

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY QUEER COLLECTIVE PRESENTS

# QUEER HONI

Week 13, Semester 1, 2020



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The University of Sydney Queer Action Collective primarily meets and organizes on the land of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. Our university, both an institution of elite white privilege as well home to a once thriving community of radical queer activists, is situated on a sacred site to First Nations people, whose land was violently dispossessed. Sovereignty has never been ceded. We pay our respects to elders past, present, and emerging.

In our work and activism, we acknowledge that the racist and patriarchal structures we struggle against harm First Nations people most severely and punitively. Only by actively engaging in rigorous anti-colonial and anti-capitalist praxis can we hope to break the nexus of interlocking power structures that uphold the stronghold of hegemonic power which seeks to disempower us all. When engaging in queer activism, we must remember that the Western societal conception of the gender and sexuality binary has its roots in European colonisation, and as settler colonialism is by nature destructive, the transplanting of European frames of thinking is inherently violent.

We recognise that Indigenous Sistergirls and Brotherboys are amongst the most abjectly marginalised within both the wider Australian and queer community.

As queer settlers, we must never grow complacent in our ongoing and strenuous efforts to assist the dismantlement of so called “Australia”.

*Always was,  
Always will be,  
Aboriginal land*

## CONTENTS

**Obituary for Sam Langford**  
Scoop for Honi – Page 3

**News**  
Wilson Huang, Maddie Clarke – Page 4

**Healthcare Outside the Binary**  
Julz Goff – Page 5

**We Are Not All in this Together**  
Nina Mountford – Page 6

**The Construction of Sodomy**  
Paola Ayre – Page 7

**A Different Kind of Representation**  
Priya Gupta – Page 8

**Masc Conceptions of Nature**  
Ellie Stephenson – Page 9

**RuPaul’s Frack Race**  
Matt Sahd – Page 10

**Down with the Rainbow Bourgeoisie**  
Vivienne Guo & Claire Ollivain – Page 11

**The Dinner Party (what do we do when no one is watching?)**  
Bonnie Huang – Page 12, Page 13

**I Wish there Weren’t a Wall**  
Shania O’Brien – Page 14

**Queering Care**  
Kimmy Dibben – Page 15

**What’s the deal with heteronormativity?**  
Wilson Huang – Page 15

**Am I Bi or is it the Compheh Talking?**  
Jocelin Chan – Page 16

**Gay Fantasies of Gay Fantasy**  
Klementine Burrell-Sander – Page 16

**Tesselation**  
Ari James – Page 17

**Incidences of Refraction**  
Orla ni Bradaigh – Page 17

**Eddie**  
Rhian Mordaunt – Page 18

**Intimacy and Identity, First Date**  
Abigail Cassandra Erinna – Page 19

**SRC Reports, SRC Caseworker Help**  
Page 20, Page 21

**Puzzles, Comedy**  
Ellie Stephenson, Salem – Page 22, Page 23

**QUEER HONI PLAYLIST**  
Page 24

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## EDITORIAL

Greetings!

Queer Honi is the annual autonomous edition of Honi Soit. It’s roots stretch back to 1976, when USYD students who were a part of the gay liberation movement stormed and occupied the Honi Soit offices, marking what would be the first ever edition of Homo Soit, the forerunner for Queer Honi.

The publishing of this year’s edition takes place amidst unprecedented social upheaval in the wake of COVID 19. During this time, where freedom of movement is restricted, taking physical action as impactful as that of the original Homo Soit editors, is near impossible. A community with a strong history of rioting and protesting against the oppression imposed on our own and other groups, are left looking for alternatives to taking to the streets.

Globally, marginalised communities are suffering heavily under the weight of an imploding neoliberal regime. The current pandemic has laid bare for all to witness the brutal mechanisms of a system which prioritises profit above all and is willing to trade in blood. Queer people are of course especially vulnerable at a time when many millions of people out of work and forced to rely on family and the charity of strangers in absence of a fully functioning and wide reaching social welfare system. Many have been forced into the homes (and closets) of unsafe and unwelcoming families, or worse, face homelessness.

Queer clubs, parties and communal activism is the ichor that flows through and nourishes the far reaching rivulets of the LGBTI+ community, in absence of a world that is able to nurture. It is this loss of community, that vital life force, that is deeply and silently grieved amidst the mundanity of quarantine. It is only in the dark however that new life can germinate. Just like a bulb lying dormant, the queer community will, as it always has, burst forth gloriously. We can witness these seeds of collective action taking root as we speak.

Mutual aid efforts, a long practiced phenomena born of necessity in marginalised communities, have sprung up organically throughout the world and especially within the queer community. The USyd Students Representative Council’s own mutual aid initiative was spearheaded by members of the Queer Action Collective, thanks to which hundreds of vulnerable students are now able to access free and nutritious groceries and essentials. We hope too, that through the sharing of the stories and art within this humble student publication, we may help provide that spark of comfort as well as a call to action.

*In love and fury,*

*Paola Ayre and Priya Gupta*  
*SRC Queer Officers 2020*

**Cover Artist Statement**

*This edition’s cover is a memento mori for the capitalist, patriarchal and colonial ruling class, a symbolic reminder of the inevitability of death for those who seek to rage hell on earth. Make no mistake, we remain very much within the grips of a dark age still, yet upon its precipice, we may glimpse the day-break of dawn. May we take inspiration from the vision of Sappho, famed Lesbian poet of Ancient Greece, casting a sinner into the despairing depths of Tartarus.*

# Vale Sam Langford, 1996-2020

An Obituary for 2016 *Honi* editor Sam Langford. Written by Scoop for *Honi* (Andrew Bell, Natalie Buckett, Max Hall, Tom Joyner, Alexandros Tsathas, Subeta Vimalarajah, Mary Ward, Victoria Zerbst & Naaman Zhou)

**“Loss comes in many forms. Sometimes it creeps in quietly, unobtrusive until it is felt. Other times it comes in like a wrecking ball.” - Sam Langford**

On Saturday May 16, we lost Sam Langford. They were 23 years young and truly embodied the spirit of creativity and activism intrinsic to *Honi Soit*, which they edited in 2016.

To say Sam – or “Slang” – was smart seems an understatement. They arrived at university on a Hillsbus as a 17-year-old wunderkind who skipped kindergarten, duxed year 12, and found themselves in the debating society explaining to people three years their senior and three times their ego the flaws of libertarianism when they weren’t even old enough to be in the pub.

Transferring from psychology to political economy, Sam earned HDs and The Paul M. Sweezy Prize despite a packed schedule of involvements: they edited *BULL* magazine before this paper, alongside roles in SHADES and the Enviro Collective. Editing *Honi Soit* lets you do what you want, and that’s how we learnt Sam could do anything: write, draw, code – Sam could pick things up in days that would take others months. They co-designed the *Honi Soit* website which is still used today, learning web development along the way.

You can’t defame the dead, so it should be said the obvious corollary of this intelligence is Sam, who used she or they pronouns, was a big nerd who wrote fan fiction and kept bees. When they passed, Sam was taking one of their brother’s programming courses, just for the fun of it.

Two of their greatest joys were puns and fonts. The most perfect convergence of these two things came one late night in the *Honi* office when, watching one of their fellow editors completely butcher the design of a headline, they burst out: “Kern you not?” Their favourite font was Futura, a sans serif designed in 1927.

This nerdiness was threaded through their relationship with this newspaper, first as a reporter – their debut was an op-ed about cutting their hair short, their last story an exclusive historical investigation into the burial of thousands of USyd textbooks under a western Sydney cricket pitch – and then an editor. Sam kept an archive of every copy of *Honi Soit* they read. Not just the ones with their byline, or the ones they edited, but a perfect anthology of every copy they came to possess.

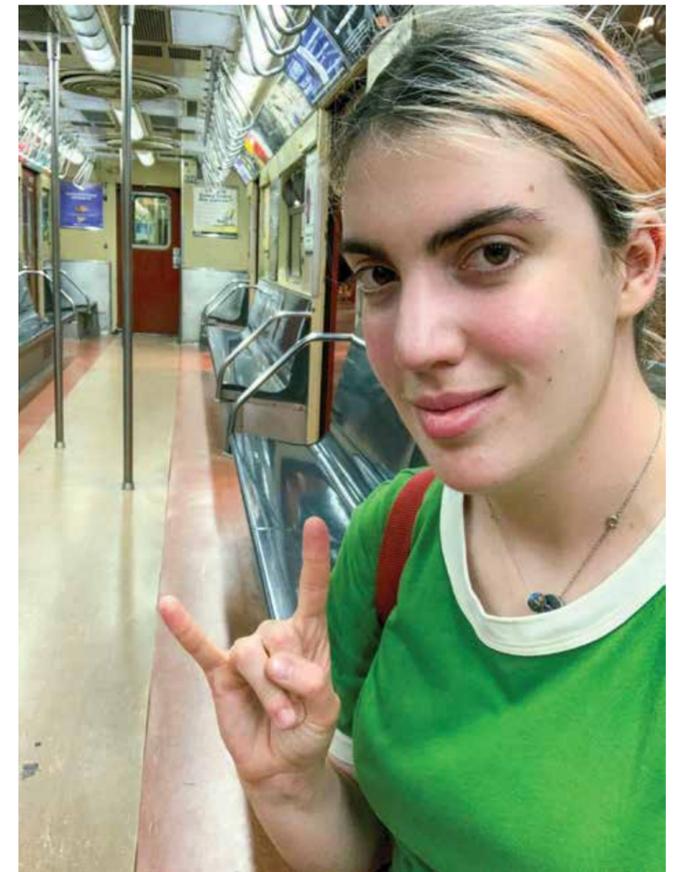
As an editor, they were as fastidious as they were kind: the minutes from our 7am Tuesday meetings – which Sam would attend after often having emerged from Sunday night’s lay-up as a Monday afternoon tutorial was getting underway – show countless times they pushed to work with a reporter on an idea, rather than just can it. They wanted as many people as possible to be able to experience the joy they did from being involved with the paper.

Sam was also a big jock, as they would remind you only half in jest. They were into deadlifting, played soccer and loved bushwalking. They once nearly got into a fight with some people at The National who were moshing in their personal space. In true Sam style, they were friends with their adversaries by the end of the night.

Fitness became an increasingly important part of Sam’s life after being diagnosed with epilepsy in 2018. Together with their dad – a physio and ex-NRL player – they developed a training regime to give their body the best chance against their condition. In his eulogy last Friday, he proudly announced the stats: they were deadlifting 100kg this month and, unable to do a chin up before starting the regime, they were now knocking out five.

In their work in student media and later in roles at Junkee and SBS, Sam showed a commitment to telling the stories others wouldn’t, or didn’t know existed. Many of the voices in the outpouring of grief after their passing were people who they gave a voice: the queer community, survivors, the ones being screwed over. Sam was dedicated in covering and caring about the closure of public housing at the Sirius building at Millers Point and brought activism to their own workplace when they unionised the Junkee staff (before promptly making a Tony Abbott meme about it).

The transition to adulthood can see many people’s relationships with their family strain or become distant, but Sam loved theirs and their company more than anything. A visit to Sam’s family home could mean your entry into a Langford



pool volleyball tournament or competitive completion of the Good Weekend Quiz. Their mum, Catherine, dad, Andrew, and younger brothers, Jack and Patrick, were not just their relatives but among their best friends.

And what a fortunate group to be part of. Sam had an incredibly low tolerance for bullshit about serious things, and an abiding love of bullshit at all other times. They had so much time for their friends and, despite their own numerous successes, were always so proud of them. New jobs, hobbies, relationships and disappointments: Sam kept track of it all. Except, of course, for what any of these characters in their friends’ stories looked like; extremely face blind, Sam was once approached by a close friend’s friend to congratulate them on a piece in *Honi* and, with the most compassionate and kind tone, replied, “I am so sorry. Who are you?”

It sucks to know we will never again hear Sam say “hey buddy” followed by “gimme one sec” as they stopped to take a picture of an ibis, or a particularly aesthetic pile of litter.

The quote at the start of this obituary is what Sam had to say in a 2016 ode to the now-demolished Transient Building, an asbestos-ridden Manning Road structure where cockroaches sat in on linguistics classes which Sam, in line with their Instagram-documented love of the Brutalist and the butt ugly, had a soft spot for. In the piece, they later asked: “How to mourn something so patently shit?”

We don’t know. We just wish they’d told us how to mourn someone so patently wonderful.

## TGA approves recommendation to reduce the whole blood deferral period for men who have sex with men to three months.

*Wilson Huang reports.*

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has approved a proposal from Australian Red Cross Lifeblood (Lifeblood) to decrease the deferral period from 12 months to three months for sexual activity-based deferrals for whole blood donors.

The regulation is subject to the approval of the Commonwealth, States and Territories including the NSW government which has supported the change.

This means that groups such as men who have sex with men (MSM), sex

workers, and transgender people who have had sex with a male will be able to donate whole blood earlier from their last sexual contact. However, the current 12-month restriction will continue to apply to apheresis plasma donations and people taking PrEP as they were outside the scope of Lifeblood's submission.

Queer advocates have tentatively welcomed the move. Concerns still remain, however, that the three-month deferral is not enough especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many have

said that the deferral period should be scrapped altogether in favour of an individualised risk assessment.

