded within feminist movements and the women’s collective is dedicated to resisting and refusing this legacy.

We acknowledge the strength, power and resistance of Aboriginal feminists such as Isabel Coe who continually fought for, and continue to fight for, the rights of Aboriginal women and peoples. We acknowledge the indispensable role that Marlene Cummins, Mum Shirl, Jenny Munro, Lorna Munro, Isabel Coe, Pearl Gibbs and Isabel Coe have had in the land rights movements of the Tent Embassy in Canberra, Redfern and across Aboriginal sacred lands. We acknowledge the invaluable contributions of Celeste Liddle, Amy McQuire, Larissa Behrendt, Aileen Moreton-Robinson, Miranda Tapsell and many many more Indigenous women who have shaped, subverted and revolutionised discourses and representation surrounding Indigenous peoples. We also want to make special mention of Indigenous women who continue to inspire us; Georgia Mantle, Laura Webster and Madison McIvor.

This land always was, always will be Aboriginal land and Indigenous sovereignty was never ceded.

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* The above terms have been reclaimed for the purposes of this contents column.

Credits

Editors: Subeta Vimalarajah, Xiaoran Shi, Arabella Close, Courtney Thompson, Lane Pitcher, Julia Readett, Alex Downie, Monique Newberry, Anna Hush, Kitty-Jean Laginha, Astha Rajvanshi, Bridget Harilaou, Shareeka Helaluddin, Mary Ward and Izabella Antoniou.

Contributors: Kate Bittar, Aulina Chaudhuri, Astha Rajvanshi, Anna Hush, Sam Langford, Sahra Magan, Kitty-Jean Laginha, Tina Huang, Joanita Olivia, Julia Starke, Mary Ward, Anoushka William, Bridget Harilaou, Kim Murphy, Arabella Close, Natalie Buckett, Victoria Zerbst, Julia Readett, Lane Pitcher, Perri Roach, Ellen O’Brien, Rameen Malik, Clodagh Schofield, Georgia Kriz, Emma Balfour, Summer Lea, Evie Havisham and Amelia Addams-Acton.

Wom*n’s Collective would like to thank all our incredibly brave anonymus submissions as well as those who planned to contribute but had to put themselves first. You are all absolutely amazing.

Front Cover: *WoCo* by Courtney Thompson

Back Cover: *Friducha* by Marina Lyshova

Artists/Illustrators: Johanna Roberts, Fatima Rauf, Marina Lyshova, EJ Son, Raveena Kawser, Alice Race, Allison Kate



Editorial

We are pretty proud of this edition of *Honi Soit*. The Sydney University Wom*n's Collective has been a site of feminist activism for decades, but it has not always been the most inclusive space for people of diverse, intersecting oppressions. People on this campus have felt explicitly excluded by the collective and its politics. With this history in mind, we are proud to present an edition that makes clear how varied the experiences of women, trans and non-binary people are. There are articles that cover experiences of gender, sexuality, race, class and age, amongst a myriad of other subjects. This edition makes clear that feminism should not seek to represent one experience of “womanhood” or strive for a uniform “sisterhood”, that our role as feminists is not singularly to destroy patriarchy.

All this said, intersectionality is a difficult, ongoing process that is never complete. We know that this edition is not perfect, we know that perfection is impossible. We also know that our Collective isn't perfect and that there are surely people who feel excluded from it. Accepting that reality, but constantly working to change it as best we can is what activism should be about. More than anything, the Wom*n's Collective is a radical space for learning via the sharing political ideas and experiences. We hope that this edition of *Honi Soit* can serve the same purpose: educating its readers on the irresolvable tensions and complexities, the myriad of questions, that are inherent to a critical, intersectional

feminism. We would like to thank the people who shared their experiences and thoughts with us, we recognise that this was a use of your emotional labour and time, both of which are rarely acknowledged regarding women, trans and non binary people. We particularly recognise that writing these pieces can be emotionally taxing and triggering when recounting trauma or difficult personal experiences. Moreover, we recognise that the capacity of people in our collective differs and there is no obligation on them to educate us or the wider student body about their experiences. In this vein we'd like to thank and congratulate the Indigenous people who contributed and put together Indigenous *Honi* last week which we are humbled to follow with our autonomous edition.

As you read this edition know that you should never expect to be educated on the experiences of those who are more oppressed than you. Take the things you learn from this paper on board and share them with those around you so that it is not a woman of colour, or a trans person or a survivor/victim of trauma who must instead exert their energy to fight structures of oppression. We all have a responsibility in this collective project of destroying kyriarchy, particularly those of us who benefit from it.

xoxo WoCo

Glossary of Terms

Bisexual: A person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical and/or spiritual attraction to both men and wom*n.

Colonialism: the establishment, exploration, maintenance and expansion of power in one territory by a political group from another territory e.g. the British invasion of Australia.

Cis/cisgender: People who, for the most part, identify with the sex they were assigned at birth based on their genitalia.

Genderqueer: An umbrella term for people who identify as neither a man nor a woman. They may identify with multiple genders, as having a fluctuating gender identity (gender-fluid) or as being without a gender identity (agender).

Intersectionality: the political framework that views oppression and privilege as not determined by distinct systems, but through their interaction.

Kyriarchy: A social system or set of connected social systems built around domination, oppression and submission; the intersecting structures of racism, sexism, ableism etc.

Non-binary: An umbrella term for someone who identifies as a gender other than a binary gender (i.e. other than male or female) e.g. genderqueer, agender.

Oppression: Being subject to the exercise of authority or power in a cruel or unjust manner as a result of structural inequalities such as those caused by gender, race and class.

Pansexual: A person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities/expressions.



4 months by Allison Kate

Patriarchy: A social system in which men hold primary power manifested in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege, control over property etc.

Preferred pronouns: The pronouns by which people prefer to be referred (e.g. they, she, he), being those that align with their gender identity. Note that preferred pronouns are not restricted by they/she/he.

Privilege: An advantage or set of advantages conferred on someone by virtue of their membership to a particular class or group of people e.g. white privilege, male privilege.

Racialisation: to impose a racial character or context onto something or someone e.g. identifying a person's interests through their racial identity.

Queer: Historically a derogatory term used to identify LGBTQ+ people, the word has been embraced and reclaimed in some communities as

a symbol of pride, representing all individuals who fall outside of gender and sexuality “norms”.

Radical feminism: The strand of feminism which believed the main oppressors of all wom*n are men. Radical feminism is sometimes associated with transphobia, or the label TERF.

Trans/transgender: An umbrella term for people whose identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth based on their genitalia. Trans people don't necessarily alter their bodies hormonally and/or surgically.

Wom*n of colour: An umbrella term for wom*n who are not white or of European parentage.

Sexual assault: Any sexual act that takes place without the existence of positive consent, including where consent was coerced or given under duress.



A Woman's Prime Is Her Whole Life

Clodagh Schofield stands up for older women against sexist ageism.

Lara and I are walking through Woodford Folk Festival when we bump into a colleague. "Where are you headed?" he asks.

"We're going to Mr Percival," I tell him.

He sniggers. "I hear he's very popular with middle aged women."

Lara, who is generally withdrawn and has been gazing into space for the duration of the conversation, snaps back into reality.

"GOOD!" she screams. "MIDDLE AGED WOMEN ROCK THE HOUSE!"

Lara walks away as violently as a graceful and gentle young woman can. The colleague looks at me seeking solidarity with those "what a crazy woman" eyes awful dudes make. Nope. I'm proud of Lara. I follow her down the path. Why should we be humiliated for enjoying something that older women enjoy too?

A few weeks later, Mum and I were at a music venue. She was buying drinks, and she'd been gone for a while. I went to check in on her at the bar, and as soon as I arrived by her side, a man came over to serve me. Walking back to our table,

Mum told me she'd been waiting around 10 minutes for service without anyone noticing she was there. She said this wasn't uncommon.

As a feminist, I was astonished I'd never considered the way that age and gender might intersect. I started asking older women in my life about how they felt in public spaces, and learnt that older women are often overlooked, particularly by customer service reps and waiters, and when asking questions at talks.

Some said it was a relief: after being harassed and overly sexualised as young women and then scrutinised as mothers, being ignored by men had its perks. Others said it could be like being completely invisible, like a piece of furniture.

It's a far cry from the experience of men, who are seen as stronger, more powerful, more important, and, if anything, more visible as they grow older.

"Sometimes I want my own space so I keep myself to myself, and being my age it's easy to do that," my mum, Eithne, tells me. "For you it's a lot less easy, because I know you get attention when you don't want it. I know you get bothered."

My mum is a quiet lady, who doesn't ask for much from others.

"For young people and men, I'm not somebody of particular interest," she says. "But that's OK."

My mum feels she experiences a double standard as a newly single older woman.

"When I grew up in Ireland, women who are the age I am, it was unusual to be single. It's quite different for single women and single men," Mum pauses. "It's easier for men to be on their own, socially. I think it's more acceptable. More expected."

"It's like you've reached an expiration date," my friend Sharon tells me. "You're not sexy anymore, you're not pumping out kids anymore, you're useless to society. That's how a lot of people see it I think, even if they're not aware of it."

Different women have different ways of handling society's attitudes towards women growing stronger and older.

Madhu, who owns her own business, is "all for woman power" and doesn't leave other people any opportunity to disrespect her. She knows what she wants, and has

adapted by forsaking the timid tiptoeing that characterised her youth.

"If someone makes me wait in a shop, I turn my back and walk away. I don't wait for anyone." Nowadays, Madhu refuses to worry about offending people with her assertiveness.

She builds relationships in which she is respected, and avoids spaces where she isn't treated as she deserves.

"Learning to say no is very important at my age. You have to learn to say no to bullshit," she asserts. "I know I'm not pleasing everybody but I'm choosing my battles more. I cut to the chase."

I took notes for this article, and also for my life goals.

I would like to see a society where older women are valourised for their achievements and their knowledge, whether that's for the children they have raised, communities they have built, or the careers they have made for themselves.

A woman's prime is her whole life (tbh) because women are A+, and it's time this was recognised.

Bi The Way ...

Bisexuals should be accepted and acknowledged for who they are, not for what you imagine them to be, Anna Hush writes.

I first told my friends I was bisexual when I was in Year Seven. Since then I've heard so many iterations and combinations of the following, from people far less accepting than my 12-year-old friends. 'Do you want to have a threesome with me and my girlfriend?' 'No, you mean you're confused about your sexuality.' 'Bisexuality is a cop-out. At least have the guts to come out fully like I did.' 'Sure, everybody's kind of bisexual, aren't they?'

Bisexuality is a difficult identity to inhabit. Bisexual people in relationships are read as straight or gay; there are no visible markers of bisexuality. While normative gay and lesbian scripts are performed (as well as troubled) through dress, speech, mannerisms, etc. we don't know what a bisexual person looks like.

This is a key factor in the phenomenon that Christopher James, drawing on Adrienne Rich's idea of 'compulsory heterosexuality', has termed 'compulsory monosexuality': the assumption that people are generally attracted to one gender. Bisexual wom*n in relationships with men are assumed to be heterosexual; those in relationships with wom*n are read as lesbians. Bisexuality is seen as an unstable, ephem-

eral phenomenon only accessible to single individuals, devolving into the stable categories of gay or straight upon entering relationships. This invisibility permeates cultural texts, which have a critical dearth of bisexual characters — Piper's insistence in *Orange is the New Black* that she 'used to be a lesbian', but no longer is, springs to mind. We need more films like Desiree Akhavan's *Appropriate Behaviour*, with characters openly and consistently identifying as bisexual, rather than just confused or experimental.

It is important to note that stereotypes of bisexuality can also intersect with other aspects of identity. Bi folk are often characterised as promiscuous and hypersexualised, a stereotype no doubt heightened for wom*n of colour. They are also seen as duplicitous, fickle and indecisive — elements that also play into common misunderstandings of trans identities.

While any stereotype is inherently limiting, those constructed around bisexuality have particularly pernicious effects for folks with intersectional identities. Homonormativity pervades constructions of bisexuality, too — the stereotype of a bisexual person, probably a young, attractive,

white, cis wom*n, obscures diversity. It titillates male sexuality while it conceals the need to investigate manifold experiences of biphobia, stratified by race and gender, amongst other factors.



Desiree Akhavan in *Appropriate Behavior*

Another factor driving the erasure of bisexual individuals is the lack of communities specifically organised around bisexual folks. Although the 'B' is always present and central in LGBTQIA+ nomenclature, it is often absent in communities and physical spaces. This is partly a function of the active erasure of bisexual identities and the bizarrely pervasive idea that 'bisexuality just isn't a thing', a catch cry I've heard from both gay and straight friends. There is a lacuna of bisexual communities

addressing shared and specific experiences of bisexuality, yet new groups are forming — for example, the Sydney-based Bi, Pan & Fluid Network.

April Callis, writing in the *Journal of Bisexuality*, locates bisexuality at a critical juncture, an 'ideal starting place for deconstruction' of gender and sexual binaries. Bisexuality poses a challenge to queer theory, which understands sexualities as constituted by performance of cultural scripts yet largely centres the experiences of gay men and lesbian wom*n. Thus, queer theory caters largely to homonormative standpoints, whereas bisexuality undermines hegemonic scripts by embracing the fluidity and ambiguity of desire.

The term can certainly be read as problematic in its reification of the gender binary and exclusion of trans and non-binary folks as objects of desire, driving some folk to adopt the term 'pansexual' or the catch-all 'queer'. I have struggled greatly with this aspect of the term, but for now, to borrow Andy Mason's terminology, 'bisexual' is the pair of boots that fits me best. I just wish others would recognise them as real, sturdy, good boots, rather than discardable, flimsy and fake.



Ain't I A Woman?

Sabra Magan reflects on Patricia Arquette's speech and the persistent need for more intersectionality in feminism today.

I'm not a feminist. I do not relate to the modern feminist movement. Almost two years ago the #solidarityisforwhitewomen discussion went viral, exposing the deep-running alienation that many wom*n of colour such as myself feel when it comes to mainstream feminism.

Patricia Arquette's backstage comments at the Oscars only reinforced this alienation: "And it's time for all the women in America and all the men that love women, and all the gay people, and all the people of colour that we've all fought for to fight for us now."

For the wom*n who fall into any number of those categories, her speech simply made public the way in which the experiences of wom*n of colour, LGBT wom*n and trans wom*n are ignored, or worse, dismissed outright by the mainstream feminist movement.

As a wom*n of colour, her comments brought to mind the necessity of conversations such as #solidarityisforwhitewomen in highlighting the problems with the internal power dynamics of the feminist movement.

As a wom*n of colour, one cannot help but notice that feminism and equality is still thought of as a zero-sum game. As wom*n of colour we are expected to discard our identity as people of colour in favour of our identity as wom*n, as if the two are somehow incompatible.

In reality these identities both shape the ways that we as wom*n of colour are viewed by the overarching white, patriarchal power structures that shape the world, and the ways in which we experience it.

This approach to feminism is termed Intersectionality, a term conceived of by American Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. Almost three decades on, wom*n of colour are still advocating for a shift in the way in which we are treated by mainstream feminist discourse. Intersectionality is a complex concept and the recognition of the validity of the differing experiences of wom*n of colour within feminist discourse requires a culture shift.

However, the best way to ensure that you do not denigrate the experiences of others in advocating for your rights is by making a conscious effort to listen to wom*n

of colour. On YouTube, Akilah Hughes recently highlighted the importance of Intersectionality in her video 'On Intersectionality in Feminism and Pizza' in which she explains the problems with 'white feminism', in response to Patricia Arquette's comments.

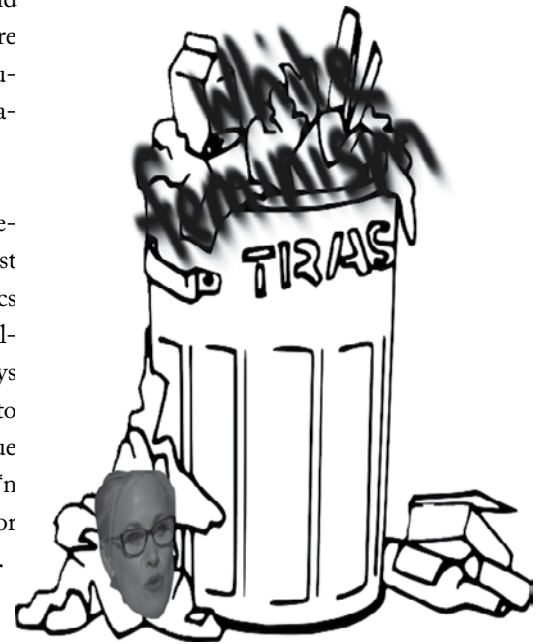
As a wom*n of colour, my experiences with racism are not distinct from my experiences with sexism. These two spheres of discrimination inform each other and that is why terms such as misogynoir are important in acknowledging and communicating the unique forms of discrimination faced by women such as myself.

What Patricia Arquette's comments reflect is the readiness of modern feminist discourse to avoid uncomfortable topics such as how legacies of slavery, colonialism and imperialism have shaped the ways that we as wom*n of colour respond to the world. The recognition of the unique forms of discrimination faced by wom*n of colour should not affect the capacity for any other group to seek their own rights. Equality is not a zero-sum game.

It is necessary for the voices of wom*n

of colour to be heard, for feminist discourse to accept and prioritise the voices of wom*n of colour, for their experiences to be validated and for the culture of white feminism to end. As wom*n of colour we should be in control of our own narratives. The colour of our skin should not lessen the legitimacy of our struggle.

Equality is not a zero-sum game.



The Drain Hole Of Emotional Labour

Aulina Chaudhuri calls for white people to check their privilege and educate themselves rather than drown in white guilt.