Some countries including Italy, South Africa, Portugal and Spain do not have blanket deferral periods for MSM and instead use individual risk factors such as multiple partners. While France has a blanket 4-month MSM ban, an individual assessment is used for quarantined apheresis plasma donations.

All plasma donors in France who have had only one sexual partner in the

past four months have their donation quarantined for at least two months until a new donation. This presumably allows monogamous couples in France to donate plasma.

Furthermore, the Brazilian Supreme Court recently overturned the country's 12-month MSM deferral ruling it unconstitutional. For now, Australia's 12-month MSM deferral remains in place.

## NSW Sex Industry to Remain Shut Throughout Economy Reopening

In the attempt to curb COVID 19 community transmission, all sex on premises businesses in New South Wales were forced to shut on the 23rd March 2020. Brothels and strip clubs have since not been included in the economy reopening plans presented by the Federal and NSW government.

17 Sydney brothels are now lobbying the NSW government to lift the closures, which have

been recommended to remain in place indefinitely by the Federal Government. In the Northern Territory and New Zealand, the decriminalised sex industries have reopened with restrictions. Industry lobbyists stress that strict hygiene standards will be enforced, alongside the introduction of a wide range of transmission minimising measures.

Industry spokesperson Julie

Bates suggests that clients will still

be seeking intimate experiences in less safe environments such as the dating app Tinder. The Scarlet Alliance states that "sex workers have been devastatingly hit by the impact of coronavirus" and the precarious nature of employment in the sex industry means that many workers are technically independent contractors and therefore ineligible

for the JobKeeper payment.

Migrant sex workers find themselves at heightened risk and remain unable to access any form of government support. Though engagement in online sex work, known as "camming", has risen steadily since lockdowns were enforced worldwide, for most sex workers this option remains unfeasible and risky, as well as less financially lucrative.

## The Second Draft of the Religious Freedoms Bill continues to threaten LGBT rights in education, healthcare, and the workplace

*Maddie Clarke reports.*

In the aftermath of marriage equality, little over two years ago, the Liberal Party has been eager for retribution. After the "Yes" vote won, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull set up a so-called expert panel to examine whether Australian law adequately "protects freedom of religion". This was an explicit attempt to undermine equality for the LGBTI+ community and placate the far right of his party. This panel, chaired by "No" campaigner Philip Ruddock, then set out 20 recommendations on how to better legislate these religious freedoms.

The recommendations laid out by Ruddock, published mid-2018, included a number of clarifications regarding discrimination law, especially in relation to schools and the celebration of marriages. These included religious schools receiving expanded rights to refuse students and the clarification that religious exceptions to anti-discrimination law apply for marriage celebrants.

While the panel didn't find that religious freedoms were threatened in Australia, 14 of these recommendations were accepted in late 2018, and the first exposure draft of the Religious Discrimination Bill was released in August 2019. After facing widespread criticism,

largely from religious groups who demanded further 'protections', a second exposure draft was released in December 2019, which continues to have concerning impacts on many areas, including education, employment, and medical services. Despite the complicated process of enacting the changes, Attorney-General Christian Porter has assured the public that the bill is still on the agenda for the current government.

One of the most worrying aspects of the draft bill is that it establishes a right to make a "statement of belief". This right overrides the anti-discrimination laws of all eight states and territories, as well as all federal anti-discrimination laws, including the Race Discrimination Act and the Sex Discrimination Act. It will allow people to make discriminatory statements such as Israel Folau's infamous comment that "all homosexuals should go to hell", by protecting them from legal ramifications as long as it can be claimed as a "statement of belief".

Another problematic section of the Bill involves an amendment to the Marriage Act, in creating a definition of marriage called a "relevant marriage belief", which can be held by individuals or institutions. These beliefs include that marriage

is exclusively between a man and a woman, and that marriages outside of this definition are harmful to children raised in them and contrary to human society. The Bill would give legal protection to institutions or individuals who object to same-sex marriage, in part by making it unlawful for Federal, State, or Territory governments to limit funding to an entity on the ground of holding a "relevant marriage belief".

The Bill also contains various other provisions that go far beyond the scope of existing discrimination laws. Section 8 prohibits any rule imposed on an employer on a health practitioner that would require them to perform services to which they have a religious objection. This could allow doctors to refuse to perform abortions or to provide any healthcare for LGBTIQ+ people or families.

This is of particular note when considering Indigenous Australians living in remote communities, where equitable service provision is already a challenge. This Bill places the rights of the practitioner over the rights of the patients, and its reliance on the discretion of health providers promotes inconsistent applications. If a patient in a remote area is refused a health service, the next closest practitioner may be an

inhibiting distance away, which is especially likely given that religious organisations are the sole practitioner in many areas of the Northern Territory.

It will also enshrine the ability of religious institutions to expel students and fire staff for being gay or for even expressing pro-equality opinions - a dire situation that is forcing teachers and students back into the closets.

Labor is unlikely to support the bill in its current form, but has previously pledged to work with the Coalition to introduce some form of religious protections into Australian law. In January 2020, Albanese worked in consultation regarding the bill with LGBT+ community groups and activists, as well as unions, human rights, women's groups, and the Australian Medical Association.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been protests against the bill around Australia, in Sydney being led by Community Action for Rainbow Rights (CARR). These protests are a continuation of a long history of queer activism and demonstrate that queer people, and others impacted by such blatant attacks on anti-discrimination law, are not going to stay quiet. As the famous Stonewall slogan goes, "Out of the closet and into the streets!"

## healthcare outside the binary

### Julz Goff explores why we need to do more for enbies in NSW

Non-binary people have been largely underrepresented in research, policy, and healthcare initiatives. While we are making strides in access to social, legal, and medical gender affirmation for all gender diverse people, non-binary and gender queer people are still less likely to access desired gender affirming healthcare than binary transgender people.

There has been an uptake of the term "gender diverse" among sexual health academics in an attempt to break away from the binary gender trap. It is an umbrella term that includes anyone that is not cis-gendered, or doesn't identify fully with the gender they were assigned at birth. This includes binary transgender (BT) individuals - those who identify as male or female. Non-binary and gender queer (NBGQ) has also been taken up to identify the subgroup of gender diverse people who are not binary transgender.

Attempts have been made to include people beyond the binary by using terms like transgender, trans\* or trans umbrella, but ultimately the "opposite" implied by the prefix trans makes identifying as non-binary a little confusing. For this reason, there are many people who identify somewhere outside that binary and don't feel that these words apply to them. On the other hand, many do feel like they are part of the trans community or would like to be. NBGQ or gender diverse are now being used in academic contexts to be more inclusive, but the research is still catching up to the community's understanding of what non-binary even is.

Some of the most up to date gender research estimates that up to 53.5% of gender diverse Australians identify as non-binary rather than binary transgender, yet most past research has been focused on BT folks. Many studies on health and gender diversity have recruited transgender people without creating subgroups, which creates two issues. Firstly, they did not distinguish between binary and non-binary participants, and secondly, the specification of 'transgender' may have led potential non-binary participants to believe they weren't welcome in these studies. This kind of exclusion from research makes it impossible for the scientific community to have realistic data on the unique needs of non-binary people. Unfortunately, the necessary changes made in legislation and norms in healthcare on a larger scale often rely on data that supports the need for change. We are doing more now, but there's still a long way to go.

From the research we do have, NBGQ and BT people experience different barriers to health and healthcare, different social and economic barriers, and even differ in the ages at which they come to understand their identity. Many of us are familiar with the story of the trans kid who has known since he was three that he's really a boy. However, with NBGQ people, the average age of realizing their identity is older than it is for BT people. This could be related to social factors that reinforce the binary as well as differential developmental processes for these two groups. NBGQ people are more likely to be housing insecure and less likely to have familial and social support than BT people, which impacts everything from mental health to access to basic healthcare.

When it comes to the way we approach gender related healthcare, it's important for everyone from GPs and nurses to gender therapists to have at minimum a basic understanding of gender diversity. Activism in social acceptance is invaluable, but for things to change in healthcare, we need activism in research. We need comprehensive studies that prove why healthcare workers need to be trained in gender diversity as a rule.

All healthcare should be approached from a gender-sensitive lens. The role of educator is often left with the patient, as their GP, psychologist, or other doctors might know very little about gender diversity. NBGQ people are often left behind when it comes to sexual healthcare, in part because NBGQ people may feel uncomfortable going to doctors generally. Specifically for sexual health issues, they are more likely than even BT people to encounter insensitive and misgendering language use. Similarly, they may not feel confident negotiating safer sex with partners, as gendered terms and roles can induce feelings of dysphoria. If sexual health is hard to deal with at home, and harder with a GP, it's easy to imagine the impact this could have on the sexual well-being of NBGQ people.

A simple improvement is to ensure that intake forms include a preferred name

and pronoun section. If you go to a GP for the first time, you may need to list your legal name and the sex on your legal documents, which is often difficult to have changed to reflect your gender identity. However, if my GP reads that I prefer to be called Julz, even though my legal name is Julianne, and I use they/ them pronouns, they can then integrate that into their first meeting with me and avoid making me feel more uncomfortable than I need to be. All medical professionals can be encouraged to always use preferred names and pronouns, and ask if there are any changes to make sure their files are up to date. As language around gender changes, and enbies learn to better self identify, they may need to make these changes on occasion.

Gender diversity training resources for healthcare workers exist, but in most cases they are optional. Resources in NSW like Transhub are great places to search for doctors that already know this stuff - but realistically not everyone has easy access to supportive doctors. We shouldn't be required to seek out specialists, or go far from home, when all we need is a GP, nor should we be required to see a local GP and be misgendered on our visits.

In addition to more training within general healthcare, we need to consider improvements we can make to access to gender affirming healthcare for NBGQ people. Gender affirmation is multifaceted, covering the ways in which a person may choose to more closely align their life with their gender. Gender therapy, social gender affirmation, hormone replacement therapy (HRT), gender-affirming surgeries, and legal gender affirmation are all potential aspects of gender affirmation. While none of these processes are necessary for someone to live as their gender, they can be valuable for reducing dysphoria and taking steps toward socially affirming your gender.

Legal gender affirmation is the process of changing your name and/ or gender marker on legal documents, such as your birth certificate and driver's license. In NSW, your gender marker can be male, female, or other gender. This is an incredible update that opens up legal affirmation to more NBGQ people. However, this change currently requires the individual to have undergone at least one gender affirming surgery. While there are differences between NBGQ and BT groups in desire for gender affirming healthcare, NBGQ participants that do hope to access these services are less likely to have done so. Because fewer NBGQ people have access to these interventions, and not all NBGQ actually want gender-affirming surgery, it is impossible for many NBGQ to have their gender and name changed legally. This can be detrimental to their mental health and can result in a reluctance to access healthcare resources, apply for new jobs, or generally socialize in unfamiliar settings. This is also relevant for many BT people, but they are both more likely to desire gender affirming surgery and more likely to have already had surgery.

Considering the barriers NBGQ people face, it's not surprising that NBGQ people in NSW are less likely than BT people to be socially, legally, or physically affirmed in their gender. Assuming that all gender diverse people want or able to access gender affirming surgery is discriminatory and insensitive. Policies that result in fewer barriers to legal gender affirmation wouldn't just be good for enbies, as BT people would also benefit.

Pressuring someone to make the choice between potentially unnecessary or inaccessible surgery, and being unable to change their gender markers, is no small decision. Legal, social, and medical affirmation should be available to all people in whatever capacity is appropriate for them. NBGQ people are frequently told that they are not real. Like the ever-present plight of bi-erasure, we are often told to pick a side - and we shouldn't have to.

It's important, as policies and norms evolve, that we keep in mind that all aspects of gender affirmation should be available to gender diverse people. With fairer policies and more educated healthcare workers, NBGQ people can work with their doctors and psychologists to make decisions around gender affirmation that are right for them. If we aren't gathering sufficient gender research, this community will continue to be underserved as we don't really understand their needs. As long as healthcare workers aren't required to have gender diversity training, enbies will continue to be misgendered and feel unwelcome.

# WE ARE NOT ALL IN THIS TOGETHER.

*Nina Mountford explores the reality of many queer people during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

A couple of weeks ago, I was walking through Newtown on my daily government-sanctioned exercise when I noticed something. Strung from a small block of apartments was a banner reading: “We’re all in this together Sydney.” Though it was a sweet sentiment, it felt eerily similar to the tokenism echoed by many mansion-ridden celebrities on social media. Despite the apartments not having private pools or stone columns, I felt a twinge of the same distaste seeing that sign in the Inner West, a queer paradise sitting on stolen Indigenous Gadigal land.

Many queer youth have made Newtown their home, drawn in by the supportive haven it offers. However, this, as well as its artistic and creative culture, has also drawn in a different and more financially stable crowd. The bitter reality is that well-off families and professionals are still able to afford the high rent throughout the COVID-19 crisis. But the people who are responsible for Newtown’s vibrance and diversity, the Indigenous people who hold sovereignty over this land and young queer people, are being disproportionately affected by the crisis. In a time where connection and community are needed most, this queer paradise is being threatened.

There are many social factors that put queer people, particularly queer people of colour, at a higher risk of extreme hardship during isolation and quarantine. Queer people already face higher rates of homelessness, unemployment, health inequalities and estrangement from their parents compared to the general population; all of which are likely to worsen during the course of the shutdown.

The same structures of oppression that existed before COVID-19 do not magically disappear. These structures continue to make people who are marginalised and from low socioeconomic backgrounds more vulnerable. This ensures that these are the people suffering the most from this pandemic.

Down the road from that well-intentioned sign is a half-empty share house with rainbow flags hanging from the windows. According to the National LGBTI Health Alliance, 51% of LGBTQIA+ young people including 71% of young gender diverse people between the ages of 14-21 do not live at home with family. With job cuts predominantly affecting young people who work part-time and casually, they are one of the groups under the most financial pressure right now.

With the dramatically increased rates of youth unemployment under COVID-19, many young people are being forced to move back in with parents in order to avoid homelessness. For many, this is a frustrating but manageable option; but for others moving back home can be dangerous.

Many young queer people are now being forced to choose between two equally bad options. They can either live somewhere safe and supportive but with an increased financial burden and risk of homelessness, or lose all access to safety for months in order to not bankrupt themselves. For the queer students moving back home, the sense of freedom and safety promised by suburbs like Newtown, or by virtue of living with people they choose, is now being stripped from them.

Those who are still closeted or not accepted at home are now completely on their own. Financial independence, support structures, and health services are out of reach because for many queer people

their isolation is absolute. For many, safer spaces like Newtown were their only opportunity to access healthcare, given that queer people were already less likely to seek it out often due to fear and previous trauma. These spaces are especially important now as many would feel uncomfortable getting coronavirus testing elsewhere.

Considering that queer people already had disproportionately higher rates of disability, substance abuse, cancer, and HIV infection before the global pandemic, moving away from their usual queer friendly practioners can lead to poorer health outcomes. In effect, it condemns queer people to the possibility of worsened health conditions during a crisis caused by a virus that can be deadly to those with pre-existing health conditions.

With this necessary isolation comes a constant state of fear, potential physical danger, and emotional stress. Those who have to return to the closet to move back home are now forced to hide under constant surveillance. Sadly, this means many must pack up any queer memorabilia or clothing. Contact with the queer community has all but disappeared when Zoom calls with queer friends means whispering behind the backs of queerphobic or unaware family members. But it is not just social support structures that are being uprooted by quarantine; professional support is also affected. Many queer people are in situations where they are not able to talk to their therapists on the phone for fear that their new housemates might overhear. Additionally, some trans and gender diverse people have to access important lifesaving hormones in secret.

Exposure to any of these scenarios is likely to have a negative impact on mental health. Young queer people have some of the highest rates of depression and anxiety in the country, and the pandemic disproportionately harms them.

For those who cannot move back home, there are many more issues to be faced. Trans people face higher levels of abuse than other members of the queer community, and finding safe employment and housing was already difficult before the pandemic. Now, with an increased national reliance on government welfare, trans people attempting to navigate the application process are at risk of being misgendered and dead-named. The legal process to change their names is too arduous and some would not be allowed to change their gender on their birth certificates without surgery. Nevertheless, the process to change gender with Services Australia, including Medicare and Centrelink, only requires a statement from a doctor or psychologist; however, non-binary genders aren’t recorded.

Along with these barriers, people under 22 are also further disadvantaged as they are normally classified as ‘dependent’ on their parents for Centrelink, making access to welfare harder if they are socially estranged from family. Although there are exceptions for situations where it is “unreasonable to live at home,” the onus of proof remains on the person.

It is undeniable that the queer community is being hit hard by social isolation. For many, leaving high school and being able to attend university is a massive opportunity to explore facets of themselves that they previously could not have. It is a time when many students can comfortably explore their sexuality for the first time. Some are finally safe to come out, and it is often one of the first times young queer people can meet others who have similar experiences.

While the internet is a fantastic resource for queer education, it is used in tandem with in-person interactions and experiences where queer people are provided the best opportunity to flourish. In lockdown, first year queer students are being denied these formative experiences including Birdcage and other quintessential queer social events. These safe spaces are being forced to close their doors just as the gaybies were filling in their eyebrows or putting on their first binder. Being around other queer people is so important for many young queer people that even though not being able to go to parties is not the end of the world, being shut out of all queer social interactions is devastating.

Overall, the pandemic has clearly affected the large majority of people. However, to say that everyone is in the same boat is an oversimplification. The people hit the hardest by financial and emotional instability during COVID-19 are those who were already facing insecurity and health inequalities. Sending a message of support can be great but only if we remember that some people are having a much harder time. Until we acknowledge this and work to combat all the different inequalities people face, remember, we are not all in this together.

# The Construction of Sodomy

*Paola Ayre on the evolving attitudes towards homosexuality over history and the socially constructed nature of sin*

Of all the grave sins made known to mankind, the practice of sodomy is definitely in the top five, possibly top three, worst abominations of all time, historically speaking. What remains little understood is the evolving societal conceptions and tolerance towards homosexuality. Those great biblical sins that still loom large today in the collective consciousness - such as gay sex, sex work, and witchcraft are in fact ahistorically imagined as being linearly condemned throughout the centuries. Even within the early Christian clergy, homosexual behaviour was fairly openly documented by members of all-male monasteries up until the 12th century. Homosexuality itself was not conceptualised as a fully-fledged and distinct sexual identity until the Victorian era in the West, when it was classified as a mental disorder rather than theological sin. The evolving nature of social responses to such practises can be clearly linked to shifting and increasingly unstable social and political climates which threatened the established political order. Homosexuality, alongside a myriad of other social phenomena, simply provided the perfect scapegoat to blame for societal upheaval.

Before the pathologization of homosexuality in the 18th century, European societies did not have a clear cut conception of queerness. Sodomy was understood to be an immoral act, but the Bible makes little reference to this, of the 35,527 verses in the Catholic Bible, only seven – 0.02% can possibly be interpreted as prohibitory of homosexual acts. The infamous tale of Sodom and Gomorrah stands out, but unbeknownst to many, the twin sin cities of yonder were not razed to the ground by God due to sodomy, but instead for being inhospitable and arrogant to foreigners - “Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy.” Though sexual deviancy is strongly implied, not once is sodomy explicitly stated. It would be 1500 years before Philo of Alexandria equated the story of Sodom with homosexuality.

Analysing early Christian views of sex highlights how volatile these attitudes are, and how much social circumstances of the time influenced them. In the first two centuries AD, when Christianity was still primarily an ascetic cult, all sex was abhorred. The Essenese, one of these early groups, did not believe marriage to be compatible with piety and would prevent one from receiving deliverance. The Marcionites in 144 AD denounced family life, marriage and sensual pleasure and believed this distinguished them from barbarism. It would not be until Christianity transformed into the official religion of the Roman Empire, over the course of the 3rd century AD, that sex within marriage was officially sanctioned as holy. Augustine of Hippo’s treatise “On the good of marriage” argued for the three goods of marriage - children, fidelity and sacrament. He put forth the claim that celibacy ought to be enforced for clergy only. If not for this radical departure from the ascetic origins of Christianity, the new faith was much less likely to have taken root and gained a mass following amongst Rome’s previously pagan adherents.

When homosexual acts were criticised by the early ascetic Christians, it was often alongside very long treatises on similarly sinful acts, of which nearly all notions of sensuality were included. Rather than the act of homosexuality being intrinsically wicked, it has been theorised that this early condemnation arose due to the subversion of increasingly rigid gender norms and hierarchy. A man engaging

in a passive “female” position during homosexual sex was deemed unmasculine to which Philo stated was “the greatest of all evils”. Despite this, early Christianpriests and monks are known to have written of their same-sex affairs and desires without facing punitive punishment. St. Aelred of Riveaulx, a widely beloved English abbot, was widely known to be gay, and wrote openly on his ongoing physical and emotional relationships with men in the 11th century AD.

Since the fall of the Roman empire in 465 AD, the Catholic Church rose to fill the vacuum of power. The middle ages saw the peak of the church’s influence and wealth. But this all-encompassing grip on power was not destined to last. The Empire was continuously subject to destabilising forces like invasions and civil war, and first began to falter significantly in the 12th century. The 4th Lateran council assembled for the purpose of internal reformation and the expansion of church powers. Amongst the most notable reformations was the enforcement of yearly confession for all Christians, which signified a shift in the church’s focus of interest and increased obsession with moral purity and renouncement of sin. Greater vigour and attention was given to the demonisation of “sodomy”, which began to be explicitly condemned. Theologians such as Thomas of Cantimpre stated that gay monks would be beset by demonological visions rather than the comforts of heaven at the end of their life. Severer penalties became more frequently issued by civil authorities at the behest of the church and homosexual activity within the clergy as well as in broader society was forced underground. This increasing social hostility would grow into a rising tide of conspiratorial aggression and oppression which reached a fever peak with the witch trials of the early modern period. Previously tolerated and respected herbal folk healers were now considered devil worshipping heretics, alongside scientists and atheists who posed any perceived destabilising threat to the paramountcy of the church’s authority. Extramarital, homosexual behaviour was viewed as a direct subversion of the sanctity of marriage, and thus a destabilising force to the very reproductive and transactional foundation of society. Thomas Aquinas’ widely influential natural law theory, which conceptualises the primary intellectual argument against homosexuality that is still invoked today, claimed that not only is sodomy a legal and religious transgression but “unnatural” according to the intrinsic moral law of nature. The core of this argument has since been invoked frequently throughout history and in Australia, as recently as the 2017 marriage equality plebiscite.

All of these shifting values and sweeping reformations were triggered by great socioeconomic shifts in Europe. As cities grew more affluent, they became increasingly pluralistic and therefore divided. The black death and 100-year war also induced the end of feudalism and the golden age of the church’s authority. The rise of mercantilism and invasion of the Americas introduced new empires and directed wealth towards burgeoning nation states rather than the church. The enlightenment would further critique and dismantle the theological basis of the church’s monopoly over knowledge and truth. As seen repeated many times over throughout history, times of great social change and unrest give rise to intensely dualistic ways of thinking, increased hostility to outsiders and greater suppression of acts deemed destabilising to the reigning social order. When the dominant hegemonic power senses attack, it seeks to assert its authority and moral integrity through its opposition to an opposing “evil” force. The greatest evil that the Catholic Church could conceive of was the devil himself, made manifest through various forms of social upheaval and fought through the scapegoating and persecution of minorities and revolutionary thinkers. The era of McCarthyism in US history followed the precedent set by the inquisition, complete with corrupted trials and virulent conspiracies. The new demonic force to be reckoned with was communism, as its very existence threatened to destabilise the established capitalistic order.

Homoeroticism would again flourish during the Renaissance, with many great artists only thinly shrouding their reverence and desire of the male form within their artworks and sculptures, often commissioned and funded by the church itself, such as Micheangelo’s “David” and his Sistine Chapel nude frescos. According to Foucault, with the advent of modern medicine, science, and psychology amongst many other newly developed modes of analysing the world, “the 19th century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case study and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life form and a morphology”. While this evolved definition was perhaps a departure in the right direction from religious condemnation of the previous millenia, homosexuality was still academically conceptualised as a medical affliction and was penalised just the same, if not harsher. It would take until 1973 for homosexuality to be declassified as a mental illness in response to radically shifting sociopolitical circumstances, such as the sexual revolution.

By overviewing the evolving nature of social tolerance and hostility towards homosexuality throughout history, we are reminded of how all notion of sin is socially constructed and not based in any legitimate objectivity, but rather is formed as a defensive psychosocial response to the uncertainty and change inherent within the world.

# A different kind of representation

*Priya Gupta explores the necessity of including questions about gender and sexual orientation in Australia's census, and the importance of representation in data.*

In August 2021, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) will conduct Australia's 18th National Census. The census is run every five years by the ABS and is a chance to collect crucial data about the entire population. The census questions cover topics including marital status, occupation, languages spoken, and family size. The data gathered is used to inform policy development, funding and resource allocation, upcoming research, and evaluate government programs. Notably absent from past censuses, and the upcoming one, is any question regarding the sexuality or gender identification of those surveyed.

Every census cycle, the ABS consults with the public, various organisations and government bodies to consider changing the questions to better reflect the needs of current society. All the same, the topics and questions have remained the same since the 2006 census. This cycle, the ABS has undertaken extensive consultation regarding new topics for consideration.

From April to June 2018, public consultation saw over 400 submissions received from different stakeholders. A broad range of questions and topics were suggested, including gender and sexuality, disability and career status, education and training, and unpaid work. These topics were then analysed against criteria including whether the topic can be efficiently and accurately completed by households, if there was no other suitable alternative for the data in question, and if the topics would be considered acceptable by census respondents. Gender and sexual orientation, amongst seven other topics, were found to warrant further consideration, and were then analysed with regards to their potential inclusion, focusing on the burden to respondents and the cost of collecting and analysing information.

As a result of their consultations, the ABS found that data on gender and sexuality would be useful to all levels of government, and that the Department of Health and the Department of Social Services require this information. Despite this, and the lack of large-scale sources on data and sexuality, the ABS recommended that the government not include questions on sexual orientation, however non-binary will be added as a response category to the question regarding gender. While this is a definite improvement, there still remains no question or response option which allows for respondents to indicate that they are intersex, transgender, or genderqueer.