The growing momentum of race consciousness in general discourse is astounding and exciting, yet there is something insidiously 'bleached' about how these ideas are communicated.

Watching beneficiaries of privilege profit from engaging in race discourse as it enters mainstream consciousness but avoid their own whiteness in these conversations has made me weary. The frustration of dealing with white guilt and tears weighs on me regularly.

I want to engage in a discussion that is built on a foundation of true understanding of racial inequity and how it manifests in interpersonal relationships, academic institutions — how it pervades all aspects of life.

When dealing with hegemonic patriarchy, white wom*n are particularly quick to jump on the bandwagon of empathising with the oppressed. However, I have noticed an unwillingness to interrogate their own role as possessors of white privilege.

Emotional labour is undoubtedly a gen-

dered phenomenon, where wom*n typically assume the role of care-takers or dispute resolution advisors due to attributed 'nurturing' or 'maternal' qualities.

From my observation and experience, the burden of education and 'growth' generally falls onto wom*n of colour who must over-extend themselves consistently and without question.

I aim to deconstruct both the consistent social passivity and expectation that wom*n should carry the burden of emotional responsibility, as well as the entitlement to be free of this burden and evasion of accountability, which whiteness and masculinity demand. It is important to be aware that these two issues are not mutually exclusive.

This act of deconstruction shows how changes are needed in the embedded make-up of how we as a community deal with emotions, relegating the burden of responsibility and labour to wom*n of colour.

I have reflected on the journey of communication with perpetrators of racial discrim-

ination and responses to their racism when identified. In these responses, overwhelming negative feelings like guilt and shame were consistent, as was gaslighting (selectively omitting/twisting events to minimise the oppressed voice) and derailment.

This typifies what Robin Diangelo describes as white fragility, which often results in a deafening silence and/or argumentativeness that reinstates the white dominance equilibrium. This is what I am endlessly working to dismantle in these conversations.

There are so many better, more engaging issues than whiteness to partake in, yet I am constantly barraged with this drain hole. Facing your own complicity in oppressive behaviour is an ugly, difficult process. However, I implore those who are 'race-conscious' to overextend themselves as the people that educated them did.

White Passivity in the context of interpersonal relationships is damaging and reflects both a product of privilege as well as the paralysing effects of your fragility, which is

YOUR burden to bear. Be self-aware and critical of your emotional response in discussions about race and interrogate whether your reactions are valid in that context.

Another thing to note is how discussing emotions serves a dual function. Firstly and more importantly, as validating lived experiences of oppression and secondly an integral part to deconstructing whiteness.

Having a 'rational,' measured approach is something I am unable to engage with as I have been deeply affected by an aspect of my identity that has been used to define me, simultaneously stripping me of agency.

I am angry, hurt and resentful at those privileged enough to not face the truth of what race means in society.

Shallowly engaging with buzzwords like 'cultural appropriation' and 'intersectionality' misses the pathos required for genuine discussion and growth, where we hold each other mutually accountable for improving ourselves as introspective individuals within a community.



“They’re Both Broad Churches”: Can You Be A Catholic Feminist?

Mary Ward examines the intersection between feminism and religious identity.

On January 2, 1994 I became a Catholic.

I was four months old.* Understandably, I don’t remember it. Less understandably, my parents dressed a newborn baby in an itchy lace dress on one of the hottest days of the year. (In Smithfield, where coastal breezes wouldn’t be caught dead.)

I proceeded to scream my lungs out for an hour straight in response.

Stop! What are you doing? Catholicism? But, dad’s Anglican! Why couldn’t we go down that substantially more relaxed path?

Hold up, did someone say free weekly wine tastings? I take it all back. Sign me up.

Afterwards, my family got together and ate cake. I probably had mild heatstroke, but, like I said, I don’t remember it.

I don’t have an exact date for when I became a feminist but I doubt I was wearing a lace dress and, if there was cake, it was because there was a special on at Woolies.

My feminism didn’t have a great catalyst. No missed employment opportunity, no catcall in the dead of night, no protest rally: just parents who thought men and women should be equal, and taught their daughters that this was what “the f word” meant.

Like Catholicism, feminism was presented as a truth. There were no tensions between the two. How could there have been? My grandmother was the first person in her family to attend university because she re-

ceived a Church-sponsored scholarship to a school that would get her there.**

Feminism, by name, not just implication, permeated my education at a Catholic girls’ high school. I was a Catholic feminist. I didn’t question it.

People learn lots of new things when they start university. Some learn that the North Shore Line goes past Central; others learn that contacting textbooks does nothing to ensure their longevity.

I – through a series of conversations, flyers on the Eastern Avenue noticeboards and jokes made by particularly tactless sociology lecturers – learnt that Catholic feminism is not as widely accepted as I originally thought.

This hostile vibe led me to two possible conclusions: either the Church hates feminism, or feminists hate the Church.

The latter reasoning is why Vice-Chancellor of the University of Notre Dame (and practising Catholic) Professor Celia Hammond does not identify as a feminist.

Addressing the Dawson Society in September 2013, Professor Hammond delivered a lecture titled “Catholic Feminism: an oxymoron?” in which she concluded that feminism has become too radical – and too heavily synonymous with pro-abortion discourse – to support a Catholic feminism.

Speaking nearly two years later, Professor Hammond tells me she cannot identify as a feminist because she feels the movement



has transitioned from its first-wave form (which she argues embraced all women) into something that attacks her beliefs.

“During the 1980s, my perception of the then-current feminist movement was that it was anti-man, anti-family, anti-tradition,” she says.

I ask how great a role her faith played in that assessment.

“My perception and my decision not to identify with [feminism] was undoubtedly due to a number of factors. My upbringing, my experiences, my education and my faith,” she says.

“I would emphasise that it was the ‘anti-everything’ perception of feminism that I did not want to associate with: I still strongly supported the pursuit of equality of opportunity for women.”

She has a point. The feminist conversation has shifted from equality to choice, yet, some of the Catholic women I spoke to for this piece felt it was only a certain type of choice that is affirmed.

“Working in the sex industry isn’t pleasing the patriarchy,” one said. “But going to mass led by a man is?”

Do feminists hate Catholic values? I (proved I have never taken a statistics subject when I) asked a group of non-Catholic women whether they thought Catholics could be feminists. The answer was a resounding: “Yes, but...”

“Yes, but it depends how Catholic you are.” “Yes if you’re just involved in your local parish. But not if you’re really into the in-

stitution of the thing.”

“Yes, but not if you’re pro-life.”

If you guessed that last answer, you should consider a stint on Family Feud; it was easily the most common response.

Professor Hammond says the degree to which feminism has become preoccupied with access to abortion restricts the involvement of conservative and religious women.

“To the extent that the feminist movement precludes or attacks alternative voices on certain issues, or attempts to shut down pro-family, pro-life voices, it is not pro-woman; it is another form of confinement.”

I said before that the tension between Catholicism and feminism could be attributed to Catholics hating feminism, or feminists hating Catholicism, and – of course – I am giving Catholicism too much credit. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that the Church is more than a bit uneasy with this whole women’s lib business.

While the Second Vatican Council (held from 1962 to 1965) significantly expanded the roles women can play in a parish’s daily functions, this is the religion that time and time again refuses to call men and women equal.

It has been happy to describe them as “equal in dignity” (as done so by Pope Benedict XIV in a 2008 address to the Papal Laity Council) and even as equal in citizenry (as Pope John Paul II put forward in his 1995 Letter to Women, which advocated equal pay and citizen’s rights





Art by Mary Ward

between the genders).

But, this equality is always anchored in difference, that men and women can perform equally important, but ultimately different, roles.

Jesus, by most accepted accounts, was a dude. From this logic, we receive the conclusion that you need to be a man to become a priest (and need to become a priest to become a bishop, need to become a bishop to become a cardinal, and don't have much hope of becoming Pope without following that trajectory).

The stained glass ceiling is double-glazed. It also has bars over it. Oh, and the bars are alarmed.

In an article I wrote for *BULL* magazine earlier this year, I interviewed several women who had decided to join the convent before their 30th birthday.

When I asked them if they felt they were missing out on not being able to become

priests, they each gave the same – theologically correct – response: men and women are different, therefore, they have different roles in the Church.

This is the argument taken by New Feminism, a school of thought originally created in opposition to the Suffragette movement, which has been revived by certain female Catholic theologians following the Second Vatican Council.

Under New Feminism, men and women are integrally complementary; neither gender is superior to the other. While this sounds a lot like equality-based feminism, the ideology is often used to create distinctions between women's work (childrearing) and men's work (work for actual cash dollars).

Writing for the *Guardian* in February, former NSW premier Kristina Keneally (a Catholic, a feminist and a South Sydney supporter; truly a woman after my own heart) argued the Church needed Catholic feminism – as in, a Catholic version

of mainstream feminism, not necessarily New Feminism – more than ever before.

Prompted by comments made by Pope Francis that Catholic families should not “breed like rabbits”, even though he believed the Church's ban on artificial methods of contraception was legitimate, Keneally said the Church needed to change its ways in order to maintain some sort of relevance to the lives of modern women, and that modern women should not be afraid to openly criticise the Church.

“A Catholic has an obligation to follow her fully-formed conscience, even if it brings her into conflict with church teaching,” she wrote.

“A fully-formed conscience consults not only scripture and church teaching but also the sciences and human experience.”

Am I a bad Catholic because I am a feminist who believes men and women are actually equal? Probably. Am I going to leave the Church? Unlikely.

Am I a bad feminist because I am a Catholic who kind of hates the way in which my religion is presented as inherently “anti-woman”? Probably.

Am I going to quit my job and leave my degree? Unlikely.

Am I a bad Australian because I think the offshore processing of asylum seekers is messed up? Probably. Am I going to move to Norway? Look, I would if it wasn't so cold.

Ultimately, people pick and choose the parts of an identity they agree with.

After I finished writing this article, I asked my mother – the woman who birthed me into this identity crisis – for her opinion.

Did she think there was a tension between Catholicism and feminism?

She shrugged.

“They're both broad churches.”

* To roll your eyes back to their natural placement: I've never been bothered by being signed up to a religious worldview so young. People are “born into” plenty of things: race, sexuality, the Freemasons, family businesses selling poorly constructed mobile phone cases, and Catholicism was my thing; as much a part of my family's culture as race or Masonry for someone else's.

** Also, she was/is very clever.



The Punitive Prison System, Violence and Women's Survival

Kitty-Jean Laginha analyses the illogical and detrimental character of criminal punishment.

From a criminological perspective, incarceration, as presently practised, is irrational. Imprisonment leads to increased recidivism as well as highly probable long-term psychological and emotional damage (coupled with isolation and severed connections to networks and family), resulting in those who have experienced it being unable to participate in the world upon release. Goals of rehabilitation and deterrence exist on paper but not in reality.

Criminologist David Garland tracks the decline of the rehabilitative ideal toward the end of the 20th century, arguing that it no longer expresses the overarching ideology of the system and is routinely subordinated to other penal goals, particularly retribution and incapacitation. This satisfies popular political demands for safety and vengeance, showing the tendency of the modern prison system toward penal populism and a 'new punitiveness'.

The declared goals of deterrence and rehabilitation are deeply questionable as the practice of imprisonment entrenches existing structures of oppression.

This can be explained with reference to the effects of imprisonment on women. Sociological studies and statistical data show that overwhelmingly, most female prisoners have experienced trauma in their lives, most frequently domestic or sexual violence, whether it be traumatic episodes or repeated long term assault.

Drug and alcohol related offences are ubiquitous as women use these substances as an escape from violence or their dealing as a source of revenue for survival. Many offences do not involve injury to others and many offences occur at a time of intense crisis in their lives.

Many of these women are in prison for

fighting to survive in a system that fails them, time after time. Prisons will fail these women just like police, family courts, and welfare systems. They are shoved into another institutional nightmare that will ultimately spit them out without support, welfare or communities to return to.

A 2011 study by Monash University's Dr Bree Carlton and Dr Marie Segrave on women's survival post-imprisonment attempts to account for women's disproportionately higher risk of post-release unnatural death compared to men by considering the relationship between institutional pain, traumatic life episodes and the multiple harms and disadvantages women experience inside and outside the system. They find that prison tended to magnify pre-existing traumas, placing women at risk upon release.

Other intersections of oppression affect women's experience in prison. According to the 2008 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Report, Indigenous women are currently the fastest-growing prison population.

In Carlton and Segrave's paper, an Indigenous woman Gwen explains that the Stolen Generation and the cycle of institutionalisation and resulting fragmentation of families and culture bred the current crisis of young people being incarcerated: "Aboriginal women in prison are all products in some way of the Stolen Generation."

The trauma of colonisation and the resultant degradation of Indigenous communities and identities manifests in unprecedented levels of Indigenous incarceration.

Interestingly, in Carlton and Segrave's study on women in prison, they interviewed many female prisoners and ex-prisoners and found a recurring theme of the potential of imprisonment to si-

multaneously magnify pre-existing traumas as well as offer a reprieve from external pressures and harms.

However, this potential is not a function of the inherent declared 'rehabilitative' qualities of prison, but as a result of physical separation from hardships often related to poverty, marginalisation, abusive relationships or drug use. This study seems to show that women are able to have some respite from literal and institutional violence when they are literally behind bars. It confirms that there is no safe place for women.

Why is our society unable to provide these women the basic right to safety? A case in point: women-only refuges, essential for women seeking safety from domestic and sexual violence, are so low a priority according to our state government that funding has been reduced and directed to Christian-based services.

A number of regional NSW refuges are facing closure, volunteer and staff shortages, pay reductions and lack of resources. These women will either become homeless or return to violence. The ignorance, short-sightedness and lack of compassion and understanding of the state and federal government on these issues is absolutely disgusting.

Many women are working to resist changes and call for an inquiry into the Going Home Staying Home reforms that recommended these detrimental funding changes.

If you are also passionate about this then please get involved, whether it be in a collective/organisation or as individuals, writing letters, volunteering, protesting and showing our anger over social media.

Look up 'No Shelter' and 'Students for Women Only Services'. Consider getting involved in the demand for a safe world for women. If you read this in time, attend the 'Stop Killing Women' vigil at 5:30 pm on May 26 at UTS.

STOP KILLING WOMEN:

Gendered Violence is Beyond a Crisis

Vigil Tuesday 26 May, UTS Tower Building, 5pm

Speakers include journalist Wendy Bacon, MLC Dr Mehreen Faruqi, Anjana Regmi and Bridget Cama





My Date Rape

Lucy Paxton bravely speaks out

TRIGGER WARNING: SEXUAL ASSAULT. SLUT SHAMING, RAPE CULTURE

I woke up with a headache and nausea. When I got up I saw that there was permanent marker all over my body. The person I woke up next to was my boyfriend.

In desperate need of some water, I dressed and walked to the kitchen where several of my friends were standing and making themselves breakfast.

They were all hungover from the night before too, but none of them were covered in marker.

They stopped talking when I entered the room and instead started laughing. Apparently I'd had sex the night before with my boyfriend, or rather, he had sex with me.

"When I was leaving to go home, my boyfriend wouldn't look at me, so I just left. I went home and cried. I felt more confused then I have ever been, and I felt alone."

I sat there in disbelief, while my friends laughingly yelled and slapped me on the back describing how they'd overheard my partner and his two friends having sex with me, while I sat there confused with absolutely no memory of what had happened.

While everyone ordered hangover pizza, and made coffee, I sat quietly on the floor watching everyone make jokes about the night before

and laugh at how I'd finally gotten laid.

At first I protested, and insisted that nothing had happened. I couldn't remember a thing from the night before, but I was adamant that they were wrong. But more and more people told me what they'd heard.

They told me they'd been outside the room the whole time, that someone had even walked in once by accident.

When I was leaving to go home, my boyfriend wouldn't look at me, so I just left. I went home and cried. I felt more confused then I have ever been, and I felt alone.

The next day I went to school, and somehow everyone in the grade knew. All of my friends laughed at me and made fun of me and I just felt sick. I wanted to throw up and scream and cry and leave all at once.

I tried begging my friends to stop telling people, and they laughed and told me I shouldn't have had so much to drink. Maybe then I wouldn't have anything to be embarrassed about.

By the end of the day, several people had approached me to tell me their feelings on the matter, not that I needed to hear it.

I had people congratulating me for finally becoming a woman, or telling me to go to the police.

The first time I ever heard the word consent was that very day at school when a friend approached me and told me that consent meant whether or not you agreed to something.

She explained that the law stated that if you were blackout drunk, you can't give consent, and that meant what had happened was rape.

Out of a friendship group of over 10 people, she and one other person thought what had happened was not consensual; everyone else thought I was just drunk and too embarrassed to admit that I wanted it.

"I have not attended many parties since then. I don't feel safe to do so, and if someone invites me to a house party, this is why I will never come."

That seemed to be what everyone in the grade thought and I felt like over 300 girls were judging me, even if that wasn't necessarily the case.

My boyfriend dumped me a week later. I guess he felt as ashamed as me.

When this happened, I was almost 17 and every single relationship I have had (romantic or otherwise) has been affected by that one night.

I could not get close to a partner without completely panicking. I had no idea what to do, and was terrified something similar would happen again.

I have not attended many parties

since then. I don't feel safe to do so, and if someone invites me to a house party, this is why I will never come. I'm fucking terrified and I am still so ashamed.

My school friends remained close with him, and as a result I don't go out with them all that often, but I don't feel like I am missing out on anything.

I know that what happened was rape. Admitting that is the hardest thing, but anyone who would make fun of me for being raped is a shit human and I don't need them in my life.