What makes the census so powerful as a data collection tool is obvious; unlike surveys, it can collect data from the entire population, rather than relying on a subset of respondents, which often poorly represents the entire country. Censuses remove many of the biases which often underlie surveys. In particular, selection bias is eliminated, which generally arises in surveys when the selection of individuals or groups for data collection isn't properly randomised, meaning the data will not be representative of the entire population. This is also compounded by the existence of respondent bias, in particular when the questions asked are of a sensitive nature, as they would be in this case. When dealing with a sizable, variable, and historically disadvantaged subset of the population, it is necessary to collect the most accurate data possible.

Inclusion in the national census would be symbolically significant with the government acknowledging the existence of LGBTI people as an important part of Australia's population. Far more importantly however, this data has enormous potential to inform government policy and services, including housing and health, as well as services provided by advocacy groups or within the queer community. Without widespread and reliable data, organisations struggle to provide resources to support LGBTI people in specific and sensitive ways. The LGBTI community is one which has been made vulnerable by the purposeful disengagement of government; a lack of data only serves this purpose and reduces pressure on the government to provide necessary services.

The most obvious use of this data would be gaining accurate knowledge on the proportion of Australia's population that are LGBTI. Current estimates put this percentage from as low as 2% to over 10%. The accuracy of current statistics is particularly poor for trans and gender diverse people, with survey techniques frequently failing to distinguish between non-cisgender identities, forcing people to respond inaccurately and obscuring the true spread. Small scale surveys with a limited sample size often require the entire set of data to be coupled together, further obscuring demographic information such as age distribution, which is necessary to know because LGBTI people, like the general

population, have different needs at different ages.

Another extremely important use of this kind of data is for allocating funding for social services. The LGBTI community is disproportionately likely to need and use these programs, especially services such as health and housing. LGBTI people are at least twice as likely to experience homelessness than their non-queer counterparts, which is compounded by the fact that homeless shelters are often faith based, and discriminate against queer people. Information on housing and homelessness would prompt the government to address this issue, and ensure that there are homeless shelters and housing which are safe and inclusive for LGBTI people.

In many areas, LGBTI people have poorer health outcomes than the general population. This includes higher incidence of mental health problems, smoking, HIV positive status, disordered eating, substance abuse, and a higher likelihood of experiencing violence. LGBTI people may also be at higher risk of cancer, including breast, prostate, and liver cancer. This disparity in health is likely due to actual or perceived queerphobia, which may result in inferior care or an avoidance of health professionals. Census data on LGBTI people would demonstrate the gap that already exists, and may be useful in pushing back against the Religious Discrimination Bill, which will exacerbate queerphobia in healthcare. There are multiple national programs such as the Aged Care Diversity Framework, and the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan, which consider LGBTI communities to be vulnerable groups who must be prioritised for action. Such data would allow these programs' effectiveness to be evaluated over time.

If included in the 2021 census, these questions would likely be accepted in Australia's future censuses. This means we could see trends over time in both societal makeup and social attitudes. Questions about same-sex couples have been in the Australian census since 1996, and in this time, the number of same-sex couples living together, according to census data, has quadrupled. This is likely due to both an increase in partners living together, and an increased willingness to self-identify, reflecting improved societal attitudes towards queer relationships. Census data would also be analysed to reveal the intersections between gender and sexual orientation, and education, work, religious affiliation, occupation, and income, as well as where queer communities are living. These trends could be tracked over time to see how they change.

The Australian Government appears to have taken on board the ABS' recommendation not to include these questions, despite the clear importance of this data, and its potential use in all levels of government. Why, then, did the ABS recommend non-inclusion of questions regarding sexual orientation? The ABS cited a desire to keep the "burden we place on responding households to a minimum", likely referring to potential confusion arising from the questions. Another reason cited was that respondents may have a lack of trust in the government, leading to privacy concerns which could reduce the accuracy of the data. This potential decrease in accuracy, due to mistrust or misunderstanding, would likely be able to be adjusted, as other areas of data are, to account for the expected undercalculation. In addition, in the small-scale testing which was undertaken with the relevant questions, it was found that the adverse reaction wasn't significant enough to impact either the quality of data or response rates. Even in the case of partial undercounting, this data's benefits extend beyond finding the net amount of queer people, to their patterns of location, demographics, education and occupation. Ultimately, even if the ABS' concerns are correct, this data would still far surpass current data about LGBTI Australians, and would be of immense value to the community.

At this point, public consultation is over, and the questions for the 2021 census are being finalised. They will be released later this year, but we do know that there will be no questions regarding sexual orientation, and no potential response to indicate being a binary transgender person, or intersex. Including these questions should not be unthinkable for the government. Both New Zealand and the United Kingdom, countries we see as politically and socially comparable to Australia, are including questions regarding sexual orientation and gender identity, including transness, in their 2021 census. Australia's reluctance on this matter will see sexuality and gender diverse people waiting until at least 2026 to see ourselves represented where it counts, in the data which informs policy and social services.

# Masc conceptions of nature

*Ellie Stephenson cautions against the dominant conception of the Australian landscape as a purely masculine pursuit.*

People often claim that Australia is a nation with an outdoorsy ethos. Liking the outdoors is up there with enjoying vegemite and playing cricket - cheerfully exploited in advertisements and lazily employed as a rhetorical tool. When many people picture Australian life, they imagine camping, four-wheel-driving, days at the beach. All the same, in the Australian imagination, the bush is wild, waiting to be overcome. It's routine for people to boast fearfully about our dangerous wildlife, constantly framing Australian nature as a hostile place. It's rhetoric passed down from our colonial ancestors; nature is there to be conquered, to be tamed. Who, in this imagination, interacts with nature? Straight men.

The outdoors is framed as a traditionally masculine pursuit, from the stockmen in bush poetry to the stereotype of the camping-fishing-jetskiing bloke. In this framing, the environment exists as a tool with which to confirm one's masculinity and a source of free adrenaline. The outdoors is there to be rough, to be in danger, and to be solitary. It is there to be overcome, by withstanding the elements and beating the terrain.

By contrast, queerness and femininity are relegated to the urban and suburban. The traditional image of a woman is, of course, domestic. But even the cultural image of an empowered woman is city-based - found in corporate headquarters or on building sites. Queerness is still more localised - the collective mind packages it into rapidly gentrifying inner-city gaybourhoods and cultural scenes.

This framing has two effects: it prevents our society from having a productive relationship with the environment, and it harms the people who are excluded from interacting with nature.

The view of nature as a site for masculinity produces destructive attitudes towards it. Because the narratives about nature hyperbolise how it can be threatening and brutal, the way society responds to it reflects that. Australians, rather than being outdoorsy, have a pervasive and pathological fear of nature. That's why it's more common for people to take fearful pride in funnel web spiders and taipans than to direct joy and affection towards potoroos, numbats and pademelons - marsupials that many Australians would probably not recognise. That's why, when many people speak about Australian ecosystems they emphasise "droughts and flooding rains", not jewel beetles and hanging swamps and lagoons and billies. Perhaps it's why people are so willing to cut down suburban trees and to cull sharks.

I've heard people complain that the Australian landscape is brown, not lush and verdant and neatly European. It makes me sad. They're missing the shimmer of heat on the horizon, the elegant amber trunks of angophoras, the vivid incandescent columns of banksia spinulosa, the glowing silhouettes of sunlit boulders, the glistening spine of a diamond python. We have internalised a vision of nature designed to be conquered and suppressed. A landscape which has been drained of colour, softness and variation is one which can be plundered by capitalism and colonialism.

On an individual level, too, this framing of nature is dangerous. I remember enduring my commute listening to a guy talk in the quiet carriage - he was moving to a leafy new housing development and he was worried about snakes. He talked about buying a gun. I thought about how horrible it was that this man was brave enough to shoot a snake but not brave enough to let one live. His automatic assumption was to subdue and destroy intrusions of nature into his living space, not to attempt to coexist. The anger at laws

restricting fishing or beach driving reveal a similar entitlement. The nests of endangered seabirds don't stand a chance against vehicular thrill seeking. The monumental curves of sand dunes and the quivering of their plant life in the sea breeze become like enemies, to be subjected to roaring engines and thick tyres. Vivid marine biodiversity becomes just red tape to be torn away.

This is not to suggest that these attitudes are inherently masculine nor that nature ought to be viewed as feminine. What I am arguing is that nature in Australia has been defined in reference to a colonial masculinity which justifies conquest and destruction and legitimises settling stolen land. The untameable and unrestrained characterisation of the bush and its sharp contrast to European countryside (which, by the way, is ahistorical and ignores primary evidence suggesting that the Australian landscape pre-1788 was carefully managed) is used to create a sense of nationhood hinged on terra nullius. In turn, Australian conceptions of masculinity have been shaped by a shared ethos - constructed through cultural myths and rights of passage - of extractive and destructive interactions with nature. This is partly why, I think, images of 'the bush' and rural areas have been reserved as a space for whiteness.

While obviously not preventing queer people and women from enjoying the environment, these narratives certainly make outdoors spaces less welcoming to us. Where outdoors pursuits are filled with heteronormative masculinity, it can be intimidating and make these experiences less accessible. If I hadn't grown up being encouraged to explore nature, I'm not sure I'd know where to start: the cultural image of these adventures preserves them, by and large, for a particular set of people.

All this means that it's time to start reframing the way we think about the environment. Claiming the environment as a queer space is important: we should feel empowered to experience joy from nature. As a community, we can create opportunities to do that - hiking or camping or adventuring together. But on a broader level, we should attempt to reframe Australian conceptions of nature. We can do this by challenging destructive and exclusionary depictions of nature and by platforming more productive ones.

I really admire the Instagram page @indigenouwomenhike, which explores the relationship of Indigenous women with the land (in this case the US) through hiking. The founder,

*Art by Jocelin Chan*

Jolie, uses the page to reveal the Indigenous history of popular hiking trails and to unpack the ways in which nature can facilitate healing. Telling these stories is important - they add a dimension to the way people imagine the environment, evoking the rich histories and emotions of the landscape. Where we have previously imagined Australian nature to be hostile and unforgiving, we can see an intricate and beautiful ecosphere. And this can change our instincts about how to treat the environment: it is not there to be overcome or exploited - a one-sided relation of dominance - but to be lived with.

We have been trained not to appreciate colonised nature. It's bad for us as well as the environment. Cultural stereotypes about the environment are used to preserve restrictive and outdated views of gender, while perpetuating harmful attitudes towards nature. The pursuit to push back against these reductive narratives is an important one, which has the potential to revolutionise our relationship to our physical surroundings, culturally binding us to the land and driving us to refuse to accept its exploitation.



Standing amidst a crowd of newly-found friends under the Mardi Gras night sky, I could not feel more at home. I marched with the No Pride in Detention collective, armed with blaring music, "Homos against Scomo" shirts, and signs naming Australian atrocities against queer and trans refugees. As floats passed by ours, we erupted in cheers and the occasional boo, understandably aimed at the Liberal Party's entry — but surprisingly to me, Labor's float as well.

As an international student living in suburban America, where performative "wokeness" and a corporate, centrist Democratic party are idealized, I at first dismissed such vocal criticisms of a left-leaning party as counterproductive. However, I joined in on their criticism after learning of Labor's frequent pivots on important issues, including their unwavering support for the coal and gas industries. And now — quarantined back in the US and shocked to learn that RuPaul leases water and mineral rights on her Wyoming land to oil companies — I decided to apply that same energy to the intersection of queer and environmental politics in my home country.

It's no secret that radical centrism has been at the heart of leading queer institutions in the US for generations: the banger Human Rights Champagne Fund should get you caught up to speed. However, what's often lost on our community is the effect this phenomenon has on modern climate and environmental movements. It's one thing to preach intersectionality on a college campus, and it's another to stand idly by while authorities are instructed to stop two-spirit activists opposing Obama's Keystone XL pipeline "by any means." The environmental implications of being queer are huge, and much more all-encompassing than praising paltry corporate sustainability efforts and posting a shirtless photo on Earth Day to top it off.

Queer and trans people have always been disproportionately affected by climate and environmental disasters, and the gap will continue to widen as financial, social, and legal institutions with histories of discrimination are stretched to their breaking point. Traditionally, American cities regarded as queer-friendly, safe spaces are located near significant bodies of water, leaving them vulnerable to increasing flooding events and natural disasters. As climate change spawns increasing numbers of climate refugees, those most harmed by displacement are people whom structural inequalities have already rendered vulnerable. These differences divide our queer community along lines of race, class, and gender identity, harming those who are less likely to avoid incarceration, less likely to receive adequate healthcare, and less likely to find housing.

The case of Sharli'e Vicks exemplifies how climate disasters and queer and transphobia are interlinked with one another. Sharli'e Vicks, a black, transgender woman living in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina, was forced to swim for her life when a levee broke, traveling 1.5 miles to reach higher ground. After spending multiple days on an overpass, she and her two cousins — one of whom were trans — were transported to Lubbock, Texas. However, when Sharli'e and her cousin went to women's showers after talking to a volunteer, they were arrested for criminal trespassing and sent to the Brazos County Jail. Sharli'e's story served as a wake up call to LGBTQ+ Americans of the trans community's unique vulnerability to discrimination during climate disasters. As a result, the Houston trans community now compiles a list of households that would be willing to take in a trans refugee every hurricane season.