Even if they were 17 and didn't understand consent, how did they not feel like something wasn't quite right about the whole situation? I don't think I can forgive that.

So, here's the only thing to take from this, if you take anything at all: if someone is really drunk at a party, don't have sex with them. It's a really fucking awful thing to do. It's rape.

If your friend tells you this happened to them, don't laugh or tell them it was their fault. That is also a really hurtful thing to do to someone that was raped.

If you are unsure about a sexual encounter and/or would like more information on consent, avenues for legal recourse or support services, please call the NSW Rape Crisis Centre on 1800 424 017 or head online to nswrapecrisiscentre.com.au



Purging to Obtain the Unattainable

Vanessa Song opens up about her personal experience with eating disorders.

TRIGGER WARNING: EATING DISORDERS, PURGING, DEPRESSION, ANXIETY

Purging is very literally a prison; the bars are self-doubt and a nagging anxiety that grows stronger by the second, fed by indecision and a gnawing unhappiness that happily eats away at your mind. When I purge, I see stars. My whole body is on fire and I feel worse than I did before I purged.

This particular purge was spurred onward by a lacerating comment made on the topic of my body, circa 11am. My heart jolted at the comment and I felt my palms sweat. I tugged on my shirt and pulled on my skirt to cover my larger-than-life legs, life giving legs. My throat constricted and my eyes watered. Why did I care so much? I felt my breakfast turn in my stomach as I made my way to the quietest bathroom on campus.

In primary school, before I understood what it meant not to love your body, I remember going to the swimming carnival. I remember taking off my towel to the attention and whispers of my peers who in turn proceeded to make jokes and snarky comments. I remember feeling stricken as an undying shame took root in my very bones.

I spent the rest of the carnival locked in one of the bathroom stalls refusing to come out, the school administration had to phone my mum to coax me out. My mother has always been supportive of me, and she let me cry my eyes out, soaking the fabric of her shirt. I've never felt as safe.

After I had calmed down however, my mum sat me down and tried to explain to me how I was feeling and why I was feeling the way I did, and why the other kids reacted the way in which they did.

"You've got a little bit of extra weight on you, and that's not what other girls look like. That's why they were

being mean. If you just lost a bit of weight then this wouldn't happen."

I know she had the best of intentions, but as a naive and impressionable nine-year-old, I took her word for gospel. I began to obsess and feel self-conscious. Wherever I went I felt huge and every time I forgot my anxiety and enjoy my food a bit too much, my family and peers would look on with distaste and judgement, especially because I wasn't losing any weight.

According to the Australian Parenting website, "Children as young as five or six are likely to have concerns about their body shape if they watch music videos or look at magazines targeting an older audience."

This is exacerbated if these same notions and ideas surrounding beauty and body image are reproduced through their experiences with family and their peers.

At age 16 I was diagnosed with Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome, a common illness in women that causes late or non-existent menstruation and can often inhibit weight loss.

According to my GP, I had to either have the cysts removed or try to treat it with copious amounts of medication. I fell into the habit of doing all in my power to change my situation; everything from diet pills to the 'pill' and herbal medicine. I could not for the life of me, reconcile how I felt with how I looked. This inconsistency haunted me and I spiralled.

Body image issues are often written off as self-esteem issues, despite their link to anxiety and depression. According to social worker Gina Dimitropoulos, stigmas surrounding eating disorders and mental illnesses often pivot around the central notion of self-infliction, that sufferers

are responsible for their problems as they have a choice in engaging with harmful behaviours.

Stigma itself affects every aspect of an individual's life. According to Dimitropoulos, stigma "robs people of their dignity, increases isolation,

afraid that I might explode and undermine all my progress.

Eating disorders are serious and can take away your voice and the voice of those around you. What I said and how I presented myself often did not resonate with how I felt. It was this



Art by Fatima Rauf

reduces self-esteem and contributes to a decline in one's quality of life". Often this very same stigma traps victims in a fearful silence of being shamed and rejected by their families or peers because of their disorder.

It was this consistent and vindictive cycle that led me down a figurative black hole, diagnosed with depression, anxiety and an eating disorder, all before the age of 21. The psychologist tried his hardest to explain what was happening to me and how I could try and pull myself out of the hole I had fallen into, but for the first couple of years I was pretty content with just dosing up on meds and drugs to keep me happy.

Those around me lacked enough knowledge on eating disorders to help me and often felt like they had to tread on eggshells around me,

numbing silence that allowed me to deteriorate.

If I could give advice to anyone suffering from an eating disorder, or even just disparaging sadness, I would tell them to try to understand what they're feeling and accept that it is a part of them. Denying it doesn't make it go away and staying silent doesn't make it hurt any less.

Sometimes I have really good days when I look in the mirror and think 'look at you, you sexy beast' but getting to that place is an uphill dredge through every image I see that does not reflect my kind of beauty.

A beauty that hides and peers up and around the folds and creases of the map that is my skin. A collected experience that houses a fragile, but absolutely exquisite mind like mine.



Death to Period Shame

Julia Starke on abandoning the stigma around periods.

Five days before my 21st birthday I woke up to the familiar sight of bloodied underwear.

I got my period at 16. I wasn't excited, shocked or proud. It was a nuisance then and has been ever since. Periods for me are pain, mess, discomfort, fatigue, bloating and mood swings.

Realising I was non-binary a year ago has added dysphoria into the mix. Swollen breasts are good on femme days, not so much when I feel like a boy.

Finding myself on my first day of a new month's period has never been a cause for joy. Not until five days before my 21st birthday, because this time I had a menstrual cup.

My Divacup™ came in complimentary pink Divapouch™ with a set of light pink instructions. They gallantly assumed I was a woman – fuck off – but made sense enough.

Eleven hours later I stared at a silicone cup half full of blood and smeared all down the sides. Bright red watery period mixed with gelatinous black sludge.

I was, unexpectedly, delighted. I held

the cup up to the light and examined its contents from every angle.

Ashamedly curious, I dipped my finger in it. It was surprisingly warm. How did I bleed for five years and not know my blood is warm?

Some vaguely radical thoughts rushed into my head. Here my blood wasn't a stain on a sheet, a skirt or my underwear. It wasn't soaked through a pad or a grotesquely bloated tampon. It hadn't sullied the bathroom tiles. This was the first thing my blood had touched beyond me without ruining anything.

I realised I'd stared at my blood for a good 15 minutes and went to wash it out, but stopped short. I didn't really want to empty a part of my uterus down a bathroom sink. I wasn't ready to throw it away – it was interesting! Intriguing, kind of weird, but utterly natural.

I found a small vase on the vanity, cleaned it out and poured in about a centimetre of blood. Twice a day every day for the rest of my period I added to that little vase. Short period – finished by my birthday. The vase was three quarters full. The blood was a deep red and the lip of the vase was

smeared with period jelly.

A now reddened ribbon tied around the vase's neck made it feel like a present. Some might say, a slightly fucked up present.

I was struck by how weird collecting period blood is, how my friends would react. At the same time though, I felt inexplicably proud of myself. All I'd done was bleed, capture the blood and keep it – but somehow I'd achieved something.

I'd done a small thing to overcome decades of menstrual shame and a year of dysphoria.

Of bleeding onto bleached pieces of cotton, wasting them, hiding them under other rubbish in my garbage bin so my male relatives wouldn't have to be confronted with my puberty.

Of asking Mum to please come help me with the washing now so no one would see my bloodied underwear on the laundry floor.

Of keeping my willingness to get 'red wings' – go down on someone on their period – to myself while listening to others describe periods as

unquestionable sex-impediments.

Of hearing over and over again that periods are gross, disgusting, unhygienic and best kept unknown and unseen, often by menstruators themselves.

Now, somehow, I had figured out that periods could and should be celebrated.

On my birthday, I took a bath. When the door was locked I took the vase and poured the blood all over me. It trickled down me and spread when it met the water, tinging it orange.

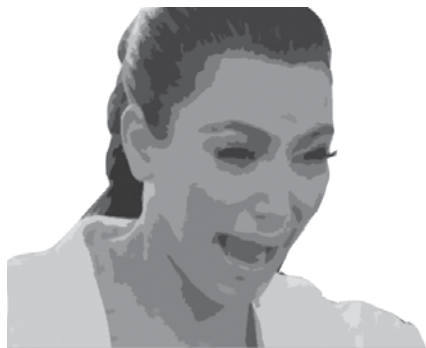
I can't fully explain how joyful an experience this was. I didn't feel like a woman, because I'm not a woman.

I felt feminist. Radical, thrilled by the transgression of it and lulled by the naturalness of my period. I felt warm. I got to be covered in real blood without causing hurt to anything. Isn't that awesome?

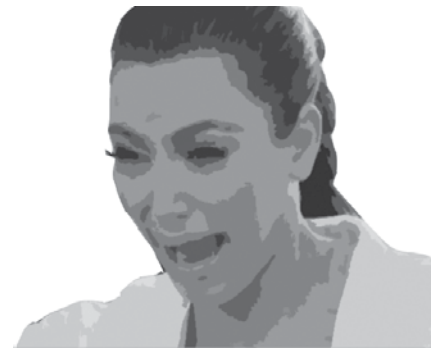
It was self-indulgent, but it was my birthday. A celebration by me for me felt right. Shoutout to the eco wonder Divacup™ for helping me to bathe in my own menstrual blood. No shame.



Art by Johanna Roberts



In Defence of Kim Kardashian



Anoushka Williams calls out sexist criticism of Kimmy K.

When the definition of a smart, powerful businesswoman comes to mind one does not immediately think of Kim Kardashian. Instead, some “hilarious” comment is made like, “Yeah, in the business of selling her body, wink, wink”.

However, it is undeniable that Kim Kardashian has emerged as one of the world’s most powerful celebrities. Having created a fashion empire worth over \$600 million at retail, dominated the tech world with her incredibly popular Hollywood game app and recently been billed as a ‘Titan’ celebrity by *TIME* and the 80th most powerful celebrity in the world by *Forbes*, her influence is irrefutable. The fact that in 2013-2014 Kim made more money from public appearances than she did from her own reality TV show, *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*, is testament to her popularity.

Yet in the face of this success, her name is still marred by a sex scandal nearly a decade old. Comments debasing her success as entirely reliant on a sex tape released nine years ago without her consent litter most of her social media platforms. It’s fairly popular to mock her intelligence, her accent and her physique. It seems that no matter how many accomplishments she has in the entertainment and tech industries, Kim Kardashian will always be defined and chastised for her sexuality — a problem that women face much more than men.

For comparison, both Usher and Colin Farrell have sex tapes that have been widely distributed, but an “amoral” reputation doesn’t linger over their heads. In fact, the number of Google hits that searching their tapes brings up is less than a fifth of what searching for Kim’s does. Even taking into account the much larger audience for Kim’s tape and her comparatively greater fame, it could still be approximated that at least two million of those seven million hits are articles that persistently link Kim’s celebrity to her sexual past.

This is not to say that she does not have flaws. There is a lot of justified criticism surrounding Kim’s 2014 *PAPER* photo-shoot which sought to “break the internet”. The cover photo of Kim balancing a champagne glass on her derriere is a whitewashed recreation of a 1976 photo famed for its fetishisation of African women and the portrayal of their bodies as servile and animalistic. The original photograph, taken by Jean-Paul Goude, was part of a pictorial autobiography literally titled *Jungle Fever*, showcasing the

French photographer’s fixation on the bodies of black women, and at times easily manifested itself as pure objectification.

Her imitation of a photograph fraught with racial tension is deeply problematic, and probably indicative of unwillingness on her part to learn about and engage in political issues that don’t personally affect her. Kim herself has admitted to never giving much thought to issues of race and discrimination until she personally experienced racism upon the birth of her daughter North West.

Similarly, having watched her reality show consistently from age 12, I can say with some confidence that she is exceptionally self-absorbed, has a tendency to put her work before her family and is very materialistic. However, these traits are no different to those embodied by Jordan Belfort for example, and despite all the sex, drugs and lascivious excess depicted in his biopic *The Wolf of Wall Street*, people would find it ludicrous to fling gendered insults in his direction.

It is equally hypocritical to fault people like Kim for their vanity when it has never been more obvious that our society not only celebrates selfishness and narcissism, but rewards it liberally as well. The proliferation of reality TV shows, the abundance of megalomaniacal businesspeople and the popularity of the selfie-stick for crying out loud, indicate that the success of celebrities like Kim is symptomatic of a broader culture that encourages the traits we are supposedly meant to abhor.

In any case, anyone with a passing knowledge of Kim’s personality from her show and interviews probably realises that unlike Belfort and many other reality TV stars, Kim’s narcissism doesn’t manifest itself as the vindictive, cruel behaviour that people tend to project onto her; most of the time she comes across as genuinely sweet-natured.

And yes, Kim is famous for her appearance and essentially being “famous for being famous”. However, to say that celebrities should only be worthy of fame and adoration because of their talent is ludicrous.

Our love of celebrities is centred on their appearances, their relationships with other celebrities and often, their ability to relate to the public. It’s the real reason why we obsess over Angelina Jolie and pay attention to Emma Watson, despite all the amazing things both women have accomplished in their respective fields. Women in the

celebrity world are especially regarded for their beauty, so to fault Kim for capitalising on her looks is to grossly misunderstand how the celebrity machine works. It also overlooks Kim’s tireless hard work; she is relevant because of her extraordinary business savviness, her unmatched ability to realise social media trends, and her indefatigable but intelligent self-promotion.

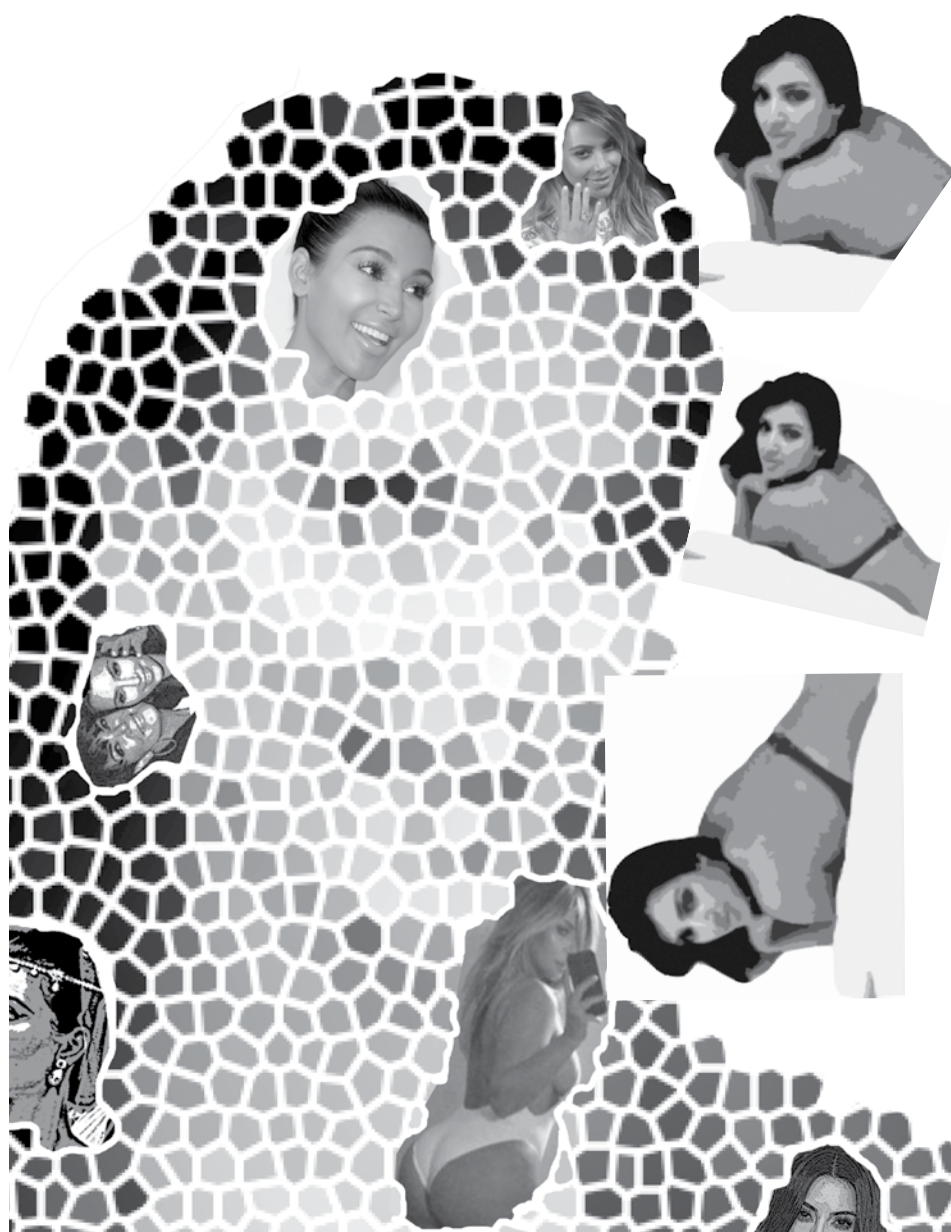
To undermine Kim’s accomplishments because she’s a woman who has done sexual things or to mock her for speaking slowly with a heavy Calabasas accent, is to seriously underestimate her. Kim was able to take the little notoriety that came with a sex tape distributed without her permission, and build a fashion and social media empire that continues to grow nearly a decade later.

Whilst Kim’s focus has not been humanitarian, her family has nevertheless shed light on important international and social issues, speaking out consistently against the Armenian genocide

over the years and more recently, igniting a positive conversation around Bruce Jenner coming out as a trans woman.

I’m not saying Kim should be revered as a feminist icon; she has not identified as one. But in the face of so much achievement and her clear business acumen, it’s disconcerting that so many people still perceive her as little more than an insipid “attention whore”.