Horrific as it is to hear how unjust institutions such as the police and prison system upended the life of a trans climate refugee, not much has changed since 2005. Increased rates of homelessness, urbanisation, and exposure to pollution among LGBTQ+ people sound the alarm for disproportionate rates of environmental injustice within our community. With increasing rates of climate-related disasters, instances of queerphobia against those most vulnerable in our communities, particularly those of color, will rise accordingly. Climate activism must be intersectional, and we must prioritize the queer and trans voices that have been resisting the worst of our materialistic, capitalistic society for generations.

Our mission is to stand in solidarity with LGBTQ+ people battling inferior health conditions, environmental racism and labour exploitation caused by unethical corporations and perpetuated by political machines, both Republican and Democratic. However, this solidarity of community is often trumped by a solidarity of class through

poor identity politics. The 2020 Democratic primaries are an excellent example of how this directly affects both climate and environmental policies.

The entrance of Pete Buttigieg, a young, gay progressive from the US heartland, electrified the Democratic primaries, and his steady demeanour and outsider status earned him many supporters from more leftist members of the party. However, as the race narrowed, it became clear that Buttigieg's politics stood in direct opposition of many who shared his queer identity — he sought to become the defining moderate in the race through weak attacks on leftist policy points, such as Sanders' Medicare for All. Additionally, climate-related issues revealed the flaws in his progressive facade; his \$1.5-2 trillion climate plan and 2050 net-zero emissions goals paled in comparison to other competing goals, most notably Sanders' \$16.2 trillion plan and 2030 goal to decarbonize power generation and transportation. Though Buttigieg performed well in the first two states (both predominantly white), he drew criticisms for falsifying support from black voters, and for his anti-black, pro-cop mayorship of South Bend. His subsequent failure to gain support from voters of colour prematurely ended his campaign. However, the greatest environmental crime Buttigieg committed was by endorsing the Democratic stalwart Joe Biden for the nomination, and symbolically abandoning all of his former altruistic goals in favor of toeing the party line.

This decision, along with that of Amy Klobuchar, reinvigorated a zombie-like Biden campaign to unify the centrist side of the party, which until then had been delivered a solid beating from Sanders, who proved that the message of a Green New Deal can lead to electoral success in any state. With this thorough rebuke of any sort of leftist climate policy, Buttigieg chose to side with fellow political elites rather than the most marginalised members of the queer community. Once again, hopes for a publicly-owned 100% renewable energy grid, nationwide fracking bans (and eventually the end of all fossil fuel extraction), and increased public transportation investment were all dashed with Buttigieg's shift of support. Buttigieg's ability to hide behind his identity while directly betraying his own queer community mirrors the actions of many high profile LGBTQ+ figures, including Ellen DeGeneres, who befriended Republican and war criminal George Bush, venture capitalist Peter Theil's unwavering support of Donald Trump, and yes, Miss RuPaul's fracking farm.

Neither the pushback against the corporatization of Pride, which conflicts with its history of anti-government riots and protests, nor "pinkwashing — a marketing technique created to depict a corporation or political organization as LGBTQ+ friendly and by extension, inherently ethical — is new. Numerous organisations, most notably the Reclaim Pride Coalition in New York City, have attempted to repoliticise Pride events by rejecting corporate influence. However, little has been done to eradicate oil and fracked gas influence in corporatized Prides, which give these companies a sense of approval and moral standing from our community where it does not exist.

A successful student-led movement that can be used as a model to push back against oil and gas corporate involvement in queer spaces can be found in the UK's 2015 National Student Pride. When it was known that oil and gas giant BP was slated to be a sponsor of the event, student activists organized to form No Pride in BP. Throughout 2015-16, the group wrote letters to the NSP board, educated the general public on BP's actions against the queer community (including contributions to queerphobic politicians and investing in decidedly anti-LGBTQ+ regimes), and participated in public demonstrations, where they pretended to wash other members in pink soap to highlight how BP uses LGBTQ+ support to cover up their environmental crimes.

Though it took time for No Pride in BP to lay the groundwork for their campaign and educate the general queer community about National Student Pride's decision, the group was rewarded in 2017 when the board dropped the polluter as a sponsor of its annual Pride.

In a year of postponed Pride events, I look forward to a 2021 in which the Queer community organises together to finally resist an enemy which divides us along matters of race and class and destroys us through the "business as usual" nature of capitalism.

# down with the rainbow bourgeoisie

Claire Ollivain and Vivienne Guo miss the radical gay agenda.

Last year, images of Ellen DeGeneres laughing with former US president George W Bush at a football game went viral. In response to the backlash she received for being friends with Bush, who not only stood against LGBTQ rights but is responsible for countless war crimes, she stated, "I'm responsible with a lot of people who don't share the same beliefs that I have. We're all different. And I think that we've forgotten that that's OK that we're all different." Ellen's words downplay how Bush's actions have destroyed hundreds of thousands of lives, ultimately revealing that her allegiance with Bush through whiteness and as members of the wealthy elite far outweighs any remorse she might feel about his homophobic record. Interested in preserving and being included in the status quo, the white upper-middle-class queer community betray the radical roots of the liberation movement.

This June will mark 51 years since the historic 1969 Stonewall uprisings where retaliation against police raids at a Greenwich Village gay bar sparked six days of spontaneous riots, leading to the birth of radical queer liberationist groups like the Gay Liberation Front (GLF). Stonewall sparked a political awakening that spread across the globe and inspired the first Mardi Gras protest in Sydney nearly a decade later. It left a revolutionary legacy, due to instrumental roles of trans women of colour such as Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson and their radical politics. Importantly, they were united in solidarity with feminist, black, and workers' struggles. Groups like the GLF built a mass movement against not only homophobia, but imperialism, white supremacy, capitalism, and the patriarchy, aiming for revolutionary changes to society. Parallel to these struggles were assimilationist strategies that sought acceptability to the values and institutions of white bourgeois society, leading to the depoliticisation of movements needed for true liberation.

It's unfortunate that the LGBTQ movement has lost much of its radical fire. Rainbow capitalism has since emerged as a way to open up new markets through the targeted inclusion of queer communities. Alan Sears wrote that "the commodification of public lesbian and gay life has distorted our communities. The nature of market relations is that access to goods or services is based not on need or desire, but on the ability to pay. A community structured around commodified public spaces is economically exclusive." Rainbow capitalism ignores the reality that queer people are directly and disproportionately impacted by police violence, homelessness, incarceration, and economic inequality. Everything once transgressive to bourgeois morality is drained of its subversive content; difference becomes a rehearsed and marketable essence under capitalism.

A tendency has emerged in Western liberal politics to conflate queerness with

progressiveness, placing value on what is perceived as one's intrinsic identity rather than anti-normative political activity. This has given rise to a rainbow bourgeoisie who are poised to benefit from the modern popularisation and celebration of queer pride, cloaking their nefarious exploitation of workers and destructive imperialist mindsets beneath a veneer of glittery 'progressiveness'.

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Ellen shot into the public eye in 1997 after coming out as gay on her sitcom show *Ellen*. She has courted controversy for taking advantage of her standing as a 'queer icon' to defend a Republican president who spent eight long, blood-stained years at the helm of the world's most destructive settler-colonial state, but she also has a long track record of exploiting and abusing her workers. Recently in response to COVID-19, nearly all of Ellen's crew members were slammed with a 60% reduction in pay. Furthermore, Ellen has compared self-isolating in her multi-million dollar Montecito mansion to being in prison. She joked, "This is like being in jail. Mostly because I've been wearing the same clothes for 10 days and everyone in here is gay." This tone-deaf statement betrays her complete lack of compassion for incarcerated people who are far more vulnerable to COVID-19, not only because they eat and sleep in communal settings but because they lack access to adequate healthcare. Her calculated indifference to the systemic policing of the queer community further exposes how her performance of progressiveness lacks any substance.

Recent US Democratic party candidate Pete Buttigieg built a campaign around being a political 'outsider' with a humble Midwestern upbringing, aspiring to be the first openly gay president of the United States. While queerness has been theorised as a challenge to the norm, Buttigieg is the paragon of white normalcy. A thoroughly establishment figure, he has said "I think of myself as progressive. But I also believe in capitalism." As a mayor, he oversaw the doubling of the eviction rate in South Bend and the bulldozing of empty homes in working-class neighbourhoods to gentrify the city. It appears there is nothing in Buttigieg's record that would make him progressive apart from his identity as a gay man, for which he has been applauded for offering LGBTQ 'representation' in a role which is imperialist and capitalist at its core. As a veteran, he appeals to the US ruling elite, having served a tour of duty in Afghanistan where he helped identify targets for assassination squads, a far cry from the GLF's solidarity with Third-World struggles. Buttigieg has built a political career that assimilates itself to traditional values and the American spirit: war, destruction, and white supremacy.

The prevailing tolerance of the rainbow bourgeoisie, despite their destructive influence, is a symptom of positivity culture's normative, bourgeois underpinnings. In his 1965 essay *Repressive Tolerance*, philosopher Herbert Marcuse argued that the liberal idea of universal tolerance across the political spectrum as if life were simply a debate

hall "mainly the protection preservation of a repressive society [and] neutralises opposition." Present-day positivity culture, as touted by such figures as Ellen, is universal tolerance incarnate. In defending her friendship with Bush, Ellen also said: "When I say 'be kind to one another,' I don't mean only the people that think the same way you do, I mean be kind to everyone." When tolerance is applied to both "movements of aggression as well as to movements of peace," in Marcuse's terms, the status quo is preserved. Positivity culture is premised on the assumption that we have made considerable advances which make us safe from the acts of violence our predecessors fought against. For some, this may be true. But it is not for those who continue to be positioned by prevailing systems in proximity to death: queer people of colour, working-class, disabled, transgender, and incarcerated queer people.

This attitude of being kind to everyone that Ellen asks of us is possible only in a world where there is no violence. The culture of universal tolerance misleads us toward embracing all manifestations of LGBTQ culture and representation - even where they are harmful - in the name of equality. In reality, such tolerance is weaponised by white, wealthy people to protect their standing and obscure the effects of systemic violence in communities. They point fingers at those who are unapologetically vocal in their solidarity with the downtrodden, claiming that what is needed is more 'positivity' - a knee-jerk reaction to their sense of discomfort when confronted with existing violence.

We have inherited the battles of our predecessors, and we must be ready to assume the mantle. In the spirit of the post-Stonewall movements which demanded active solidarity with black liberation, workers' rights, feminist justice, and more, it's time we brought back the radical agenda. The existence of rainbow capitalism and a rainbow bourgeoisie is a symptom of neoliberal ideas which cannibalise and anaesthetise dissent. In a world free of violence, the bourgeoisie class and classes altogether will be eradicated. Instead of settling for being accepted as 'normal' within a repressive system, we should be dismantling the system that makes 'normal' possible altogether. In 2009, queer theorist José Muñoz wrote of the term 'queer' as "a rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world." When we think of 'queer' as a political practice rather than just an identity signifier, our struggle becomes enmeshed in the collective striving toward a new horizon of being, in complete refusal of the values of the bourgeoisie.

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## rupaul's frack race

Matthew Sahn isn't willing to forgive and forget just yet.

Art by Vivienne Guo



These photos were taken at the Stonewall uprisings, 1969.

# The Dinner Party (What Do You Do When No One's Watching?)

BONNY HUANG ART & WORDS.

## What lies beyond the cracks of the constructed facades?

Individuals all inherently and subconsciously curate their own image of identity to be consumed and understood by those around them. Particularly for queer people, adhering to or fervently denying the binary mores of hetero-gender normative society become essential acts of self-definition. It allows liberation from conventional ideology, which often does not provide space for our existence. A large part of one's formative queer journey is often taken up by the attempt to find a sense of self and reconstruct an identity that aligns with their lived experiences. This self curation is exacerbated to a further extent with social media - an arena of exhibitionism and an opportunity to define oneself through visual and verbal autonomy that is conveniently collated on one's profile.

I personally have great conflict with trying to maintain the equilibrium between the falsity and superficiality of presenting yourself to be subjected to voyeurs, with the innate desire to express my identity.

To be that gross, primal creature of exorbitant love, egoism and self-indulgence but wracked with crippling self-doubt and uncontrollable emotions. The extent of which I'm able to verbally express myself is

limited, and I often find my tongue caught in a knot tied by my social anxiety. Taking on this photographic series, I sought to visually express and expose the pervasive gender and social performativity that has become inherent to our contemporary culture.

Sometimes we find ourselves inadvertently appealing to conventional societal values, putting on performances that deny our true identity and emotions in order to take up less space. By denying our truest colours and presenting the most digestible version of ourselves, we all contribute to an increasingly monotone and homogenised world—no matter what show or party of extravagance we attempt to put on.



## How can we truly express our emotions in these rigid environments that suppress them?

Through celebrating the art form of drag, I situate myself as these exaggerated characters: Lexi the host of the dinner party, Maximus the businessman suffering from alexithymia and superficial self-awareness, and Blossom the one who has succumbed to gluttony. By embodying common feminine and masculine archetypes, I attempt to dissect and personify traits drawn from the seven deadly sins: vanity, dysfunctional emotional expression and gluttony. Intaking form as these

characters innate within me, perhaps, I was even trying to explore the inherent performativity and caricaturing of queer bodies as flambouyant and theatrical. We need to be aware of our role as voyeurs and performers. I was also inspired by a quote from The Good Place, "parties are mere distractions from the relentlessness of entropy. We're all just corpses who haven't yet begun to decay". This is both a celebration and critique of the inherent performativity of existence, we can both reject and embrace it.