As women we have to be extraordinary to validate the attention and praise we receive. As such, I feel it is natural to want widespread feminist support for women that achieve so much in fields we still struggle to break into. I may not want my potential offspring to create sex tapes or to live the highly narcissistic lifestyle Kim does, but other than that, I’d struggle to take issue with them pointing to Kim Kardashian’s face on the cover of *Adweek*, declaring, “I want to be like her when I grow up”.





The Unbearable Lightness of Being



Summer Lea on realising that life is many different shades of grey.

TRIGGER WARNING: DEPRESSION, SUICIDE

I remember a time in my life when I perceived the world in black and white, with occasional, powerful flecks of red appearing, like I was watching *Sin City* day in, day out. The colour red – that of passion, anger, death and love. But there were no shades of grey.

The world seemed to be a simple place, there was right and wrong, love and hate. The emotions of my teenage temperament would flare at times with a brilliance that seemed to redefine the nature of the world in which I lived. I see the world now in a wide spectrum of complexity and I want to reflect on some of the stories and memories that have changed my perception.

Ali is a young Jordanian living in Australia. He is an intellectual who is always inquisitive about the science behind objects and the way things work around him. His parents are refugees from the Gulf War and ran away from one another across Arabia, then to New Zealand and Australia, dragging and separating their children with them.

He considered love to be non-existent in his life until he met a young girl who moved into the same youth refuge. He loved her like a sister. Their friendship blossomed instantly. He is not someone who is easily attached to people. He despised men; particularly dominant types who made him feel inferior and weak. But deep down inside, he just wanted a parent who genuinely loved him.

The change in over 20 foster families was

agonising. The social pressures had led him to explore his homosexuality in secret, through sneaking out at night to see strange men. He enjoyed this, as way to explore the idiosyncrasies and vulnerabilities of other men through sex.

He plans to be a young girl's date to a year 12 formal. Out of desperation to escape the feelings of despair and disconnect from the world, he calls her. She is undertaking her HSC. She rejects many of the calls, as she was busy studying and barely tolerating her own circumstances.

The day before the formal, she receives some letters. He leaves her a poem expressing his sadness and loneliness and how the lack of love led to his lack of will to live. It is a goodbye letter. The poem was about the heartbreak he felt when his love was not reciprocated and how he could not stand to live in this world anymore. During her formal she could not think about anything but him. She realises her sense of empathy and uncontrollable willingness to nurture.

Joanna is the kind of girl everyone speculated about. How could she afford to go on extravagant holidays all over the world? How did she finance her expensive designer clothes? Her parents were not rich, but she was a sex worker. She is exuberant, flamboyant, impulsive and hypersexual. She has a tendency to quit many commitments and a pattern of unstable relationships. She can never stay in one place. At the age of 15, she finds solace in having relationships with older men in order to

rectify the void in herself and the imperfect relationship she has with her parents.

As she is older, she attempts to commit suicide and gets admitted into a psychiatric ward. She then escapes and calls her friends to reach out for help. The young girl picks up her call, but all the girl can do is call Joanna's family.

The luxurious lifestyle had failed to provide the meaning in life that we all seek so desperately.

There is a funeral. A funeral for a much admired young woman. Lucy, to everyone, seems perfect. She has a loving family who devotes themselves to chaplaincy and community. She loves her family and her family absolutely love her.

She is a young aspiring actress. She is defined by her devotion to the Church but struggles with the conflict between her religious ethics and the demands of the theatre. She struggles as she repeatedly rejects roles that do not align with her values: explicit scenes that may contain nudity or even depict rape. She rejects many roles, but starts to lose herself she realises her dreams may not be within her reach.

Her suicide comes as a surprise to everyone. The bubbliest, happiest, kindest and most inspiring and selfless person kills herself. It is a mystery to all, but it is clear that Lucy had descended into a deep depression in the period before her death; a depression that she had successfully hidden from the world.

A young girl stands at her funeral, a year ago, looking around at the two thousand people in attendance. The world has become more black than white, in a sea of black suits and grief. Lucy used to make cupcakes for the young girl.

Love is the longing for that part of ourselves that we have lost as the naivety of youth is left behind. When the heart speaks, the mind finds it indecent to object. There was a string of many young men, but the young girl never fell in love with any of them and never expects to in the future. They were there to rectify the emptiness inside family.

The young girl now questions whether the love that she yearns from a family is not important for one's existence. She, Ali and Joanna had desperately wanted a relationship with their mother or father figure. However, Lucy was loved enormously by her family and ended up killing herself anyway. It is never as simple as it seems.

No one can truly understand this world, but what I do know is youthful idealisations and underage thinking can result in us getting lost in romantic perceptions that become a detriment to ourselves and are in no way aligned with life's bitter realities that lie within the stories told, above.

Life's not black and white; it is shades of grey and all the colours of the spectrum thrown in for added confusion. It is a multi-coloured outline that we cannot ever fill in, correct, complete or perfect. It is this uncertainty that scares us the most.

Beauty Isn't A Virtue

Joanita Olivia doesn't care if you don't think she's beautiful.

Is beauty¹ important for women? I'm not sure. I would be lying if I said no, but Dove campaigns have repeatedly made me uncomfortable with the idea of beauty. Without it, Dove argues, a woman cannot feel worthy or proud of herself.

While claiming to promote female empowerment, Dove subtly reinforces the principle that physical appearance should be a woman's main priority – not values, skills, or personality.

One probably shouldn't take lessons on body image from a beauty product company. But, are they completely wrong?

It is still less socially acceptable for women to be ugly than men; looks are considered integral to womanhood.

To attack women on the internet, trolls almost always resort to mocking their appearance – and somehow it's often effective.

“Why should beauty define a woman's self-worth or value?”

In movies, 'plain' girls have to undergo a makeover first before they can achieve their romantic or personal goals, while it's common for 'plain' guys to avoid any references to their looks altogether.

Once, a guy friend, then single and desperate, said, “Hey, do you have any female friends that you could introduce me to?”

Is she prettier than [redacted mutual friend]? Ah, never mind then.”

Appearance to a certain extent matters. I believe that people with better looks gain more approval from others.

To hold it against those who make an effort to improve their looks, be it by makeup, clothing, or plastic surgery, would be unfair; not only because that would be criticising the choices they make about their own body, but also because in a lot of cases, that is what is expected of them.

But the problem with Dove and all of this is, why should beauty define a woman's self-worth or value? I don't think every female pedestrian I pass on the street is beautiful – that would be dishonest.

But I also don't believe that they are worthless just because of the way they look. They may have qualities in themselves that are not visible to the eye, and this benefit of the doubt should not be exclusive to, you know, the men.

Every day, I still take time to pretty up by choosing clothes, shoes and jewellery to put on. But if you think I'm ugly, that's fine too.

¹Sometimes the word 'beauty' is used in advertisements to euphemistically suggest “great personality”, “self-confidence” or “kind heart” – the 'inner'. But 'beauty' or 'beautiful' connotes physical qualities and is often taken to mean 'prettiness' – the 'outer', and it's time to be honest about what we mean when we say it.



Race Activism At USYD

Bridget Harilaou reflects on her experiences of racism in student politics.

Racism at the University of Sydney (USYD) is one of the most neglected issues on campus and within the Student Representative Council. The Wom*n's Collective and Queer Collective have been funded by the SRC for years, but until 2013 there was no autonomous collective for those who experience racism. The Indigenous Collective has only been SRC-funded for three years, although it existed for many years before that. This is indicative of USYD's hostility toward thinking critically about race, see: St Paul's College British Raj party.

As a Group of Eight university with notoriously high entry marks, and a long history of elitist college culture, this isn't surprising. In September 2013, the Autonomous Collective Against Racism (ACAR) was formed, and since then, it has been patronised, pushed around and dictated to, by every political faction that has an interest in the SRC.

The Anti-Racism Collective at USYD (dominated by a Socialist political faction named 'Solidarity') has consistently maintained that ACAR as a collective is the "wrong strategy" to address racism. The Wom*n's Collective can exist as a wom*n only Collective (as it should), but ACAR? How "divisive" to exclude White people!

Additionally, ACAR has always had to fight to get the same respect in choosing our own office bearers. In fact, a coalition of Labor factions ('Labor Unity' and 'Sydney Labor Students') was responsible for denying ACAR the Ethnic Affairs Office in 2013. Every other collective on campus is allowed to choose its own leaders, but not ACAR.

Denying People of Colour autonomy and claiming we need a "united fight" is a fundamentally White supremacist model. It excludes those directly affected by racism from having a voice. It is patronising to be dictated to by White people about race, period.

Autonomy, and allowing oppressed people to lead their own liberation movements,

is not a complicated concept. However, many students at USYD seem to have immense difficulty comprehending this.

In 2014, ACAR was subject to an 'infiltration' by a group of Labor Party members (from 'Sydney Labor Students' and 'National Labor Students'). Jason Kwok, Arien Amarindra, Nina Mao and Sam Kwon all nominated to be office bearers, attempted to add numerous friends, and run for election without ever having participated as members of ACAR. Kwon never even joined the Facebook group before nominating himself to lead the collective. To all the activists who had helped build the group, this was an incredible betrayal.

These people should be ashamed for disrespecting ACAR with this kind of political careerism. Grassroots (a leftist student activist group) has also proved to be complicit in racism. Grassroots won the presidency at USYD in 2014 and as a member, I had never experienced issues of racism until the end of 2014.

A group of people within Grassroots organised for a Solidarity member named Caitlin Doyle to become the 2015 Education Officer. Solidarity are the faction who disagree with ACAR's existence and the fundamental ideology of People of Colour leading our own movement. To have these people be supported by Grassroots members, reveals the insidious disrespect of People of Colour rife within the activist community.

Arguing that education activism is 'separate' from racism ignores the fact that only White people can leave race at the door of these conversations, and referring to Grassroots' past deals with racist factions only shows a refusal to progress.

Quoting from a 'letter of dissent' published by this group of Grassroots members, "Discussing the issue in a hostile and name-calling way (e.g. branding people 'racists')... incites fear and intimidation... Shaming people as racists or the 'white bloc'... invisibilises people of colour who dissent or are unsure."

Of those who signed this letter, a definitive majority were White, but god forbid we point out racial power dynamics for fear of... actually I still don't quite understand. None of these factions or people have apologised, and the majority leave it to be forgotten. It's all just irrelevant 'student politics', right?

However in 2015, race activism is being restricted on a higher institutional level. Recently the University of Sydney issued an investigation into pro-Palestinian activists who peacefully protested a lecture being given by Richard Kemp. Kemp is a known genocide apologist, who sees the occupation of Palestine and second-class citizenship for Palestinians as the "Israeli Defence Force" safeguarding "the rights of civilians."

Despite photographic evidence and witnesses showing attendees of the lecture assaulting protesters by throwing objects at them, it was the protesters who were investigated for allegations of racism (anti-Semitism). Freedom of speech and racism are so often manipulated to defend those who have more power in any given context. Depending on whether it is Charlie Hebdo or pro-Palestine rhetoric being discussed, freedom of speech and racism swing one way or the other. It is particularly telling that there have been zero formal investigations into Islamophobia on campus despite clear reportings of harassment and abuse.

It is unquestionable that Richard Kemp, a retired British Colonel, and Israel, as a militarised state backed by US imperial interests, have more power to wield in a geopolitical sense. It is also clear that Muslim Palestinian refugees who are People of Colour, do not have the social and economic capital that middle class 1st/2nd/3rd/4th generation Jewish Australians have in modern race relations.

"The majority of its White, elitist student population are not interested in discussing race or the structural, institutional and cultural power dynamics of racism"

In this way, it's clear to see where USYD's priorities lie: defending the powerful.

As the president of the Student For Justice in Palestine Society, Fahad Ali, wrote, "This is not about a difference in opinion. This is about human rights. You wouldn't have a debate on whether or not apartheid South Africa was a great place ... What's the difference here?"

The difference is that the University of Sydney and the majority of its White, elitist student population are not interested in discussing race or the structural, institutional and cultural power dynamics of racism.

It is great to see that the 2015 USYD Union Board elections showed much more racial diversity — unlike last year where there was literally one Person of Colour ... and they were a joke campaign.

Accountability and transparency aren't just buzzwords, they require action. So here's to the hope that this year's Board candidates will give People of Colour the representation they need for race activism to flourish. Let's open up a dialogue about racism within activist groups and at universities, because in the last three years it honestly hasn't been good enough.





What I Learnt About Love

Astha Rajvanshi shares the wisdom of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

Someone once said to me that interracial relationships are like “the new Coca-Cola – the taste of a generation”. At the time, I was amused as I thought of a 1971 Coke advertisement in which a group of ethnically diverse people are standing on a hill, holding hands and singing, “*I’d like to buy the world a Coke/ And keep it company/ That’s the real thing*”.

Although he was joking, I felt he had actually summarised the intersection of race and love in our society and amongst my generation quite aptly. Within a heteronormative paradigm, interracial relationships have become more common and less stigmatised in white-centric societies, with love serving as a universal commonality between all people, a subtle way of keeping each other company.

When I read Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Americanah*, however, I was confronted with a new idea of interracial love. It was realised when the main protagonist in the novel, Ifemelu, unabashedly declares that the simplest (and possibly, only) solution to the problem of race in America was romantic love:

“Not the kind of safe, shallow love where the objective is that both people remain comfortable. But real deep romantic love, the kind that

twists you and wrings you out and makes you breathe through the nostrils of your beloved. And because that real deep romantic love is so rare, and because American society is set up to make it even rarer between American Black and American White, the problem of race in America will never be solved.”

It was this unapologetic, radical notion of love that I have been most compelled to think about – one that is not so easily packaged and sold as colourblind or free-spirited; one that doesn’t pretend that race does not exist; one that questions if such a love can even be sustained past a ‘this-will-do-for-now’ romance. It is the rarity of it that makes the notion so compelling.

For women of colour, being in an interracial relationship means that they must question if they exist, or are even really seen by their partners.

In *Americanah*, Ifemelu is an unusual species of being comfortable in one’s own skin. She knows she is attractive, she is outspoken about race, and when she is in a relationship with Curt – a White male with wealth and privilege – she does not feel insecure about their power dynamic. And yet, it is the banal, everyday interactions with people around and about her

relationship that slowly undermine her sense of worth.

Adichie (or rather, Ifemelu) writes that she doesn’t tell her partner the small things that piss her off and the things she wishes he understood better because “we’re worried they will say we’re overreacting, or we’re being too sensitive”. She doesn’t want him to say, “look how far we’ve come, just forty years ago it would have been illegal for us to even be a couple”, because she’s thinking “why the fuck should it ever have been illegal anyway?”

She observes the subtle looks of disapproval they get from other people, from Curt’s mother to other White women, who are confronted with “a great tribal loss”. She talks about the things that she has allowed to pile up inside her head in the pretence that race doesn’t matter, just to “keep [their] nice liberal friends comfortable”. And, if white people are ever broached with a discussion on racism, people of colour must “make sure [they] are not bitter. Don’t complain. Be forgiving. If possible, make it funny. Most of all, do not be angry.”

It is in these prickly, uncomfortable truths that the unresolved tensions and hypocrisies of interracial love are laid bare. And

so, women of colour are stripped of their power and simply left to question, ‘why would a White man date a woman like me in the first place?’

This question is not just about flagrant fetishes or the exoticisation of women of colour. It is not just about White men having a particular ‘preference’ or about them wanting to ‘experiment’. Those things have already been challenged, called-out, and exposed.

What it is about, rather, is that a woman of colour will never be able to just question if a White man desires her for her self-actualisation. Instead, she will question if he likes ‘any of them’ because race disciplines a White man’s desire in such a way that he will always only see few as desirable.

If we are to see interracial relationships through a radical lens – one that actively recognises constructions of colour, race and power – then Adichie’s notion of love can never be a happy, blissful one. It will make people angry and uncomfortable. It will make people question why they are even together. It will make them loathe themselves, and the people they love, simply for loving them. It will not be sweet like Coca-Cola, but at least it will be real.

Know Your Enemy

Kim Murphy exposes the evil behind Hillary Clinton.

If things are to improve for women, a key step would be to gain higher wages and more job security. There is still a large gap between the average wages of men and women, and this is more than just a relic from a ‘backwards past’. Due to a lack of social services and welfare support for women, especially in regards to maternity leave and parental pay, they are concentrated in the lowest paid and least stable industries in the workforce.

If Hillary Clinton became president, who’s to say she wouldn’t reform America’s tight-fisted welfare and scarce social services to give all women the equality they deserve? She’s proclaimed that she wants to be the champion of everyday Americans. We’ve already seen women’s rights groups announce their support for the Hillary 2016 campaign. But what has Hillary herself said throughout her political career?

It has recently come out that Hillary is in America’s top 0.1% of income earners. She earned over \$31 million just last year. And what kind of strenuous toil did she have to go through to earn these millions?

A majority of this money came from giving speeches at various events and institutions. None of these events were

the opening of a women’s refuge, or an abortion clinic, or a government-funded childcare centre. They were at well-established big businesses or institutions that want to keep propping them up.

Hillary Clinton’s support of big business can be traced to her position on the Walmart board of directors from 1986-1992. In 1995, Walmart was America’s fourth largest business with a revenue of over \$80 billion. Today Walmart is the world’s biggest business with a consolidated revenue of over \$480 billion.

In her 2003 book *Living History* Hillary states that she “learnt a great deal about corporate integrity and success” from the CEO of Walmart at the time, Sam Walton. Given that a Walmart employee’s yearly salary puts them below the poverty line, integrity obviously isn’t a concern. All through her time on the board Clinton sat with silent approval as Walmart smashed up unions and paid their workers next to nothing.

Business conglomerates, like the ones Clinton has so avidly supported, only reach the size they do through mass exploitation of labour. Backing wealthy corporations has no progressive benefits for your average citizen, particularly

the working class woman. The idea that business profits ‘trickle down’ to the masses is a farce. While the American GDP has quadrupled over the last 30 years, the average American household income, adjusted for inflation, is lower now than it was in 1985.

From 1993 to 2001 Hillary Clinton was America’s First Lady. This era of her life is also mentioned in her 2003 memoir. She writes “by the time Bill and I had left the White House, welfare rolls had dropped 60 percent.”

Did the Clintons really manage to increase living standards so that 60% of the people who had been on welfare no longer needed it by the end of Clinton’s presidency?

Her tenure as the US Secretary of State from 2009 to 2013 was spent vomiting out support for foreign military intervention. This isn’t surprising given that she was a resolute supporter of the Iraq War in 2003. As Obama’s Secretary of State she pushed for the expansion of both troops in Afghanistan and drone strikes in Yemen. These drone strikes have killed hundreds of civilians.



Exceptionally unsettling is her bolstering of Israel. She is a self-described “emphatic, unwavering supporter of Israel.” She supports Israeli settlement, the West Bank barrier, and the 2014 attacks on Gaza. Israel’s massive attacks on Gaza resulted in the death of 1,617 civilians. Hillary has been shown to be even more aggressive in her military support than certain Republicans.

Hillary has come out with the slogan ‘Everyday Americans need a champion. I want to be that champion’. Considering Hillary’s habits of welfare-slashing, big business support and military expansion, she’s not so much their champion as their enemy.



Masculin Féminin:

Four Perspectives on Androgyny

Sam Langford discovered that there's more to androgyny than skinny white people with flat chests and cheekbones.

When I started university, I tried really, really hard to be androgynous. At the time, my source for “androgyny” was Google Images, which told me that androgyny meant skinny, white people with flat chests, cheekbones and masculine attire.

I'm curvy, not at all flat-chested, and have no visible bone structure whatsoever. I overcompensated with a bad haircut and a lot of oversized flannel.

Since then, my understanding of androgyny has evolved. My brief stint as a linguistics major encouraged me to consider that the word androgyny is literally a fusion of masculine and feminine.

I started to have questions. Where is the feminine in androgyny? Why are “androgynous” people so often thin? What does it mean to be androgynous?

There's no straightforward answer to these questions – there's no central organising committee for androgyny. There are only androgynous people, and people to whom androgyny means something.

In this piece, I talk to a number of people who identify with androgyny in different ways. The sample is imperfect; despite my attempts to source diverse interviewees, those who agreed to talk to me were predominantly AFAB (assigned female at birth), and all of them were white.

The absence of other perspectives matters. There is so much more to be said. Still, the interviewees have something to say.

Androgyny is ultimately personal; it means something different for each person who experiences it. I'll let them speak for themselves.

ROBIN (THEY/THEM)

Being androgynous means different things for different people.

Our construction of gender is incredibly specific to culture and time. Indigenous cultures have totally different ways of framing and imagining gender. There were more than 20 recognised genders in India before English invasion.

I identify with the term androgyny, but I'm not sure I can define it. A lot of people think of it as a middle space between male and female, but I like to think it can occupy something in its own right.

I don't want to be seen as a woman, but I don't want to be seen as a man either. I'm endlessly frustrated by attempting to express my gender. There's no way to get people to consistently read me as non-binary – the most I can hope for is a moment of confusion, which is dangerous because it unsettles people.

I'm not particularly masculine, and I don't have the right body type to hide my curves successfully. Masculinity is uncomfortable – it's binders and layers and tight neckties.

I try to express androgyny by going for a deliberately kind of weird, hippie aesthetic, but people mostly just read me as a queer woman.

I get frustrated by androgyny tending to mean masculinity. It comes down to misogyny and transmisogyny, I think. It's fine for AFAB people to go masculine, because that's levelling up. Little girls can play with trucks, but little boys can't paint their nails. When cis women don't shave their legs it's an act of feminist rebellion. When trans women don't shave their leg it's “lazy”, and “proof that they're not real women”.

I try to mix codes sometimes. I'll have a bow tie and a skirt, or clompy boots with a lacy blouse, or angry spiky jewellery with sparkly eyeshadow.

At Fair Day this year there was a stall selling “androgynous clothing”. It was actually just masculine clothing for AFAB/curvy people. Nothing for the AMAB non-binary person, and nothing complicating the idea that androgyny is just expressing the opposite of someone's assigned gender.

I want androgyny to be something occupying its own space, not just negative space. But we gender everything. Shampoo for men and shampoo for women. No hair products for androgynous people.

I don't really have any role models when it comes to gender. I feel like I have to carve out my own space. And a lot of the time I have to throw things away. My dresses are non-binary dresses now because I, a non-binary person, am wearing them. My lipstick is non-binary lipstick. My armpit hair is non-binary armpit hair.

MAX (THEY/THEM)

I guess I'd define androgyny as a mix of masculine and feminine elements, usually in fashion, though a lot of people use it for a lot of different reasons. Personally, I identify with it as a means of self-expression, mostly in dressing because that's what people can see.

I guess the look I'm going for is like a really femme boy. I wear a lot of dresses and skirts, though, so I'm not sure if the way I see it translates to a lot of people.

Someone recently told me they thought I was androgynous, which surprised me. In queer spaces, though, I'd assume I'm being perceived as more androgynous than if I were just walking around.



Art by Jobanna Roberts



Before I started identifying as gender fluid, I would make an attempt to mix things up in my life, and dress really boyish one day and really girlish the next.

I feel like I should acknowledge the way that these tiny specific things are gendered is really weird and arbitrary. It's ingrained in your mind, like "this is for girls" and "that's for boys".

But it was dressing like that and combining those things that probably got me thinking about gender. It was an interesting way of experiencing myself.

I often consciously stop myself from dressing too masculine because I don't ever want to let myself fall into the trap of masculinity. It's gross, and sexist, and full of terrible things you don't want to be associated with.

I usually feel that I want to start at a masculine point, and then make the outfit more feminine from there. It's just personal preference and feelings.

I really want to grow out my hair, but I don't want it to look like girly long hair. I want to have boyish long hair, but it's difficult because no one would really perceive me that way.

I didn't really start feeling comfortable about the way I was dressing until I came out as queer. Before that, I'd feel like I couldn't wear a tie or something because people would think I was a lesbian. Since I started dressing more androgynously, I've felt way better about my body.

A lot of things I used to dislike about my appearance because they weren't "feminine" enough are actually some of my favourite parts of my body now.

SHEVVI (THEY/THEM)

I find performance a really safe space to be able to switch up clothes and gender. In the show I just had, I was a transit officer, which is very boring, bland – the worst kind of masculine there is. But I got to be a little girl as well.

People who wouldn't normally be comfortable around someone changing their clothes all the time and being in different gendered clothes are fine with it during a performance, which I think is cool. It gives you a context where you get to experiment.

I identify with androgyny sometimes, some days. Mostly I identify as more genderqueer. Androgyny in my head is more like masculine clothes. It's just the image of a person in black Doc Martens

and black clothes, who's white and cheek-bone-y. That's totally not what I'm going for.

I think androgyny is generally so masculine because there's such a stigma against men wearing dresses. Even for women there's femmephobia, and this idea that being masculine is better. I think that's why androgyny is more masculine; it's safe. It's safe now for a person who's read as a



woman to wear masculine clothes – you can still kind of pass, and no-one will hurt you. But it's still not safe for a person who is read as a man to wear a skirt.

I like the idea of pairing stuff that's opposite, like boots and a tutu. I prefer going hyperfeminine rather than normal feminine, because to me, normal feminine is normative and what's been pushed on me.

But if I wear a ridiculous tutu, or a really pink dress, then people can see that it's a choice and I'm doing it not because I've been told to do it, but because I'm like "yeah, I'm gonna take femininity and I'm gonna do it my way, fuck you."

Clothes can mean something different for anyone. A tutu can be hyperfeminine, or it can just be really fun, or bright and happy, or ironic. They could be going for childhood, not femininity. It generally depends on what their identity is.

I'm generally read as a cis woman. I would love to be read as genderqueer, but I think once people get to know me they see the way I dress not as expressing a gender, but just as Shevvi being weird. I attempt not to read other people's clothing as gendered, but that's not always going to work. There's a lot of unlearning involved.

I know clothes don't have inherent value, but sometimes I have to switch clothes during the day. I'll suddenly feel really uncomfortable. If I'm wearing pants and a shirt I bought from a men's store that I'm still kind of getting used to, I'll have a dress in my backpack if I have to change, and that's happened.

It's happened three times in a week, actually. It's not a major deal, I'm not crying

to draw from, a lot of notions of how it's meant to go together.

You don't necessarily have that with androgyny unless you're going with a very specific set of guidelines, and that set of guidelines usually are that you have to be really thin, you generally have to be white, and you have to have sort of '70s glam rock-ish stuff available to you.

"We gender everything.

Shampoo for men and

shampoo for women.

No hair products for

androgynous people."

It's weighted towards masculinity, too. One of the most frustrating things when I'm searching for androgynous clothing to wear is that it's almost exclusively "male" clothing for women. And people tend to consider Adam Lambert as androgynous, but all he does is have tight-fitting clothing and eyeshadow.

When you look at female cultural icons who are considered androgynous, the degree to which they adopt "male" characteristics is more excessive than the degree to which someone like Adam Lambert adopts feminine characteristics.

The environments in which I've chosen to dress androgynously have been ones where I can assume people will be quite positive about it: at university, within the debating community, both of which are generally quite left-wing but especially so on social issues, which is what's important.

I come from an Afrikaans background, which is a very socially conservative background. I'd never let my parents see me dress that way.

Androgyny for me is linked with issues of gender dysphoria — basically, feeling really shitty in your own body. Being able to dress androgynously offsets that to a degree. To be able to appear the way you want to appear and have that recognised by other people is really positive.

It just makes you feel totally different from the kid who in Year 9 sat in the back row of Christian Studies and thought "fuck, I think I want to be a girl, that's really weird and I can't tell anyone." It takes you away from that self-loathing and that capsule of who you were at that time, into a much more positive way of being.

or anything. I'm just like "oh, I feel really uncomfortable right now, can't move the way I want to," and then I go change and I feel better.

TILDA (THEY/THEM)

I think androgyny as a concept is quite appearance-based. People like David Bowie and Michael Jackson took it into the mainstream without making it a comment about their gender so much as a statement about how they liked to dress and appear.

So I think that for a lot of people, androgyny is thought of as a fashion style rather than a really intrinsic identity. I feel I sort of dabble in both. I'm personally unsure of my gender identity, and I've been exploring/struggling with that for a while now.

When I choose to dress androgynously, I do so because I personally desire it, but my desire to express myself in that way is interlinked with the notion of people seeing me in that way.

It's harder to put together an androgynous wardrobe than it is to put together a binary wardrobe. It's very easy for me to put together an outfit that looks good as a man, because I've got a lot of places



An Unfair Advantage

*Extra-curricular tutoring is criticised for giving some students an unfair upper hand. **Arabella Close** looks at the role of race in the debate on tutoring and advantage.*

I had to visit a podiatrist the other week and while he was rubbing a plaster cast onto my feet he asked me what I was doing on the weekend. When I told him I worked at a tutoring college and was going to spend 8 hours on a Sunday teaching writing to children, I felt the whole tone of the conversation change. He became wary of what he was saying. To him, I clearly represented a cog in a problem, yet he felt uncomfortable in explicitly labelling what that problem was.

This has happened to me many, many times before. While this man with my feet in his hands was one of the more delicate examples, what all these conversations boil down to is race and the perception that extra-curricular tutoring is giving ‘Asian’ (a blanket term that seems to be applied to all non-white children in tutoring) students an unfair advantage over their ‘Anglo’ peers.

These views have been pulled apart by people of colour many times before. As a white Australian, my criticism of racism should be secondary to the culturally and linguistically diverse families whose voices

these views seek to discount. I do work in one of these tutoring colleges, however, where the white Australian population would be under 15%, and perhaps can add something to the tail end of these existing arguments.

The kind of race-based discriminations made about adults seem especially confounding at a tutoring school. The children that I teach, whether they are students of colour or white, are all *kids*. They all delight, charm, impress, exhaust and undermine me. They all can be erudite, stropky, insightful and inattentive. I am struck so often at work by how children have this strange rubberiness to them and no matter what mould you might try to push them into they keep bursting back into a general, uniform kid-shape.

Sometimes these children don’t want to be there, but for many of them it is a social activity – their friends are there too and they get to be mucky kids together. Sometimes the work they do involves rote learning. However, the majority of the time it does not. The work is creative, analytical and tangential. Sometimes the

work these children do at tutoring colleges will help them get into selective high schools and gain scholarships to private schools. However, more often than not the work they do will simply help lessen, by some very small amount, the vast gap in privilege many of these children experience as non-white people in Australia.

The criticism levelled on tutoring stems in part from its ostensibly quantifiable benefit. It can be measured in hours and marks and dollars. However, if you are the child of parents who are white, whose first language is English and who have studied a Western syllabus you enjoy a privilege that being unquantifiable does little to diminish.

You will always have the upper hand in a school syllabus built around Western texts and events that your parents or other family members have probably studied and can be an invaluable resource on. If you speak English at home you will be at an advantage in scholarship interviews. Later down the track your skin colour, your name, your accent will never hinder your job prospects.

To refer to tutoring as “unfair” is to completely ignore the “unfairness” of systemic racism and classism that no amount of extra homework is going to dismantle. Regardless of whether these students have families who have been in Australia longer than their white classmates, the processes of othering and racialisation will ensure that whatever advantage extra-curricular tutoring provides, will do little to stem the racial inequality of modern Australia.

I do not mean to suggest that there should not be a serious review of the focus in NSW schools on testing and ranking students. There is a very valuable discussion to be had about the state of public education. There is a discussion to be had about the increased focus on testable intelligence, the ethics of selective education and the consequences of pulling the academically gifted out of mainstream schools.

And while a lot of these discussions are nominally gestured at by people like my podiatrist they continue to completely miss the point and to propagate a demonisation of non-white Australians by making the discussion about race.

Parent Traps

***Anonymous** looks at “bad” parenting.*

In the state of NSW you must practise for 120 hours before getting your driver licence. Every turn is indicated, every park meticulously critiqued and every stop sign given a full ‘three Mississippis’ before the consideration of continuing. Yet when you have a baby the state appears to give no fucks about your qualifications. There are no tests, no 120 hours of practice, no requirements for having to be responsible for the upbringing of another living human being.

With TV shows and our own (often incompetent) parents as our only examples, it’s little wonder why most people struggle. Whilst the state’s approach to driving ensures adequate support for safety on the roads, when it comes to parenting they seem more concerned with punishing ‘bad’ parents rather than helping them.

With such limited support, do we judge our parents too harshly for their fuck ups?

It’s pretty easy to be tricked by the apparently conclusive evidence. Poorer families are statistically more likely to have their kids end up in foster care or juvenile detention centres; statistically more likely to abuse drugs and statistically more likely to end up in abusive relationships.

We tend to blame this on a pattern of bad parenting in poorer communities. But are these statistics truly accurate? And is the blame we place on these parents unfair? It seems fairly clear that poverty and domestic violence are intergenerationally cyclical, so why does the state continue to focus on punishing those apparently ‘responsible’ rather than giving support?

Let’s assess the flipside. Parenting records in wealthy communities appears to be quite irreprehensible, or so may it seem. I would argue that sucking at parenting is something that doesn’t discriminate based on income. Growing up on the North

Shore, it’s safe to say that behind every mansion door every family has their problems but they seem to manifest in different ways when you’re rich.

“There are no tests, no 120 hours of practice ... to be responsible for the upbringing of another human being.”

Drug abuse problems tend to be hushed up; abusive relationships slowly and strategically break off with the father moving to China for ‘business reasons’ and products of bad parenting end up looking like sociopathic CEOs rather than criminals. As a society we are quick to judge the failures of the disadvantaged but slow to realise that this failure is collective.

It’s probably true that some people are born with a natural parenting ‘instinct’. Perhaps it’s a gene that makes you more caring, patient and selfless. Regardless of what it is I know I most definitely don’t have it.

Just like no individual really has a clue on how best to reverse park on King St with a line of cars waiting behind you, in the same way that no parent really knows the best way to discipline a belligerent teenager. At least in one scenario we get to practise.

Parenting is a thankless and tiring task, but that is made worse by one’s financial situation. The state needs to provide support, not judgment. To enable that, we as a society need to change attitudes about who is and isn’t a “bad” parent.

It doesn’t just run on class lines and perpetuating that myth undermines many wonderful parents and invisibilises the struggles of many other children.

*Sometimes my friends interrupt me as though I've said nothing at all, broaching a new subject, a new train of thought. To be quiet is too often thought to be weak, and in the social climbing world of Sydney University if your voice isn't loud enough nobody will listen, writes **Natalie Buckett**.*

Once sensing weakness, you are identified as prey for the predators looking to assert themselves as dominant, important and superior. You are sourced as the rare Beta to Sydney University's plethora of Alphas, and become the object others can dominate to validate their own importance.

A week later, a friend in the same group was enraged when I, who was supposed to be their friend, didn't answer their question straight away because I was responding to another in conversation.

Capitalising on the timidity and self-doubt of others has always been the easiest route to assert your position of superiority,

And that's why the disadvantages of being quiet and passive aren't just trivial. The first impacts I notice may just be that I get paid back a little less for Uber rides, and I am interrupted a little more in dinner conversations. And suffer the occasional blow to the head.