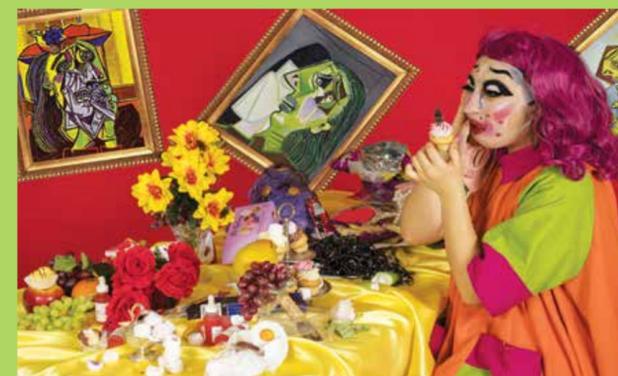


Engaging in these great acts of performativity, putting together these sets, and wearing these brash costumes as extensions of my identity ironically exposed myself to a more vulnerable state. The series acts to highlight the universality of each character, as they intertwine and manifest within all our own identities, since we are all vulnerable to the severely critical gaze of our surroundings.



Why has our eating culture become so tied to the concept of "image" and "appearance"? Even the mere act of eating has become subject to a critical gaze. Not only are the visual aesthetics of the food we consume highly regarded, but the way we eat our food, and what food we choose to eat, are often criticised and linked to one's body image and appearance.

Life is just another long dinner party, and the dinner party can be the most performative act of them all. All three characters prepare for a dinner party—which is the "last supper" for all these tragic contemporary characters. They engage in performative and uncomfortable social interaction, having lost all sense of their personal identity and real human connection from living as the facades they present to those around them.



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# I wish there weren't a wall

Shania O'Brien explores the significance of walls.

In a letter to a friend, I wrote about a wall I encountered in Darlington. It wasn't anything particularly special; just the back of a terrace house I found while wandering in the suburb one evening. There was a bit of graffiti carved into it, the words growing fainter with every letter as if inscribed in desperation by the nib of a pen whose ink had run dry long ago.

I can't get through the wall.

It was the first time that I'd thought about walls as more than pillars that hold ceilings up. It's strange, because the more thought I give it, the more I see how significant they are, both physically and symbolically. Now, I am reminded of the Wailing Wall, the Walls of Jericho, Zechariah's wall of fire. In *Letters from the Underworld* (1864) by Fyodor Dostoyevsky, the narrator's adversaries attempt to convince him of nature's unyieldingness by explaining: "A wall, you see, is a wall . . . and so on, and so on." There are common phrases and sayings: talking to walls, hitting a wall, building too many walls and not enough bridges, getting stuck with your back to a wall, and going over a wall. In all these situations, walls are portrayed as strong and tangible. Iron-willed. But there are also wallflowers, stonewalling, walls of silence and separation. American academic and author Michael Moore believed that walls possess an immense measure of signification, and can often act as a nexus point between the concrete and the symbolic.

Since their creation, walls have longed to be adorned by the world around them. They have given form to many materialisations of artistic expression: from cave drawings, frescoes, murals, and graffiti, to picture frames, tapestries, wall hangings, and posters. Over the ages, people have had different motivations to imprint themselves on walls. There are descriptions of homoeopathic magic in the Spanish Altamira caves, religious murals in Anatolia, and decorative tapestries of the Gothic era. Walls have been essential for visual arts, from the ones in prehistoric caves acting as the very first canvases upon which people could create, to modern-day manifestations of graffiti tunnels.

Since then, walls have been employed in literature as metaphors and symbols in a myriad of ways. In Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892), Gilman condemns male control of the 19th-century medical profession, using the wallpaper as a metaphor to explore the narrator's oppression and descent into insanity. H. P. Lovecraft uses the walls of an ancestral home to obscure horrors in *The Rats in the Walls* (1924). *The House of Asterion* (1947) by Jorge Luis Borges describes a giant house with endless corridors. There are no exits, only endless walled passages with open doors and countless rooms for Asterion to wander through. As writer Tom Mitchell noted, his world is walls.

Asterion's story, which was later revealed to be that of the Cretan Minotaur, shows that a wall is also a dividing force separating space both physically and psychologically, an attempt to categorise the chaos of our world and universe into affectable pockets of existence. Commonly, a wall is defensive. I think about Hadrian's Wall, imposed on the Roman Empire not only to protect but because of divine instruction; the walls of Jericho that protected the neolithic people against invasion; the impenetrable walls of Troy built by the gods themselves. And, as the story of Asterion tells us, walls imprison; I think also of Antigone walled up in a tomb and condemned to die for rebelling against Creon, her numbered days spent in agony. In Herman Melville's *Bartleby the Scrivener* (1853), the protagonist spends countless hours staring at the "dead brick wall" outside his window, foreshadowing his later incarceration; Melville uses walls as symbols of urban separation in capitalistic society's forced individualism.

Weeks after that overcast afternoon in Darlington, I encountered the tale of Pyramus and Thisbe, and have since found myself going back to it time and again. Their story is a myth from Ovid's Latin narrative poem, *Metamorphoses*, telling the story of two neighbours whose houses shared a wall. They were in love but their union was forbidden because of an old family rivalry, so they would whisper their love through a crack in the wall, a physical barrier as well as a symbol for the circumstance that kept them apart. In some translations, Pyramus writes Thisbe a letter:

Dear Thisbe,  
I wish there weren't a wall.  
Love,  
Pyramus

Throughout the ages, walls have bore witness to the lives of many queer people, who desperately inscribed their feelings and identities into history. Many walls still stand vigil over ancient romances and love letters that are addressed not always to a corporeal person, but sometimes to someone in

the future who would understand, who would be free. Often, queer folk have been torn between their religion and their identity, who have written on the walls of churches and temples for eternity, their yearning immortalised in stone. There exist records of graffiti from Pompeii, where people wrote on city walls: "Often as I have been awake, love, at midnight, I think of you," and "Sabinus, my beauty, Hermeros loves you," and "Hecticus, my pet, Mercator says hello to you."

Some days, I think about that wall in Darlington. I wish I had taken a picture, but it

*Often, queer folk have been torn between their religion and their identity, who have written on the walls of churches and temples for eternity, their yearning immortalised in stone.*

felt wrong to document a stranger's desperate wish. There is something very personal about writing on walls, and I am reminded of a scene from the movie *All The Bright Places* (2020); in it, Theodore Finch goes up to a public wall and writes, "Before I die, I want to feel awake." This wall, in the book, is called the 'before I die wall,' because it is filled with people's hopes and last wishes. Their dreams have echoed across time. Finch had previously been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and began to distinguish his manic and depressive days by documenting the time he has spent 'awake.' His bedroom walls are also covered in Post-It notes, iterating quotes, memories, and lyrics he wants to keep at the front of his mind. That wall, like many other walls in real life, acted as a public declaration of his joy, misery, desire, grief, and yearning. Walls become a site of possibility, for the expression of one's innermost feelings; vulnerable and exposed, yet anonymous and safe, like a diary that has invited the world into it.

To many of us, walls are understood as a force of division or imprisonment. But they are also a protection. They tell a story of survival through the millennia. We document history on them, willing our impossible yearning into being. A billion desperate wishes have been written into walls; and undoubtedly, a billion more will be after we are nothing but dust and shadows. Yet, sometimes I think about Pyramus and Thisbe, about the barriers that divided them, about the barriers that still divide people today. And I too wish there weren't a wall.



Art: Mural in Pompeii with tourist graffiti

## Queering care

Kimberley Dibben argues for community against neoliberal and capitalist structures of individualism and the nuclear family.

Community is radical under a neoliberal state of individualism. It is radical to care for those whom the state ignores, and more so to facilitate this care between ourselves. To choose community is to reject self-interest, and to enact communal mutual aid is to resist an intangible meritocracy. Essential to the brutal colonisation of so-called Australia was the destruction of Indigenous communal living, continuing today through racially targeted child removals and incarceration. In its place is the 'nuclear family'. The nuclear family is central to the colonial state and its function, wherein heteronormative 'family values' and gender norms are formalised through infrastructure and policy.

As well as being the central labour force for capitalist production, the nuclear family absolves the state of welfare responsibility and shifts it onto the individual 'household'. Women are appointed this care work, and queer people are ostracised from these care units. Both women and queer people are criticised according to heteronormative reproductive value, and the ability to recreate a productive unit of labour by means of the household. The household reflects divisive state power, not communal care. An

alternative is necessary.

By this, we do not mean queer marriage or adoption. A white picket fenced home for two dads with a rainbow atop is meaningless when queer people are twice as likely to experience homelessness. It is not enough to infiltrate systems of oppression for the few, but to redefine care under community for the many. Similarly, the notion of 'chosen family' is limited by individualised identity politics, still rooted in the hierarchy of the nuclear family and its function.

*It is not enough to infiltrate systems of oppression for the few, but to redefine care under community for the many.*

Assimilation is, therefore, inadequate. Community care in place of individualised care is to centralise kinship in belonging, and inter-dependence without the focus of reproduction or productivity. To sever community from heteronormativity and capitalism is to centralise kinship and care as fundamental roles. This looks like forming and prioritising friendships, connecting across lines of normative

kinship, centring intimacy over individuality, and communal support over self-interest. Queering care is in a constant state of construction, adapted for different folks; fluid.

Community building is not frivolous, but central to political activism. Tangible political action may be possible between strangers, as seen when we march on the street, side by side with unfamiliar faces. However, political activism is not void of intimacy, nor community. What do we fight for if not community? To keep the two separate is to internalise the capitalist divide between public and private, or the bourgeois notion of a depoliticised personal life. As many authors have argued, 'the revolution starts at home,' meaning that political values must be enacted in our everyday. This includes within relationships and personal spaces, as well as in public and intellectually. Community is what binds a movement together and creates practical alternatives to harmful state institutions such as the nuclear household. Solidarity starts on the couch and at the pub, in conversations and texts, between friends and neighbours. Through community, comrades become kin.

## What's the deal with heteronormativity?

Wilson Huang explores how straight cisgendered people have consciously and unconsciously perpetuated heteronormativity.

There is a song from 2002 which starts off with the lyrics, "He was a boy. She was a girl. Can I make it any more obvious?". Given that it was one of the most popular songs of its time, you would probably know that it is Avril Lavigne's "Sk8er Boi". While the song is not trying to denigrate queer people, those first lines reveal an awfully prevalent social norm, heteronormativity.

Heteronormativity, for those who do not know, is the idea that people are supposed to be attracted to the opposite-gender assuming a strict gender binary. Though the existence of heteronormative assumptions is easily attributed to historical norms, especially the ideologies in conservative religions, it is not often further questioned why this is the case.

A possible answer to this is perhaps from the claims made by conservative religious groups. Many religious fundamentalists use their religious texts to claim that their God/s dictate a heteronormative human nature. Though this is a somewhat substantiated belief, as someone who grew up in evangelical and pentecostal churches, I argue that this view lacks deeper scrutiny.

While religious texts do often contain heteronormative references, these texts are not necessarily singularly coherent or consistent. In larger and heavily edited texts, like the Bible, there are many different possible interpretations, requiring people to 'pick and choose' which parts to abide by or ignore regardless of whether they are conscious of it.

Therefore, there is a tendency for many religious groups and people to read their own selves into religion. For example, in 2018, a group of psychologists studied this and found that American Christians chose faces of God that were reflective of themselves. (*The faces of God in America: Revealing religious diversity across people and politics*)

In this sense, religious heteronormativity, and by extension societal heteronormativity do not necessarily come from religion itself. Rather, it is a matter of individuals in positions of power privileging their own identities and experiences. Straight cisgendered people who were likely ignorant of queer people wove their heterosexuality into religious dogma. Sadly, this harmful dogma is then blindly treated as divine law by some religious congregants, who privilege their personal sense of meaning over other's welfare.

**Many people, including queer people, assume other people's gender and sexual orientation subconsciously, almost reflexively, based on how much they conform to gender norms.**

Over the years, this increasingly vicious dogma has inflicted serious harms through unscientific conversion 'therapy', societal rejection, violence and hate crimes. While a majority of Australians have moved away from a religiously motivated heteronormativity, many heteronormative assumptions still persist. The most common of which is that queer people are often stereotypically portrayed based on heteronormative assumptions of binary gender expression.

As such, feminine presenting people are meant to feel attracted towards men, masculine presenting people towards women, transgender people are meant to conform to their gender norms, and other queer people such as bisexual, asexual and non-binary people do not really exist. Many people, including queer people, assume other people's gender and sexual orientation subconsciously, almost reflexively,

**While religious texts do often contain heteronormative references, these texts are not necessarily singularly coherent or consistent.**

based on how much they conform to gender norms.

Indeed, I too have been assumed to be straight many times as I am generally perceived as more masculine than feminine. In one such incident, right before the full brunt of COVID-19 in Australia, a friend of mine, who I was at the beach with, jokingly asked if I was talking to 'my girlfriend' after I had spent some time away using my phone.