Yet as long as their voices don't resonate with the same volume as everyone else's, they will forever struggle to be heard.





Coming Out Bald

Tina Huang on hair loss and the power of Gillette Venus razors

*"You get to decide what to worship."
- David Foster Wallace*

My girlfriend was a born again believer in the power of Gillette Venus razors, eager to forget that year where she took gender studies and became a contentious objector to my wax strips.

Every Sunday night Laretta sat in our bathtub, shaving her legs and covering cuts with pieces of toilet paper. She sacrificed body and blood. The Gillette commercials promised that shavers would ultimately be rewarded with heavenly ogling and cat calls. The act of shaving itself however made her irritable.

Still, even on the cold Sunday night last July, when I told Laretta that I was going bald, she could be found shaving her legs. I sat on our bathroom floor staring at my socks, whilst she swore at the razor. I hadn't really planned to tell her that night, especially not whilst she wielded a sharp, blunt object, but there was something very intimate about watching her shave.

It felt wrong to keep things from someone who had let you see them in a bathtub, splattered in goops of Sorbolene, squinting at their knees. In the end it wasn't a very big deal.

Laretta gave me a hug and then went back to shaving. I stayed on the bathroom floor for the rest of the night, just sitting there, watching as her leg hairs circled down the drain.

It has been about a year since my hair started thinning out, first in wisps and then thick, healthy clumps. Nobody was quite sure why this was happening. My doctor put it down to stress, a diagnosis which in itself was so stressful it acted like a self fulfilling prophecy. He told me to come back if the hair loss got worse and sent me on my way with a pamphlet featuring bald, middle aged men on the cover.

Inside someone had copy pasted proud, bald figures like the Dalai Lama and the Rock. The pixelated heads espoused terribly peppy platitudes about confidence and success. When the doctor first confirmed that I was losing my hair, the image which came to mind was surprisingly not of a religious leader or a sports star.

Sitting in the sterile office surgery I thought about Roald Dahl's *The Witches*. In the film's pivotal scene, Angelica Huston pulls off her wig and transforms into a bald she-devil. This film left me, as an eight-year-old, terrified of bald women. I sat in the

office wondering how soon it would be until I too started to terrify people.

A little while after Laretta found out, I decided to tell my family. My mum came over immediately. I found her on my doorstep, proselytising about some miracle infomercial ointment.

*"I sat in the office
wondering how soon it
would be until I too
started to terrify people."*

My mum didn't know about Laretta. She was determined that my hair loss not impede her banal plans to find me a good, Asian boyfriend. My mum put her faith in the Coles cosmetics and health aisle, buying vitamins and conditioners and creams.

I knew that unlike my mother or any prospective Asian boyfriends, Laretta didn't really care about my hair loss. None of the girls I dated would have. They were all uni students who flirted with pixie cuts and used phrases like "patriarchal standards of beauty." Yet, I used all the products my mum bought

me. First out of politeness, and then earnestly, as if I were some sinning Catholic, counting my vitamins like rosary beads, praying with each circular pill that my hair would grow back.

I used the products as if I actually believed in the power of Head and Shoulders. As if \$7.99 was a small price to pay for salvation. It turns out that Queer women, even ones going bald, worship at the altar of patriarchal beauty standards.

Recently, my hair started to grow back. The hair came through in patches, raw and messy, but at least in time for the new semester. I stopped letting my mother buy vitamins and shampoos.

I had converted too much, if not to her faith, than at least to her practices and I was not sure that they were really working for me.

Nowadays, the only time I walk into the Coles cosmetics and health aisle is to buy razors. On most Sunday nights, you can still find Laretta and I in the bathroom shaving our legs.

You can still find us worshipping Gillette Venus.

What Nietzsche Taught Me About Pap Smears

When it comes to Pap smears, Nietzsche was on to something, writes Victoria Zerbst

Whenever I get a pap smear I think of Nietzsche. Nietzsche never had a Pap smear (he was before their time) but it is almost like he understood the ideal psychological condition to get a pap smear.

As soon as my doctor slides that shiny speculum into my vagina, I recall a passage in Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is*, Section 10 'Why I Am So Clever'.

In it he states, 'My formula for greatness in a human being is *amor fati*: that one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity.'

Amor Fati. This is Latin for love your fate. Pap smears are just another fate

weighed on some of us.

Since Greek doctor Georgios Papanikolaou invented pap smears in 1923, people all over the world have dreaded their yearly visits to speculum-clutching medical professionals. But all these complaints are just flaws in basic philosophical thinking.

The concept of 'Amor Fati' can be traced back to Greek Stoic philosopher Epictetus (once again a Pap smear virgin).

He also said something totally pertinent, 'Men are disturbed not by things, but by the view which they take of them.' And I am sure it is the same for women. The unpleasantness of a small spatula and

tiny brush rubbing some cells from your cervix is all in your head.

If you have been sexually active for two years over the age of 21 you should be getting revved up and excited for your annual trip to the kingdom of cervical surveillance.

There is something so wonderful about dropping trou and spreading your legs on a crisp, clinical bed. And it is also a miracle that a philosophically painless experience can detect potentially pre-cancerous and cancerous processes in the cervix.

So please enjoy your Pap smears. Nietzsche tells you to.





Living Out the Party Girl Trope

Being the sad girl, bad girl ain't all it's cracked up to be, writes Evie Havisham

Listen as I show you the last 12 months in snapshots: here is the night I thought I had fallen in love again; here is the night with speed; here is the night I went home with a stranger with no pretence; here is Shelley fucking me in the back of a ute in the rain; here is me crying in the gutter, witnessing a stranger's assault; here are all the scars where my body has previously been raided.

I am Sia's "Party Girl": drunkenly holding onto chandeliers, followed by a lonely, messy morning after. I am familiar with the trope; it's been projected onto me for years: a slut-shamed manic pixie dream girl. Dating websites tell men not to approach me. I can't be trusted, I care more about "a good time" and "attention" than "intimacy" and "commitment". I have "daddy issues". Call me for fun, but not for friendship. Men tell each other to "put me in my place" – the terror of that sentence comes from its ambiguity, the silent threat of violence.

In the past year, I've swallowed pills, snorted powders, gulped drinks, kissed strangers and friends, developed a credit card debt, wiped cum off my stomach and thought "why do I keep doing this?" and not been able to come up with an answer. After a

rough break up, casual sex became my therapy. Every Saturday night I would wander through darkly lit rooms, or call someone on the phone if that didn't work. And when I woke up in a stranger's bed that Sunday morning, I would treat it like church; as a Good Catholic Girl I would be consumed by guilt and ask for forgiveness.

Like most things, I went about sex the wrong way. I mistook it for cathartic, until I began sleeping with up to three new people a week. Not because I wanted to, but because I could. I was always drunk; they were all slightly too old for me. By the time we were in bed they treated me like a function, and in my own apathy, I treated myself like one too. In this scene I am submitting to them, whatever they want, but please don't ask me to remember it the next day. For me, there is a certain emotional masochism that comes with being a strange and wild thing ... and a certain kind of self-loathing that comes with forgetting to take the morning after pill.

A friend told me that I was addicted to the recklessness, that I wasn't allowing myself to be seen in any other light. She told me that the sense of disconnect I felt from the world, my apathy had all emerged as a result of trauma:

my body was violated and now I only let myself be touched in ugly ways. Yet I see myself as three-dimensional, as beyond the stereotype of some 'broken girl'. Despite my hedonism, I do not try and live out the Party Girl trope. Nor do I use it to live out some escapist fantasy, and I'm not sure it would matter if I did. My sadness both precedes and follows my Party Girl behaviour, but it is not sufficient in causing this behaviour.

Yet the pain of the Party Girl is a distinctly female experience. The identity relies on seduction and betrayal, a hypersexual nymphomaniac who can be both a mysterious source of salvation and morally corrupt. I cannot navigate this identity; as always, my status as either an ethereal romantic saviour or a disgusting whore is imposed on me by others. Traditional femininity relies on two-dimensional perceptions of woman; by being something, anything, outside of these stereotypes, women are demonstrating the cracks in the concept as a whole. For this reason, the expression of female pain is, and always will be, political.

In Leslie Jamison's *Grand Unified Theory of Female Pain*, she writes about her boyfriend who accuses her of being a 'wound dweller', constantly

lamenting her pain. In her internal dialogue between "why does this shit happen to me" and "why the fuck am I talking about this so much", she can only conclude that, in the midst of romanticized suffering, we forget that the subject is real: "women still have wounds; broken hearts and broken bones and broken lungs".

"The expression of female pain is, and always will be, political ..."

The men who don't hate me want to protect me — the violated child or the untamed Party Girl — yet this in itself is a form of denying me agency. I hear them: 'let me take you home...let me take care of you... you might not be ready to be saved, but I am ready to save you'. I pray, if I have to live in trauma, in tragedy, so be it. But the sadness in my voice is, and always has been, mine to define, my own private sphere. I would rather wash your semen from my hair than let you love me. Perhaps I am addicted to the suffering, the disassociation, but my addiction belongs to me only, and I am real and unowned because of it.

How To Be A Girl

There are no incorrect ways, says Amelia Addams-Acton

As a kid growing up in the '90s with hippie parents, there wasn't much I had to worry about. I grew up in a rural community and our next door neighbours consisted of the furry inhabitants of a rainforest. That is to say, where I lived was isolated, I didn't watch television and there weren't a lot of kids my age except for the occasional day at pre-school.

It was only until I reached primary school that I began to have worries. The other girls would ask me why I didn't do my hair in cute hairstyles, why I wore shorts instead of skirts, why I wore runners instead of sandals.

To me those questions were strange. Sure, skirts had an awesome twirl but you couldn't do handstands or slide down a wet hill on a cardboard box.

Shorts were comfortable, runners helped when playing tag. It was in primary school that I first heard the term 'tomboy'. The other girls would make fun of my appearance calling it "boyish", something they didn't see in their television shows or their parents' magazines.

My school was small, only 12 students in my Year 6 class and I was desperate to fit in. I began to tuck my uniform up so it showed my midriff like the other girls. I ditched my runners. I begged my parents for expensive outfits considered "girly" by my peers, outfits they could scarcely afford.

I stopped playing lunch time soccer with the boys in my class, instead choosing to sit and watch them with the other girls in my class. I mocked

any girl displaying overt signs of "boyishness". By the time I reached high school I thought I had it all figured out, I would smile and laugh and try not to say anything too smart because "boys didn't like it when you're smarter than them". I began to quickly realise I had again made the ultimate faux pas. I didn't own or wear any make up. I begged my mother for make up, anything that would allow me to fit in.

She was horrified, saying instead I was beautiful as I was. She didn't understand, or more accurately as I realise now, I didn't. Makeup to me was my final stepping stone to being a girl, the ultimate conclusion. I had been told that would be the way for boys to notice me and therein validate my status as a girl.

Even today I struggle even wearing jeans instead of dresses because I have constantly conditioned myself to become what I have been told what a woman should be. I check myself when I speak to men because I struggle with the deep need to appease them instead of myself.

It was only until I reached university and I met other like-minded people I was able to realise that what I understood as the only way to act as a woman was incorrect.

I am a multifaceted creature, who cannot be contained to one single description. There are millions of individuals who have an idea of what makes them a person, be that woman or man. Not a single person has the right to say that is incorrect.



International Students Officers’ Report

He Lu

The international students’ collective has been trying to plan more activities for students. In the middle of May, an event of meeting and greets for both members and non-members of International students collective has been created by International Student Office of SRC in International Student Lounge. Free food and drinks were provided in the event. The main goals of creating this event are: firstly, introduce SRC and international Student Office to students so that international students could get better

services and enjoy a better university life; secondly, we aimed to introduce further plans of international student office in the rest of the semester; thirdly, students who had better ideas or problems would be encouraged to share with members and non-members so that better services could be provided to university students.

We were glad that many students have come to enjoy food and drinks. This could not only be an official event for the office to introduce working plans, but also a relaxing

place for both international students and local students to communicate and share ideas about their university lives.

Another program worthy to mention is that a basic introduction passage of Australian university’s politics was made in the corporation with Australian Chinese Youth Associate (ACYA).

This project aims to share basic knowledge and situations of university politics in Australia so that more international

students were able to get involved in the university activities such as campaign of SRC and USU. The article has been spread both officially in ACYA’s network platform and social network websites. We hope more and more international students could feel free to be involved in university wide activities.

Please do not be hesitated to contact with International Student Office of SRC if you have any concern. Email address: international.officers@src.usyd.edu.au

Residential College Officers’ Report

Issy Hellig

Congratulations to the recently elected Union Board Directors Michael Rees, Jack Whitney, Atia Rahim, Marco Avena, Tiff Alexander and Shannen Potter! The above are all capable and experienced representatives who will serve the USU well. However this year we regret that there was a lack of representation from the USyd Colleges, as none of the above elected Directors (to our knowledge) are associated with one.

As all Residential College students are Union members it is important that we

have a say in its direction, especially as the fight goes on for transparency, greater representation of marginalised groups (including wom*n, queer and ethno-culturally diverse people) and as Sensitivity Training is extended to all student leaders.

Again, we congratulate the new elected directors, but call on Residential College students to stay involved in Union programs and to continue casting a vote in coming years to decide the direction of your union. On another note, though in a similar vein, all four Residential College

Officers encourage College students to broaden their involvement in the SRC’s various initiatives in the (inevitable) lead-up to this year’s SRC election, which will take place some time around September.

The SRC does great things for student welfare and has strong roots in activism. Above and beyond all obscure factional alignments, all of the current SRC Office Bearers in the departments for Wom*n, Queer students, Ethnic Affairs and the Environment have been autonomously preselected by their collectives, which

are open to anybody with an applicable identity/interest.

For evidence of the amazing work of these Collectives, you need not look past this incred Wom*n’s Edition of *Honi Soit*, or the ongoing fossil fuel divestment campaign, Fossil Free Usyd, of which many of the recent USU Board Director candidates came out in support.

For more information, please get in touch with us at residential.colleges@src.usyd.edu.au. Cheers!

Wom*n of Colour Officer’s Report

Aulina Chaudhuri

Just over a year old, the Wom*n of Colour Autonomous collective is continuing to provide an important space for individuals that negotiate race and gender as important aspects of their identity. The collective has a strong online community, where anyone that identifies as Indigenous or marginalised by White supremacy is invited to join.

This year started with an open call for any members by Tabitha and Shareeka (2014 office bearers), to come forward to assume this very role. I initially shied away from such a position, but then realised I

wanted to actively contribute to a space that provided so much comfort, openness and learning. As a medical science student I often found race and gender to intersect with interpersonal interactions with tutors, peers, lecturers that left me alienated and frustrated. It is testament to the collective’s supportive and encouraging presence that I am in this position, and I am very grateful.

To crack things off we had an intimate screening of Brandy’s *Cinderella* ft. Whitney Houston and *Keeping up with the Kardashians*, which was a chance to meet

some new faces. Following the devastating earthquake in Nepal in April, the Wom*ns Collective and WOC collective organised a film-screening fundraiser of *Manakamana*, and relief donations, which are being sent through Disaster Support Nepal. For any readers who wish to contribute with monetary donations, Mitrataa Foundation and Guthi Australia are both grassroots organisations that are contributing to disaster relief in various areas affected.

This year holds some exciting new plans, such as working on a zine, as well as with

other collectives such as the Muslim Wom*ns Collective & Indigenous Collective to strengthen and expand our commitment to intersectional feminism.

As this collective is a space for solidarity, strengthening our radical form of entitlement to facilitate our voices being heard, not marginalised or silenced as it regularly is in other political and social contexts is vital. You can keep up with events by joining the ‘Usyd WOC Autonomous Collective’ Facebook group, and following us at [womenofcoloursydney.tumblr.com](https://www.tumblr.com/womenofcoloursydney).

Education Officers’ Report

Blythe Worthy

For Wom*n’s *Honi*, I thought I’d talk about exclusively wom*n’s education things and that brought me around to how much graduates who identify as wom*n earn.

Let’s have a little guess at how much less than men they earn? \$500 a year? \$3000? Nup, it’s a whopping \$5000 less than graduates who identify as wom*n earn in comparison with their male counterparts.

Trans wom*n earn even less comparatively, and there’s barely been any research into it because it’s easy to ignore gender issues if you’ve never had to deal with any. The truth is, trans people are ignored by everyone. In fact, just last year at their annual conference, the National Union of

Students (NUS) made the incoherently ignorant decision to pass a motion to remove the asterisk from wom*n for their collectives.

Let me just say that the asterisk is there in order to protect wom*n from discrimination and hate based on the very term they rely on.

Trans wom*n will be the ones who want to join a collective with an asterisk in its name in order to seek support and friendship, and the fact that NUS decided to try and strip all collectives of this statement of solidarity is disgusting.

The excuse given by the wom*n’s officer

and member of Labor right faction Unity who moved the motion was that explaining the reason for the existence of the asterisk was too hard.

She managed to ~explain~ to an entire conference floor of students that the asterisk alienated “women” from collectives and was unfair because who even remembers why the asterisk is there and who can even be bothered explaining it because that’s not the entire reason you were fucking elected campus Wom*n’s Officer or anything.

A member of NLS spoke against moving the motion based on NOWSA’s definition of wom*n (a little bureaucratic but ok)

and a Grassroots member also spoke out against the motion in defense of trans people, but it passed anyway.

Then someone from Unity got up and started talking about how stupid the asterisk was. And read out a list of words that had ‘men’ or ‘man’ in them to derisive laughter from the Unity cohort.

Because gender issues are funny right? Especially if you’ve never had any.

Let’s burn transphobic organisations to the ground, starting with NUS.



Indigenous Officers' Report

Georgia Mantle

Putting together last week's Indigenous *Honi* saw me focusing and reflecting on my cultural heritage and identity. However I realised that my Aboriginality is only one important aspect of my identity. As an Indigenous wom*n, my identity is not only shaped by cultural influences but also by the way in which society views and understands my gender. In writing this piece I began to reflect on what I know about Aboriginal wom*n and more specially Aboriginal feminists. My conclusion was, not very much.

The history of feminism in the Australian context is more often then not dominated

by the narrative of white feminists. The 'first wave' feminist movement was shaped by the desire for wom*n to gain the right to vote — a brilliant movement that changed a lot of people's lives. However, did all wom*n get the vote through the suffragette movement? No. Aboriginal wom*n did not gain their rights to vote until the 1960s.

Similarly during the 'second wave' feminist movement wom*n fought for their rights to their own bodies and the legalisation of abortion as well as more government support for childcare. At the same time, Aboriginal wom*n were forced into

sterilisation as their children continued to be taken away from them.

This is by no means a way of diminishing the work and suffering of white feminists but rather a way to critique past movements in the hopes of gaining a better understanding of why an intersectional approach to feminist and wom*n's rights work is needed. Wom*n cannot hope to achieve equality while neglecting the needs and suffering of Indigenous Wom*n, Trans wom*n and Queer Wom*n.

I want to acknowledge the incredible spirit and courage of our Aboriginal mothers,

sisters, cousins, and friends. I want to acknowledge the continual suffering of Indigenous wom*n as their land, culture, rights, and children were taken from them. I also acknowledge the great steps indigenous wom* have and are taking to connect with their culture and make real change within the community.

Lastly I want to acknowledge the wom*n within the Indigenous collective and encourage them to continue to celebrate our culture and identity as we continue to break down barriers and understandings of what it means to be Indigenous wom*n.

NEW 'Sydney Student' online service...
What do you think?

The University changed its computer system to Sydney Student. You'll have noticed a change of format for all computer related things like enrolling at the beginning of semester, adding or deleting subject, and checking your academic transcript. But what do you think of it? Has it all been good for you, or have you had problems? We'd like to know.

Send an email to help@src.usyd.edu.au with "sydney student" in the subject line.



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

Have you seen an SRC caseworker?

We want to know what we're doing well and what we need to improve. So if you've consulted an SRC caseworker in person, on the telephone or by email we'd like to know what you think.

Send an email with any comments to help@src.usyd.edu.au with "my thoughts" as the subject line.

If you prefer your comments to be anonymous feel free to drop your comments on paper to our office or post it to:
SRC, Level 1, Wentworth Building, The University of Sydney, 2006.



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

DID YOU KNOW?

If you apply to discontinue a subject before the last day of semester* you will get a Discontinue Fail (DF)

This WILL incur HECS or fees, and WILL affect your "academic progression", but WILL NOT affect your WAM. This is particularly important for students avoiding Show Cause & Exclusion.

* Semester 1: June 5, 2015
* Semester 2: October 30, 2015

Need help or advice? Your SRC is here to assist you.
Phone for an appointment. The service is FREE, independent and confidential.
We are located at: Level 1, Wentworth Building (G01), University of Sydney
(02) 9660 5222 | help@src.usyd.edu.au | src.usyd.edu.au | facebook.com/src.help
If it is not possible for you to come to our office, a caseworker can meet you on a suitable campus, or speak to you on the telephone or Skype.



Notice of Council Meeting and election of a Mature Age Student Officer and an Interfaith Officer

87th Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney

DATE: 3rd June
TIME: 6-8pm
LOCATION: Professorial Board Room (Quadrangle)



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

Health Services for Students

Safe Beds Program



If you are fleeing domestic violence, but are concerned for the safety of a pet you have to leave behind, you can contact the RSPCA to get help. They run a “Safe Beds” program which gives temporary accommodation to your pet, while you seek more permanent housing.

For more information search “RSPCA safe beds”.

Are you needing a health check up of any sort?
Pap smear? Sexually Transmitted Infection tests?
Or maybe some acupuncture, naturopathy or a calming lymphatic drainage massage?

There are a range of Women’s Health Centres around Sydney including one in Leichhardt and Cumberland: <http://www.whnsw.asn.au/centres.htm>

Leichhardt Women’s Heath Centre welcomes female students and offers a range of services either free (bulk-billed) or for a small charge.

The Centre also holds groups for a small fee on:

- Health & well-being
- Meditation
- Body image
- Communication skills

International students are welcome and receive free counseling, acupuncture and naturopathy as well as any services provided by nurses.

Free and confidential sexual health services are provided by NSW Sexual Health Clinics. No Medicare card necessary and international students are welcome. In fact, they don’t want to know who you are, so there’s no need to feel self conscious or embarrassed. Free counseling is also provided.

There are clinics in Camperdown & all over Sydney.

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/sexualhealth/pages/sexual-health-clinics.aspx>



Ask Abe

SRC Caseworker Help Q&A

Hi Abe,

I have a bad situation and I don’t know what to do. I met a guy in my class and we talked a bit. He was kind of cute and I flirted with him, but I’m not really ready to get involved with anyone so I told him that I was only interested in being friends. He got angry and said I was being really selfish and was leading him on. He now follows me around and is often outside my other classes and sometimes when I go out he is there too. I don’t think he is a bad guy, I think I just confused him. I don’t want to hurt him or get him into trouble. I just want him to leave me alone now.

Left Alone

Dear Left Alone,

You have every right to change your mind about any interaction with someone at any point. That is how consent works. There is nothing wrong with flirting – you just need to communicate clearly about what you want. It sounds like you have done that, and he does not like what you think.

He needs to stop stalking you. You deserve to feel safe on campus and when you go out.

I would recommend that you meet with an SRC caseworker who can accompany you to speak to Campus Security. They take stalker threats seriously and will be happy to talk to him about how he should leave you alone. They can also keep an eye out for you when you are on campus, especially around your scheduled classes. Similarly you can make a complaint to the Police so that if you require assistance, and you call them, they will know about your matter.

There are also a range of other things you can do if he has your phone number, email or facebook contact. Talk to a caseworker about this too.

Abe

Abe is the SRC’s welfare dog. This column offers students the opportunity to ask questions on anything. This can be as personal as a question on a Centrelink payment or as general as the state of the world. Send your questions to help@src.usyd.edu.au. Abe’s answers can provide you excellent insight.



Low-cost and affordable for students.

We are a low-cost and confidential all-women community health centre located in Leichhardt. We offer services for students and concessions. Our caring and understanding professionals are always here to help and listen.

Our services:

- + Women’s health doctor and nurse clinics
- + No-cost and bulkbilling available
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Juliana Huxtable

Kate Bittar explores the power of self-representation and self-definition.

Juliana - naked and metallic-bodied, reclines on a plinth and extends her right hand toward you in a Cleopatra gesture of command. Her body is spray painted in proliferations of blues and greens, and draped in thick braids that spill across her form as regalia. She, a life size sculpture by artist Frank Benson, sits in the third iteration of the New Museum's Triennial, 'Surround Audience.' The piece is modelled from a 3D body-scan taken of 27-year-old transgender artist and poet, Juliana Huxtable, who is both subject and author of five pieces displayed in the exhibition. These are works that testify to the Triennial's concern with how self and subject-hood are progressively understood in a world in which our "ability to see and be seen is expanding, as is our desire to manage our self image and privacy," concerns which are both facilitated and problematised by expanding internet access. This desire for visibility coexists with anxieties about the result of that visibility: the unshielded process of being seen and overseen, on or offline. The exhibit of the Triennial coincided with International Transgender Day of Visibility; a rare moment of priority for the visibility of mar-

ginalised bodies, a kind that is particularly double-edged. It contains the need for representation, something rarely in the primary control of an oppressed group, but also the need to exist beyond flesh and outside of how they are read, beheld, and owned by others. This is a tension that is difficult to navigate in the physical world, a space where those bodies are often both invisible, and forbidden. In Surround Audience, Juliana Huxtable demands a holistic visibility; one that is not confined to the way she is 'seen' in Juliana, but that is also guided by the assertion of a voice that extends beyond the rubric of her body.

The Triennial's co-curator, Lauren Cornell, has described 'Surround Audience' as "predictive, rather than retrospective." The works within do not seek to offer angsty, dystopian prophecies of the defenceless individual in a world overcome by digital technology. Instead, they speak for self-hoods that are discovered within and encouraged by the porous landscape of the 'digital era', one that is constantly changing as we change with it. Huxtable's series of four Inkjet prints, UNIVERSAL CROP TOPS FOR ALL THE SELF CANONIZED SAINTS OF BECOMING

(2014-5), embraces this state of transformation; she poses variously as a Nuwau-bian Nation goddess among neon-tinted skies, balancing on turquoise bodies of water and kneeling on golden sands.

Her adoption of a persona inspired by the Nuwau-bian Nation, a movement of extraterrestrial theory derived from Islam and Ancient Egypt, speaks to the otherwise absent representation of marginalised bodies in imagery of technological futures. As such, Huxtable's series is woven with Afrofuturist concern. 'Afrofuturism' acknowledges the way in which "blackness gets constructed as always oppositional to the technologically driven chronicles of progress."

It relies on the existing "distance between racialised fictions of black magic and white science... and of the disparity between blackness and the cybernetic technological future." In these portraits, Huxtable is not something separate from the cyborgian worlds she occupies, she does not exist in contrast to supposed "white" technologies, or appear lost in the expanse of them. She is refusing a gaze that fixes her identity, interrupting our desire or ability

to position her somewhere within or outside invisible norms, her works reflect a self-described "pastiche of me at different points," they are "avatars for the constantly growing list of references in my head." Benson's Juliana challenges the austerity of the gallery space in the same way its muse, Juliana Huxtable, challenges a systemically white, cis-het, contemporary art world. The desire to be seen coexists with a desire to be heard; Huxtable demands visibility by first interrupting her viewer's 'knowing' gaze, their ability to attach false discourses to her body, and fix signifiers of otherness to her skin. Cyberspace was once, as the author of the term, William Gibson, suggests, "a specific elsewhere, one we visited periodically, peering into it from the familiar physical world. Now cyberspace has averted. Turned itself inside out. Colonised the physical."

To live inside the digital era is to live with the constant ability, via the Internet and social media, to curate and transform our concept of self and selfhood; we are increasingly faced with the illusory concept of a 'stable' identity. It is within this climate that Huxtable chooses to remain, and envision herself as, unapologetically liminal.



The Fire Burns On

Julia Readett explores media as a tool of decolonisation

The Fire Burns On is an exhibition of photographs of the Redfern Aboriginal Tent Embassy, located on Redfern's 'The Block', and commemorates the Embassy's one-year anniversary.

The exhibition is located at the Discovery Museum in The Rocks, which sets the tone for the historical background of Sydney for tourists. Upon walking down the cobblestone lane, surrounded by sandstone buildings, you are transported to the colonial fantasies of settlement and modernity that are still alive and well in Sydney. The first level of the Discovery Museum traces Eora culture "pre-contact", as they describe, and comprises a number of artifacts, sketches and letters home from colonial botanists. The second level explores the history of Sydney's "colonies", complete with a slightly forced simulation activity that involves a convict sexworker calling out "Hello, Sailor!"

Amongst all this violent colonial history, a staircase leads to the most affecting and powerful display of Aboriginal resistance to colonisation on Gadigal land. For me, the position of the exhibition echoes the position of the Embassy. Amongst a racist culture based on the dispossession of Indigenous peoples, is the Embassy. Asserting itself on the grassy lawns of The Block it truly is "a demonstration of how our people live", as described by Jenny Munro in a short documentary that accompanies the exhibition.

The collection of over 40 photographs are taken by photographers and artists such as Lorna Munro, Jenny Munro's daughter, Jaroslaw L Gasiorek, Barbara McGrady, Felon Mason, who is also an activist, musician and integral supporter of the embassy. 'Selfies at the Embassy' by John Janson-Moore consists of an iPhone mounted onto the wall, attached to a selfie-stick. The piece shows the significance of self-representation to decolonisation.

The camera has been used as a tool for

colonisation since its introduction to Australia in 1850. During this age of scientific discovery, the camera offered colonials the perfect medium to depersonalise and control the curious inhabitants of terra nullius. Anthropologists, historians, botanists and other researchers ferociously noted the perceived strange habits of Indigenous peoples, to salvage and commemorate a culture that was thought to be "dying out".

This desire to pronounce difference and assert white supremacy set up some of the most reprehensible and disastrous stereotypes of Indigenous peoples, stereotypes that still pervade this racist society. We cannot underestimate the power of representation in supporting and creating racism that has material consequences for Indigenous people.

The act of self-representation, as seen in this powerful and downright priceless collection of photographs, shows the way in which representations of Indigenous people can be reclaimed to explode any hint of stereotype or generalisation.

As explained by bell hooks, "Photographs

taken in everyday life, snapshots in particular, rebelled against all those photographic practices that reinscribe colonial ways of looking and capturing the images of the black 'other'. The exhibition runs until June 28. Perhaps longer than the Embassy itself may continue to run, as the Aboriginal Housing Company have issued a 14 day notice of eviction.



These pages are brought to you by the officebearers of SUPRA.
They are not altered, edited, or changed in any way by the *Honi* editors.

Last Week at SUPRA

Wine and Cheese

This past week, SUPRA hosted its ever popular Wine and Cheese event in the beautiful University of Sydney Quadrangle. The event was heavily attended, and people had a great time enjoying wine, sharing stories and tasting the warm mulled gluhwein Pru, our lovely administrative coordinator contributed to the event! Thanks to Tom, our Vice President, our staff, and the team of councillors that volunteered to make this event a success, and thanks to all the postgrads who came to this lovely event. We'll see you next month for our end of the semester special edition of Wine and Cheese!

Postgrad Week

This past Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, SUPRA also attended the University's Postgraduate Week in the Great Hall. Many prospective postgraduates, and current postgraduates considering second

degrees came to this event, and spoke to us about what SUPRA does, and how SUPRA supports the postgraduate community. If you are a student considering postgraduate work at the University of Sydney, we encourage you to join SUPRA as soon as you can. We attend faculty inductions, and have a presence at O-Week where you can find our stall or simply approach our new offices.

Coffee, Cake & Chat

Yet again, our amazing Women's Officer, Forough has hosted another successful event for the Women's Network. This past Friday, postgraduate women met at the Holme Building's Courtyard Café for some coffee, cake and tea. We also had discussions about what we are studying, or issues in the world that are important to us.

Many compliments to Forough, who has kept the Women's Network incredibly active this year, and thanks to everyone who

came to join in. If you are a postgraduate woman who is looking to connect with other women, please reach out to her, get on the Women's Network mailing list, or join the Women's Network on Facebook.

Federal Budget 2015:

The Federal Budget was released last Tuesday – and according to some early media sources, students were let off the hook this year!

Well... not really...

It turns out many aspects of the 2015-2016 budget will affect students, and postgraduates. Students and staff at university have already expressed concern for example, with cuts to Sustainable Research Excellence (SRE). The budget also makes no promise to amend the original \$173.7M cut to the Research Training Scheme (RTS), and this will impact the research workforce going forward. The Council of Australian

Postgraduate Representatives (CAPA) released a statement expressing their concerns with regard to these cuts, and what they mean for the future of the research workforce. (Source: <http://www.capa.edu.au/media-releases/cuts-to-research-training-threaten-future-of-research-workforce/>.)

Universities Australia also expressed concern, citing that students will continue to be left 'in policy limbo' as this year's budget does not address the education cuts announced in previous years. Of course many assume that fee deregulation will go forward.

If you're interested in the budget, or have concerns with regard to cuts to research or fee deregulation, please consider reading up on this issue, and finding out what student groups are doing to tackle these issues.

What We Got Up To This Week: Coffee, Wine & Cheese in the Quad & Postgrad Week!





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Upcoming

Postgrad Affairs

It's Time for the AGM!: Our Annual General Meeting is this Thursday and we encourage everyone to come. Our Annual General Meeting is a time when postgrads can come to SUPRA, voice their concerns and give the next Council directives on what they would like to see for the 2015-2016 term. We will also review our activities this year, the policy we currently uphold, and any constitutional amendments that might be put forward. This is a great time to engage with us and tell SUPRA how we can better support you, so we look forward to hearing what you have to say this Thursday.

Finding SUPRA

SUPRA has moved! We're also easy to find once you know how to find us. Unfortunately, some postgrads are not used to our new location, so to make life easier, we've made a map, and written some instructions for you: The new SUPRA offices are on Level 2 of the Holme Building, Camperdown campus. To get to the SUPRA offices you can enter the Holme Building via Science Rd, head through the Holme Courtyard and take the lift (next to the Courtyard Restaurant and Bar) down to Level 2.

Our new premises are accessible however the nearest accessible toilet is on Level 3 of the Holme Building, adjacent to the Holme Courtyard.

Check out the included map to find SUPRA. For a digital map of campus that shows where the Holme Building (A09) is, see the website <<http://sydney.edu.au/maps/campuses/?area=CAMDAR>>. See you at SUPRA!

SUPRA Annual General Meeting

Thursday 28 May
From 5:30pm - Footbridge Lecture Theatre

All postgraduate students are invited to attend SUPRA's Annual General Meeting, **5:30pm Thursday 28th of May 2015** at the Footbridge Lecture Theatre.


Please arrive at 5:30pm to sign in for a 6pm start. Light snacks will be provided. The business of this meeting will include a report from SUPRA's Officers, and a Constitutional Review.