While this action was not meant maliciously, it illustrates how assumptions of heteronormativity persist even when people are not queerphobic. This is because even though people are generally more tolerant, our popular culture, just like many religious cultures, is still controlled by straight cisgendered people who view the world through themselves. However, good intentions do not negate harm. At that moment, I felt unacknowledged, but I also did

not want to risk coming out.

While differing lived experiences can make it difficult for people to look past themselves, assumptions made about other people do not exist in a vacuum. Though they are not at the level of harm caused by religious dogma, casual heteronormative assumptions do cause distress and can lead to the erasure and 'othering' of queer people. In light of this, if we want a world where we all can feel safe being ourselves, we all need to disband heteronormativity.



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## Am I bi or is it the compet talking?

Jocelin Chan retraces her journey in bisexuality

Earlier this year, ContraPoints uploaded a YouTube video entitled “Shame”. In it, she comes out as a lesbian, pointing out part of why it took so long for her to accept this label was because of “compulsory heterosexuality”, aka “comphet”. As she explains, her experience of comphet made her feel as though it were shameful for her—especially as a trans woman—to embrace being a lesbian.

As defined by Adrienne Rich in 1980, compulsory heterosexuality describes a socially-ingrained institution that reinforces the performance of cisgender and heterosexual norms by oppressing deviation from it. Heterosexuality is “compulsory” by virtue of being the unquestioned, default status quo. On an individual level, comphet particularly erases lesbian experience because the patriarchal bent of our social institutions defines femininity in relation to men. While compulsory heterosexuality is an organising structure of our society, which includes an embedded financial, reproductive, and creative control of women, it can also be experienced as pressure for women to perform desire for men as part of their womanhood, as ContraPoints did.

ContraPoints’s video couldn’t have come at a more confusing time for me. I had been entertaining the idea that I was bisexual and downloaded a dating app, expressing interest in any gender. Funnily enough, I hadn’t identified as straight before—I had been a lesbian. In fact, part of why I originally identified as such was because I had read through online discussions about comphet.

Over the past few years, lesbian activists have shared resources via social media with checklists for any wavering lesbians thinking they might be experiencing the social aspects of comphet. Some of the points look at early indications of crushes on girls that hadn’t been parsed as attraction yet: admiration, wanting to kiss, or a strong desire to become best friends. Others put “attraction” towards men under the microscope. Lesbians experiencing comphet may say they could date a man, but only if he meets certain “high standards” that are engineered to be impossible for anyone to reach. Another point states that they may only crush on men who cannot reciprocate interest, such as celebrities or authority figures. They can also be anxious about interacting

with men who could be interested in them, or generally repulsed by heterosexual relationships. Another point is they may date a man without feeling romantic or sexual interest towards him, just so they can perform heterosexuality by letting other people know they have a boyfriend.

Some of these points had resonated with me. The only men to whom I had been attracted were celebrities and I tended to roll my eyes at cishets in general. Sometime last year, I had an uncomfortable encounter with a man who was a bit too obviously interested in me—although I could easily put my discomfort down to his unpleasantness rather than gender. On the other hand, my interest in women had been an established fact since that first heart-wrenchingly unrequited high school crush; plus, I’d just ended a two-year relationship with a woman.

As for men—well, I hadn’t quite worked it out yet. I sometimes found men physically attractive, and there were one or two boys I knew who I thought could be alright people to date; I even felt that I could have sex with a man. But here’s the catch: I didn’t know whether I’d be romantically attracted to one.

In the end, I sorted out the matter pretty easily. Trying to match with women on a dating app was difficult; most people who responded were male. So after one uneventful date with a girl, I ended up going out with a boy. Then I saw him again. And again. And again. And again.

Long story short, that’s how I discovered I was bi.

As queer people, we can often switch in and out of labels. Gender and sexuality are nebulous categories; sometimes, we use labels to help ourselves define our own experience, sometimes we use them to help others understand our identities. Our homophobic, patriarchal societies don’t make the task of choosing the “correct” label any easier. Reading theory that helps you understand the way society structures sexuality is definitely important, and can expand and clarify your view of the world around you. But in the end, you just have to trust your gut.

**compulsory heterosexuality is an organising structure of our society, which includes an embedded financial, reproductive, and creative control of women**

## Gay Fantasies of Gay Fantasy

Klementine Burrell-Sander dreams of otherworldly queerness

I don’t know about you, but I’m a sucker for fantasy. I love it all, from the fictional worlds that are endless rip-offs of imagined medieval times, to the ones where magic exists in the world we know, to those where there are three suns in the sky and a dozen new type of animals. There is so much scope for difference, for originality, for exploring stories and ideas that won’t fit into the dull, predictable landscape of reality. Considering how much freedom and flexibility fantasy authors have, though, there’s something distinctly missing. The queers.

Of course, not all fantasy is guilty of this. There are in fact a lot of great fantasy stories that are jam-packed with representation. A quick google search will throw up dozens of books featuring protagonists who are gay, who are trans, who are living in futuristic worlds where social taboos around queerness are literally unheard of. These books are wonderful, but I’m talking about books that are not written for queer people, books which anyone can stumble upon without having to consult an online list.

There are two prevalent phenomena of queer representation in fantasy books. The first is the infamous queerbaiting, perfectly exemplified by beloved children’s writer and shameless transphobe J. K. Rowling. Her characters may be interpreted as queer, but are not canonically stated to be so unless Rowling thinks her revisionism of the Harry Potter characters will earn her brownie points for ‘progressiveness’. But writing queer characters isn’t just writing a character and slapping a label on them afterwards. Writing queer characters means giving them nuance and individuality, in the same way that writing a disabled character, or an Asian character, is distinctly different from writing an abled or white character. This is where the second excuse pops up - the vaguely described gay, whose sexuality is only ever nebulously alluded to. I’ve stumbled upon countless variations of the line “and the prince wasn’t concerned with who he bedded, man or woman,” that I can’t help but roll my eyes every time I see it. Minor characters who are loosely described as homosexual, bisexual, or perhaps pansexual, often in a throwaway line that is rarely further elaborated upon, is just plain lazy. It is nothing more than paying lip service to the idea of that queer people might exist in fantasy worlds, and lets authors get away with seeming queer-friendly without actually having to make an effort to write authentic queer characters.

What really irks me about the lack of queers in fantasy is all the lost potential. By confining yourself to a heteronormative, patriarchal world, you immediately cut off so many alternate storylines and experiences that you could have explored otherwise. Very broadly speaking, there are two different ways to go about writing queer characters

into your fantasy. You can write gay utopias, where queer people are totally normal and acceptable, or you can write fantasy parallels of the real-world experience of queers. Obviously, there can be overlap - you might write a world where homosexuality is fine but transphobia remains an issue - but regardless, writing queer characters brings so much more variation, individuality, and depth to a story.

It’s been covered many times before that queer protagonists should have storylines that go beyond examining their sexuality, and nowhere is this more possible than within fantasy. You can explore wholly different worlds, where queerphobia, or even gender, are unheard of concepts, in which case a gay protagonist has no need to come to terms with their sexuality. Alternatively, you can write contemporary fantasy where characters might have magical powers but still get mocked publicly for their sexuality. Maybe their response to this is part of their character development, but it could also be a scene that explores their self-control, or their experimentation with their powers, or something else entirely. With fantasy, the options are genuinely endless, because you don’t have to be constrained by writing queer characters and stories that don’t stretch the suspension of disbelief.

Fantasy is the perfect genre for authors to branch out and explore queer characters. These characters don’t necessarily have to be the protagonist, or even central to the storyline, but the inclusion of queer characters allows authors to explore different narratives far beyond the typical coming-out stories that still dominate gay fiction today. These various, often unexplored narratives bring complexity to fantasy worlds that might otherwise seem indistinguishable from each other with their pseudo-feudal societies and tedious reliance on cis-heteronormativity.

Art by Alex Mcleay



## Tessellation

Words by Ari James

I.

They sleep on their stomach and this bed is only big enough for one, so I wake up with half my back pressed against theirs, a lazy tessellation of limbs and oversized t-shirts. When I was twelve I said I’d stay a virgin forever, never open my legs for some boy following the demands of his cock. Funny the promises you make when you don’t know better, and the ones you keep when you do. I am listening to fat globs of rain plop on patio tiles like the slap of skin against skin. A beautiful ugly closeness, a crude intimacy, picking at each other’s scars.

II.

Sometimes I watch them eat raspberries, picking off each red drupelet individually, savouring, drawing out. I am learning patience in these small gestures, drops of water against stone. At nine I ripped a sapling out by the roots to understand my mother, how she grew anger in place of love. I felt it then, the rush, the force chafing against my hand, the sudden blank freefall when it gave. Ten years on I listen hopefully for their irregular flurry of footsteps down the staircase, their wordless murmur at the door - the days tumbling gently from my fingers like glass beads shattering out of sight. But I still flinch when the door opens without warning, because I know what makes a child hide in the garage, a girl get in her teachers’ cars, a boy leave home at eighteen and never look back.



Art by Anonymous

III.

They sleep in my bed now and my father knows, awkwardly letting himself out of my apartment with a goodbye ridden with holes they know they will never fill. But our first night we lay awake with our sides pressed together, an unbearable heat growing where we were joined, not friction but a soldering iron’s searing kiss. I woke up half melted in a puddle of old fears and new. Now I don’t know which shape I have taken in my father’s eyes - man learning patience, boy learning devotion, girl learning to live on scraps of love. What I know is six months ago I sat on the end of their bed as they slept, trying not to grieve for what had not yet been lost. Now their heartbeat in my ear still makes me shiver, and I lie closer, lines of skin blurring like memory and speculation - fear and nostalgia - train platforms and apartment windows - until we are one little girl sitting on the precipice, tears streaming from her eyes, hugging herself tightly and not jumping.

## Indices of Refraction

Words and art by Orla ni Bradaigh

In her body I had mine.  
the tender parts of me existing  
in the space between  
her touch-  
the reflection  
of my lines, leaked  
into recollection of the light  
on her skin.  
assume to taste the smoke escaping  
from her lips,  
ears pressed against her breast-



but I transcribe merely  
wilted shadows at dawn.  
to find phrase, to excuse  
to cease nocturnal turn,  
to resolve the days dissolved,  
and to absolve  
the spayed and incomplete.  
but in this  
I pervert you;  
the bergamot and lavender,  
lace curtains and rain,  
a rising impression on damp grass-

just memories now  
real only as the words  
that remain-

# EDDIE

There was Michael, Eddie and I.  
 Eddie and Michael didn't really get along.  
 Eddie was selfish.  
 Michael was warm.  
 Eddie held me down and told me he loved me.  
 "I'm running late"  
 He didn't care.  
 Eddie didn't find me very attractive.  
 Eddie would survey my body and tell me to try harder.  
 Eddie tried to kill me  
 a couple of times.  
 Michael didn't know about Eddie for a while and  
 when I told him he was confused about why he wasn't enough.  
 Why was Eddie around on days when I promised it was just us two?  
 Why was Eddie changing the way I walked, talked, dressed -  
 ate?

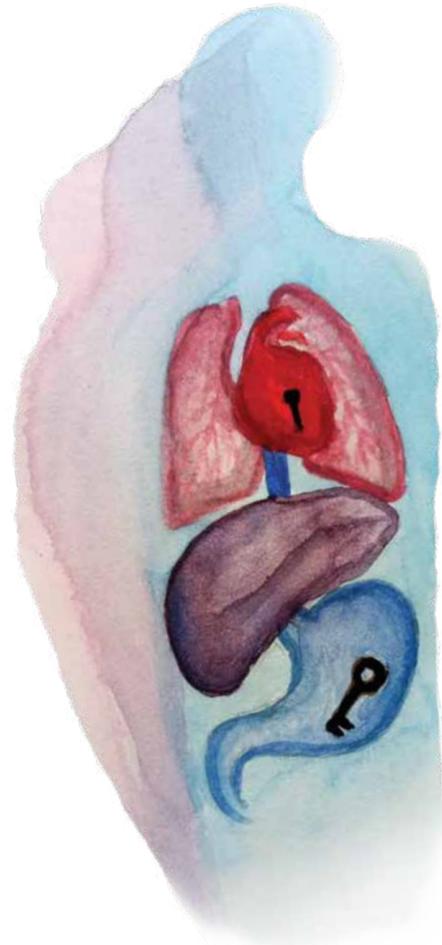
I slept uncomfortably that night because our bed wasn't fit for three.  
 Michael rolled over and asked if I was okay.  
 Eddie wrapped one hand around my mouth and the other around  
 my throat,  
 I screamed through his fingers but all that he heard was a whimper.  
 "I'm fine".  
 Michael gave me a key to his place and told me that he was my home.

"You're beautiful."  
 "You're a liar."  
 "Stay with me tonight."  
 "It can't."  
 "Why?"  
 "You know why."  
 "You're cold."  
 "Hold me."  
 "He's killing you."  
 "You don't know him."

"You said you were fixing this."  
 "I am."  
 "I need you."  
 "I'm here."  
 "No you're not."  
 "Hold me."  
 He let go and I fell.

Eddie eventually left too.  
 Some days I still feel him beside me  
 and then I realise no one else is in the  
 room.

Yesterday, I used the key to open the front door of  
 Michael's house.  
 He changed the lock.