The current Constitution can be found at <http://supra.net.au/regulations.html>
Please note, relevant documents for the 2015 AGM will be available on the SUPRA Website for you to read in advanced. They will go live soon at: http://supra.net.au/public_records.html. We look forward to seeing you at the AGM!

SUPRA On Social Media

Did you know SUPRA is active on Social Media? Come like our SUPRA Page (<https://www.facebook.com/sydneyunipostgrads>) on Facebook or join the conversation in our open SUPRA Group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2369669686/>).

We use the hashtag #SUPRAPostgrads, we've just started posting pictures of our events and activities on Instagram (@SUPRA_Postgrads), and you can follow us or say hi on Twitter @SUPRAPrez.



SUPRA

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE REPRESENTATIVE ASSOCIATION

SUPRA is an independent representative association run by a council of elected postgraduate students, for all postgraduate students at the University of Sydney.

SUPRA's Student Advice & Advocacy Officers provide FREE, confidential advice and advocacy to postgraduate student on a range of issues including: academic, welfare and housing.

SUPRA's Solicitor provides FREE legal advice and representation on a wide range of legal issues.

How can a student get advice and assistance from a Student Advocate?

- Book a face-to-face appointment at our Camperdown campus location
- Book a phone appointment
- Come to a drop-in session on a Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 2- 4pm (30 minute slots in order of arrival, no appointment needed, last student seen at 3:30pm)
- Send an email query. All queries will be responded to within 1-2 working days
- Book a Skype appointment
- Book an appointment for an Advocate to come to your campus location

How can a student get advice and assistance from the Solicitor?

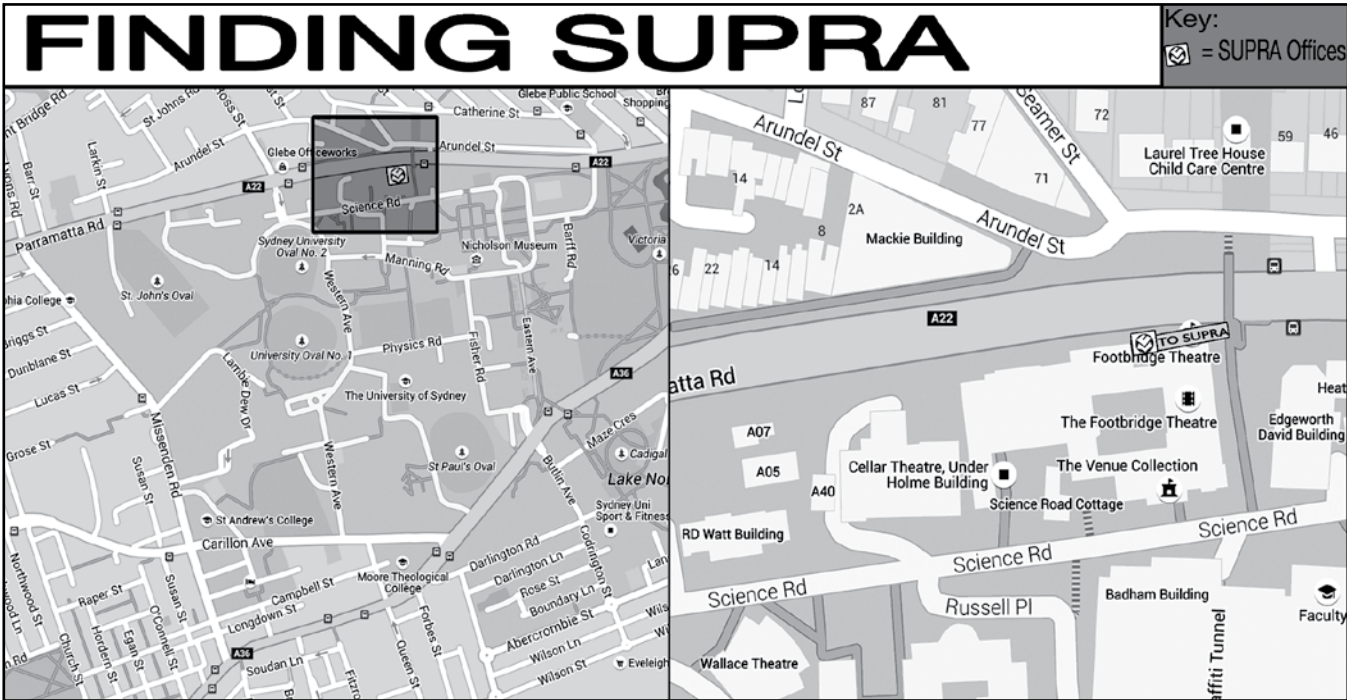
The Solicitor is based at the SUPRA Offices on main campus, though they are also able to assist SUPRA Subscribers who study on other campuses or are otherwise remotely located.

- Book a face-to-face appointment at our Camperdown campus location
- Book a phone appointment
- Come to a drop-in session on Thursdays 2pm-4pm (30 minute slots in order of arrival, no appointment needed, last student seen at 3:30pm)
- Send an email query. All queries will be initially responded to 1 -2 working days
- If possible, please include a telephone contact number in your email so we can get back to you if necessary

For all bookings
Please call or email to book your appointment
P: (02) 9351 3715

If you are in Australia but outside the Sydney metropolitan area, call our toll free number: 1800 249 950
Email: help@supra.usyd.edu.au

For more information about SUPRA and how we can assist you, please visit our website: supra.usyd.edu.au
Find us on Facebook
Please note all students must be a SUPRA subscriber to access to our services and assistance
Subscribing is free and fast: <http://supra.net.au/subscribe.html>





SUPRA

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ON

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i @SUPRA_Postgrads / #SUPRAPostgrads



[Editor Unknown]

Lane Pitcher

sub

Mine is a subtitled plot
Subjugation overwrites sublime submission
In subheadings that subsume ‘subversion’
I am subscribed a biography of subliminal subordination

•

stance

Perspectives of circumstance, imaginings of instance/s
The secrets of sauvignon slurs, pseudo smiles
Presumptions are assumptions
Sexed fantasies or jealousies impregnable to resistance

leads to

con

Condescension confirms identity conditional
Confidence conceals chaos, credentials contradict
Since my Levi’s must be LifeStyles lined
To you the greatest conceit is ‘conscious consent’.

•

dom

But I am my own domesticated dominatrix.
Dawn my dominion – a braless shoeless showerless domain.
This dripping domino doesn’t fall to your erecting deck.
Salt lipped, sweat lynxed... I’m a 90s bitch I love it.

leads to

chem

i-you-WE are chemically incorruptible;
Desires are only pressed with depressants,
They pre-exist as reflexive mirrors on the binary do.
But in that glass made of mist and noble neon –

•

ist

Chemists see abortionists, rapists see rationalists.
In a world of suffixes I am an escapist –
From sexist, racist, classist elitists
This undecided amorist is an un-apologist for anti-ists
idealists
humanists
optimists
feminists

5:59am

Perri Roach

this morning’s foul, bright breath leaves
a landscape on my bedroom wall;
lipped orange in tungsten glow. spores of sunlight
sew carcinogens, a
microcosmic waltz
across the stretch of my bare skin.

this body
is hardly evocative:
it lies
slackened and soft,
broad as a baleen whale. occupies,
bristles linen like the waves.

the time will come for stranger convulsions;
cereal and suitcases
laid out under my eyes.

until then,
remain
enveloped
in this morning’s photon miasma

where
ribs softly undulate
and pores burst open like windows.



collages by Alice Race



Ritual Virtuality

Ellen O'Brien

Let us declare the mystery of faith:
I used to practise it as a child
until the incense made my head swim
until crying in the chapel became a ritual in itself

and now I practise something else entirely

I kneel on the floor, without a pew this time
nothing between me and the earth's shell
and even without a home I anchor myself
in a simple routine:

inhale
then cleanse pores and soul
then tone skin and heart
then apply oil and rejuvenate
exhale
try it again

the comfort found in repetition draws me back
back to the church after years of solitude
back to the mirror after years of disrespect
I challenge myself to remember
to know the body
to obtain awareness

I was so blind, but now I see
and see indeed!
Behold illuminated glistening cheekbones
glowing skin dewy with artificial tears

all hail me, I'm full of grace

These rituals signify what is holy:
the holy ghost
the corporeal existence
bodies in motion
bodies being constructed

each movement is measured, but to the outsider perplexing
and contested
but I own my performance -
my physicality cannot be emulated

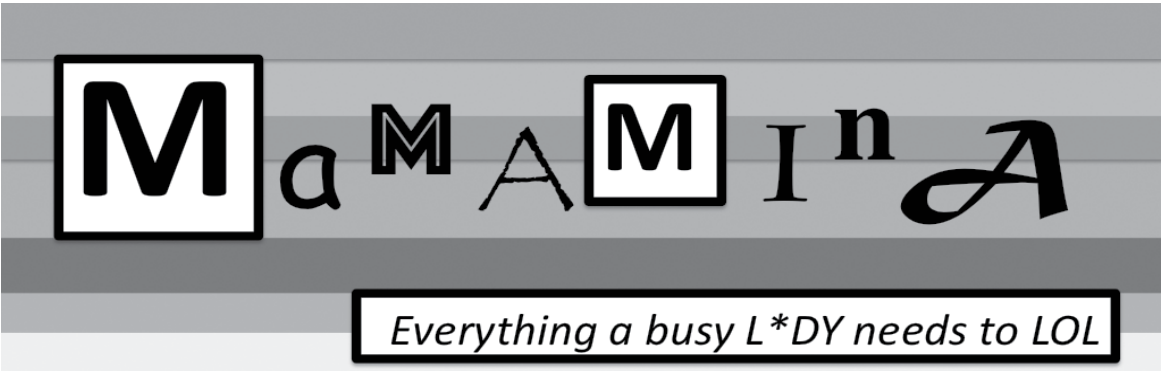
Let us declare the mystery of faith:
I will die, and these rituals with me
and I will rise
and I will come again.

They told us that the world was a cruel place.
That we didn't know even half of it
But what they do not realise is that we were forced to thrive in cruelty
The half of it was made of cruel men
That we fought battles that stemmed from every fibre of our being
While they fought battles with only their fists and feet
We were forced to defy the laws of nature.
Told we were diamonds, the pretty ones
But kept hidden even though we were the strongest ones
We were told we were flowers or pearls
But were told to refuse our origins,
That we existed because of rough seas and wild rain
We were compared to everything but humans
That even though we looked it from a distance,
We were told to be anything but
We had voices but we were silenced
We had legs but they were shackled
We were the reason why humanity would perpetuate
But funeral silences was what we heard at birth
We were vessels of creation
But we were killed for it
We were taught to fear darkness
As if the absence of light made us incapable of living
But do they not know the story of Icarus
Who flew too close to the sun
Do they not realise
That everything has the potential to kill
But that should not stop us from living
They numbed our minds with myths
Made us fear things that kept us alive
Kept us from truths
That we were not to blame for bad men doing bad things
That no, boys will be boys is not enough
That a woman is not defined by how much she hasn't seen
But is defined by all that she has seen
When they cloaked us from night skies they deprived us of one truth
That the sky didn't span as far as the clouds
That stars and distant galaxies did exist
That the universe wasn't as small as the cruel men who lived in it

World Was a Cruel Place

Rameem Hayat Mailk





Mina explains exactly what we’re feeling re: #Bali9



Mina Friedman
@MinaFriedman

3.7k shares [SHARE](#) [SHARE](#) [+](#)

When I heard that two members of the Bali Nine were due to be executed, I immediately knew exactly how their plight was relatable to my life as a private school mother living in Sydney’s Eastern Suburbs.

I also knew what every woman in the country, if not the world, was feeling today.....

This.

It’s that emotion that we’ve all felt.

Maybe we’ve felt it at David Jones food hall, waiting in line for a gingerbread house only to be told that the last one was sold to a woman who came in before the school pick up rush (and who happens to work for a competitor’s mummy blog but that is so totally fine because we’re all friends in the Australian mummy bloggers circuit. Not that I run a mummy blog – it’s a current affair website, like News.com.au).

Maybe we’ve felt it when we stood on a piece of Lego. Maybe we’ve felt it when watching Karl and Lisa on the Today show.

The feeling? Like you’re about to have your brains blown out by a firing squad after your home nation’s foreign affairs department (headed by a woman! You go girl!) failed to get you any sort of immunity from their archaic death penalty for drug related offences.

Often I look at my daughter brushing her hair in the mirror of our third bathroom and I wonder why she isn’t in the fourth bathroom where her bobby pins are kept.

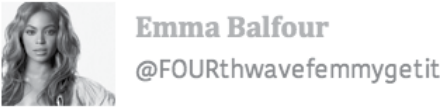
Then I wonder if she ever feels that feeling too. If it’s ever crossed her mind that she too could be trapped in a foreign country. About. To. Be. Killed.

One day it’s a discussion I will have to have have with her. But, as I watch her innocently braiding her hair in a vaguely coloured way, I remember that she is white.

I am white.

And we are safe.

The top 10 catcalls I’ve received in the past month



Emma Balfour
@FOURthwavefemmygetit

4 shares [SHARE](#) [SHARE](#) [+](#)

You won’t BELIEVE number eight...

1. “Hey! I have a poor relationship with my mother and you look a bit like her!”
2. “Hey there sexy, I was recently dumped and this is a coping mechanism I am using to show that I can still be dominant!”
3. “Damn! What you doing walking round with an ass like that?” (He refused to stop following me or asking me about the donkey I was attempting to pack into my car.)
4. “Hey, you free later? You free now? Are you freed yet?” (He jingled his handcuffs next to mine for ten minutes.)
5. “Oi, sweetheart! You a dancer? A prancer? A vixen? Comet, cupid, Donna?”

Like this? Try:

- Remember the cute kid from that ‘80s show you liked? Died last week.
- How to make sure your Bassike tee isn’t mistaken for Bonds
- Peanut butter and bacon on toast. (Seriously, just try it once.)

6. “Take it off! Take off the false form that keeps you from your true self. Take it off and then give me a lap dance.”
7. *wolf whistle* [He was joined by other wolves in the pack. As they whistled together, they began to surge past me to continue their Hunt. Three miles south, a rabbit pricked up its ears.]
8. “Hey baby, I am attempting to force a false dominance upon you but due to the momentary existence of an interdimensional wormhole, I have become deified in another world as a superior Other Being. Wars will be fought over the translation of the words I have said in the past twenty seconds. Millions will die.”
9. *incoherent jeering* *incoherent physical form*
10. “Hhhhhhhhhhh”



5 lesbians we would definitely hook up with in front of our boyfriends



Georgia Kriz
@IKrizzedAGirl

609 shares

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+

The #girlongirl options are totally endless.

C’mon, ladies, ‘fess up – we’re all a little bicurious now and then, and our men LOVE IT. Whether it’s in the club after a couple of vodka lime and sodas, or as the result of a totally !crazy! dare at a party, it’s super hot to get frisky with a cute lady friend in front of your man.

Here are our picks for five famous lesbians we would love to hook up with in front of the BF to really get things going.

1. **Cate Blanchett:** Cate’s cute coming out took the world by storm this month. And it’s no wonder – she’s a total babe. Imagine the look on his face!
2. **Katy Perry:** She kissed a girl and she continues to like it! Katy’s every girl’s girlcrush and teenage dream – we say yes please, KP!
3. **Hillary Clinton:** Mmmmmm, that power suit does things to all of us. Since her husband’s infidelity turned her gay, Hillary’s been slaying pussy left, right and centre. All we want is a quick snog, though, from the next #potusofourhearts.
4. **Tina Fey:** This leading lady is (like all female comedians) famously out and proud! She’d make us laugh while getting us ready for the dirty bedroom dance with the BF – an all-in-one package deal!
5. **Lee Lin Chin:** Although Lee Lin is notoriously private about her lesbianism, her short spiky hair and asymmetric, quirky attire tell us all we need to know. Those newsreading lips could be put to much better use...

Rebel Wilson has been lying about her shoe size



intern-23

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Will the real Rebel Wilson please stand up (in accurately-sized shoes)?

Rebel Wilson recently wore a pair of size 8 Louboutin heels to the *Pitch Perfect 2* premiere in New York.

That’s awesome, except for one thing.

Rebel Wilson wears a size 10 shoe.

After we reported on Wilson’s red-soled choice last week, Mamamina reader and shoe department assistant at Myer Westfield Parramatta, Patricia Muscat, sent us this email.

Dear Mamamina, I absolutely love your blog!! But every time you write something about Rebel Wilson I get really angry. You see, Rebel isn’t a size 8 shoe! She’s a 10! I know this because she came into my department to buy shoes for her law school graduation over ten years ago and I keep a bedroom archive of every foot I fit which I read before I go to sleep each night. Also, your videos don’t work in Firefox. Am I doing something wrong??

Love and light, Patricia

Interesting.

A quick squiz at Ms Wilson’s Wikipedia page reveals that her shoe size has been repeatedly edited between now and her *Bogan Pride* days.

Patricia’s theory would also make sense because fat people have fat feet.

We asked Sydney-based podiatrist Dr Richard Goldstein whether it would have been possible for Rebel’s feet to grow in the years since she graduated university.

“Feet don’t grow after the age of 18,” he told us. “Rebel is a con artist worse than the Prince of Nigeria. She should be shot.”

But, of course, we don’t think Rebel should be shot.

It’s just that the Hollywood Machine has told her she needs to have smaller feet to get jobs, because it’s a truth universally acknowledged that no director will hire an actress who has feet bigger than a size nine.

So, instead of asking Rebel why she has lied to the public, we want to say: “Rebel, we know what you’re going through, and it’s okay.”

Rebel is a fun and feisty, funny and curvy lady.

We’ll be rooting for you, Rebel. No matter how fat your feet are.