Art by Claire Ollivain

- rhian mordaunt

# intimacy and identity

Words by *Abigail Cassandra Erinna*

Have you ever woken up beside a beautiful girl? Have you kissed her and felt her patchy stubble, her legs tangled in yours, her dick pressed against your thigh? Have you smiled, groggy with love at the intimacy of it all? In this closeness I have known a person better than I ever thought possible - I have loved someone in their wholeness, and through them I have loved myself in my incompleteness.

Since transitioning I have, by no intention of my own, only been with other trans people. I could dismiss this by saying we just have something in common, but it is so much more than that. The simple existence of a trans person presupposes a beautiful strength and a sadness. An overcoming of seemingly insurmountable pressures, the sadness of surviving an unnameable incongruence and strength in the righteous anger at what was taken, hidden, or marked with shame.

I spent two decades feeling ashamed of who I was and who I dreamed of being. In the arms of another trans person, in their lustful or affectionate gaze, in exploring their body with nothing but adoration, in seeing the scars of testosterone and finding beauty in them, I love them and I find nothing lacking. Maybe that means I can love myself, and can accept what I feel I lack.

In that same intimacy I came to find the fragility of gender and sexuality, the frayed edges. Beyond times when I've neatly packaged my transition for friends and family, I haven't identified as a woman. I thought that maybe one day I'd wake up and have grown into an essential "womanhood", into a confidence of self. That day still hasn't come, and I still have no stable sense of my own gender identity. Out of a fear of this state I found myself searching for a rock-solid core, a gendered essence, something I could hold up as the root of my gender identity, the cause of my behaviours and my gendered presentation. But there is no core to find - you cannot find the essential woman, and you cannot be the essential woman. There is nothing but a facade, a decorative covering pulled back to reveal an empty pedestal. But where does this leave me, in what

direction do I move now? If my gender is not within me, then where is it?

For me, this confusion left me wandering until I met Sam. We started talking Christmas morning, and met up just after New Year's. She picked me up from the station and I kissed her like I'd promised to. I had been medically transitioning for two months - really, I'd only been alive for two months. We stared out at the sea and I felt her body. Both of us out in public wishing we could be invisible to everyone if not for the gaze of the other. She took me home, we put on a movie and didn't watch it, and I felt a body like mine for the first time.

In the way she walked, the way she shyly asked to hold my hand, in the way she spoke and the way she held herself, in the ways she was strong and the ways she was vulnerable, I saw womanhood. An impossible womanhood, fought for and won. Self-defined and strong I saw not an essential womanhood but a personal and proud one. A womanhood that made perfect sense and was perfectly unique. Her gender was her own because she lived it, and I felt it through all of her.

A common drive, distinct but inseparable from gender, is to find a pure sexuality, to know who you're attracted to and to draw clean lines. But again this effort begins to fracture. In contrast to finding a clearer picture of gender in closeness, my understanding of my sexuality began to bend when I met my Ax. Standing at the intersecting edges of gender and sexuality I had to ask; "Who is a lesbian without an essential gender to drive essentially gendered attraction?"

Ax is agender. We met in Melbourne on a beautiful date to see improvised experimental music, where I was tall and fem and it was an androgyne in camos. We spent the rest of my week there with each other constantly. I'd only once before fallen so hard and so fast. We are both ambiguously gendered lesbians. Neither identity negated the other, and instead they grew together, one into the other in twisted vines of attraction and presentation. And twisted together, Ax

## first date

I get closer, I feel you, your skin is even softer than it looks, you move delicately but walk with strength. You're shorter than me but I hold tightly onto your arm and feel small, I smile warmly, head tilted up into the cold rain.

I get closer, I feel you, your hands are soft and strong, I feel cold metal when I kiss your warm lips and taste cigarettes in your sweetness.

Your contradictions make you, I can't place you, I'd never want to.

and I made perfect sense of it all in ways no academic text can explain.

There's no essentially sexed or sexual core, there's just us, there's who we are, and there's who we commune with. Identities mark the ground on which we gather and show solidarity, but they ultimately are an undoing of individuality in the interest of some greater communal "doing". This tension is the defining one of queer politics and can be felt most acutely by those living and loving in these boundaries of gender and sexuality. I have been made and unmade by my identities, I have learnt who I was and forgotten who I was in the arms of lovers, and I have appreciated every second of this instability. I only hope that more people, especially more cisgendered and heterosexual people, can learn to embrace the rough edges and unsafe territories that mark the places where we grow and learn.

# DISRUPTION

## Honi Soit Writing Competition

Entries open 11th May

Categories:  
 Fiction  
 Non-fiction

Prize pool of \$3600



Art by Kyla Ifurung

Note: These pages belong to the Office Bearers of the SRC. They are not altered, edited or changed in any way by the editors of Honi Soit.



## President

Liam Donohoe

The last two weeks of this semester will have major implications for all facets of the higher education landscape in 2020 and beyond. Between the Uni's decision to cut countless courses across countless faculties, the government's refusal to support the sector at all, and the impending vote on the NTEU's job protection framework, the battles in higher education have never been as difficult or existential. The SRC is hoping to play as useful and active a role in these battles as possible, and I'm doing my utmost to help achieve a No Vote among NTEU members, build attendance at protests, and create mass student resistance to the countless attacks on our education.

The NTEU's car convoys on Thursday set the standard for the week and the weeks ahead. A long procession of cars, including a significant number of students and SRC Office Bearers (and yours truly), eked out of Mrs. Macquarie's Chair to surround the Liberal Party's Headquarters along William Street, where they were joined by a vocal ensemble of activists, students, and workers. Beyond being fun and cathartic, the convoy also disrupted and raised awareness of the Liberal's refusal to support higher education,

demanding funding to protect jobs.

But that was only the start of the day's resistance. In the afternoon many of those same activists, students, and workers amassed outside the F23 building for the country's first in-person higher education rally since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, protesting the University of Sydney's decision to axe FASS courses and reduce staff numbers. Some 70 strong, carefully distanced from one another to comply with medical and legal constraints, heard staunch speeches and later marched up to the Quadrangle to tac a petition to the door of FASS Dean Annamarie Jagose.

These demonstrations were just the start of what will be an exciting and decisive series of actions in the coming weeks. On Thursday the SRC will be hosting a forum to increase student awareness before a significant in-person protest on Friday. We also expect that the USyd branch will vote on the NTEU's national job protection framework at some point soon, and so will be contacting as many potential members as possible to encourage a No vote. We demand FASS and other faculties reverse any planned or announced course cuts, we implore all NTEU members to vote No to the

national jobs protection framework, and we demand the Uni liquidate assets and borrow to ensure no staff member is worse off in this period. We are willing to use whatever approach is necessary to achieve those ends, and will escalate further if this Friday's rally does not totally succeed.

These won't be the only in-person activities this week, however. This Monday, the last of the teaching semester, the Women's Collective will be protesting the racist and sexist culture at St. Andrew's College and beyond, after Honi Soit revealed a number of shameful incidents at the College in the post-Broderick period. I encourage anyone to attend what will be a safe and socially distant registration of opposition and outrage to the type of behaviour disclosed by Honi. The SRC endorses the rally, and believes the Colleges should be converted into affordable University accommodation provided to low socioeconomic status, regional, and long commute students on the basis of need.

As great as it is, though, protest has not been, and will not be, the only thing on the agenda in these final weeks. Beyond attending a variety of committees, of which Monday's University Executive

Education Committee is the most auspicious, the SRC has been / will be finalising our Electoral Regulation changes for 2020, hiring a Paralegal, and undertaking further deliveries for our Mutual Aid program. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Faculty of Health and Medicine for a sizable donation of gloves, Bic for donating razors, and OzHarvest for donating yet more hampers for our essentials packs.

All in all, it promises to be a dramatic conclusion to the one of the most dramatic semesters in the history of higher education. I wish all students luck with their final assessments, and urge you all to take the time to thank your tutors / teachers for going above and beyond in supporting our learning this semester. And the best way to thank them, of course, would be by building for and attending this Friday's protest, at 11am along Eastern Avenue. Together we can reverse these cuts and Defend Our Education!

## Vice President

Charlotte Bullock and Felix Faber

Recently we have been working with other office bearers to continue and develop the SRC's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the move to on-line learning.

We have continued to meet weekly with University management. At those meetings we have addressed a number of ongoing issues, including issues with the University's travel specific and general hardship funds. The issues students have faced in accessing these funds are deeply concerning and we hope they can be rectified shortly. We have also discussed the decision to delay Semester 2 this year by three

weeks. We hope this decision means that we may be able to return to some form of face to face learning before the end of the year. The university is still working on their plan for the return to campus in accordance with government restrictions, and we look forward to ensuring this plan centres the needs of students when it eventually becomes available.

We have also been working in these meetings to stop the University's attempts to cut Arts courses. We encourage students to get involved in the campaign against course cuts led by the Education Action Group and the NTEU. While we are working to

lobby the University, these efforts will only be as effective as the strength of the campaign behind them. This campaign has already seen exceptional success, reducing the cuts from 30% to 8%, but wins like this will depend on ongoing student action.

Charlotte has been in attendance at several committee meetings recently as well. This week she attended both the Research Education Committee and the Student Consultative Committee. Charlotte also attended a meeting with other officer bearers regarding potential changes to SRC regulations to ensure provision is made for an online election, should that be necessary.

Felix has been continuing his work with the SRC's mutual aid program. The SRC has now sourced approximately 200 food packages, and is in the process of distributing them to students in need. The SRC is still accepting requests for help through the mutual aid program, so if you are in need of food or other essential supplies please contact us at vice.president@src.usyd.edu.au.

## General Secretaries

Abby Shi and Liam Thomas did not submit a report this week.

## ACAR Officers

Altay Hagrebet, Kedar Maddali, Virginia Meng and Anie Kandya did not submit a report this week.

## Queer Officers

Paola Ayre, Priya Gupta and Oliver Mackie Pawson did not submit a report this week.

## Student Housing Officers

Klementine Burell-Sander and Julie Zhang did not submit a report this week.

STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

**SRC CASEWORKER APPOINTMENTS ARE NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE**

**Do you need help with CENTRELINK? Ask the SRC!**

The SRC has qualified caseworkers who can assist Sydney University undergraduates with Centrelink questions and issues, including: your income, parents' income, qualifying as independent, relationships, over-payments and more.

Check out the Centrelink articles on our website or book an appointment if you need more help.

srcusyd.net.au/src-help

Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney  
Level 1, Wentworth Building (G01), University of Sydney NSW 2006  
PO Box 794 Broadway NSW 2007

p: 02 9660 5222  
e: help@src.usyd.edu.au  
w: srcusyd.net.au

#usydsrc  
@src\_usyd

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Employment law  
Consumer rights  
Traffic offences  
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Level 1, Wentworth Building (G01), University of Sydney NSW 2006  
PO Box 794 Broadway NSW 2007

p: 02 9660 5222  
w: srcusyd.net.au  
ACN: 146 653 143

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation.

# Difficult home life? What are your options.

## You Can't Live at Home?

One of the ways of establishing independence with Centrelink is to show that it is unreasonable for you to live in your family home. To apply for this payment, you will need to complete three forms in addition to the regular paperwork: One by you, one by a parent (I know... ridiculous right) and one by a third party. Centrelink will probably ask to contact your parent, but you can instruct them not to if you believe this would put you in danger.



The third party should be someone who is aware of your family situation and could include a counsellor, doctor, police officer, teacher, religious leader, grandparent, adult relative or – as a last resort – friend.

## What is "Unreasonable"?

It is considered unreasonable for you to live in a home where there is extreme family breakdown, where there is serious risk to your physical or mental wellbeing, due to violence, sexual abuse, or other similar unreasonable circumstances. It is also considered unreasonable to live in unstable accommodation. This might include a lack of electricity or running water, or illegally occupying the property. You also cannot be receiving continuous support, whether directly or indirectly, and whether financial or otherwise, from your parent.

## What is extreme family breakdown?

Extreme family breakdown does not refer to the "normal" differences that young people have with their parent(s). Centrelink will look for documented evidence of violence, behavioural problems, or threats to your emotional or physical wellbeing. Centrelink does not deem extreme family breakdown to have occurred just because your parent(s) disapprove of your relationships or lifestyle, (e.g., religion, sexuality, (trans) gender), unless this is a threat to your physical or emotional wellbeing.

## How can you get extra information?

SRC Caseworkers provide free, independent and confidential advice on Centrelink matters. If you would like to discuss what payments might be available to you, please call 9660 5222 to make an appointment.

## Ask Abe

SRC Caseworker Help Q&A

Coming out, making new friends and accessing LGBTQIA+ services



Hi Abe,

I have only just come out and I have no friends. Well I had a couple of friends before, but they don't really want to hang out with me now. I'm lonely, and too shy to know how to make new friends. Can you help me please?

Shy

Dear Shy,

It's great that you wrote today, because there are lots of people in your situation. The SRC has a bunch of collectives including the queer collective that meets regularly to discuss issues and work on campaigns together. The USU has

dozens and dozens of clubs that cover a variety of areas of interest, including Shades, which organises social events for Usyd LGBTQIA+ students. These groups will give you a great opportunity to meet people, and make new friends, who will in turn help you to meet even more people, widening your friendship circle. There are also lots of other community based groups, including Twenty 10, where you can just drop in and be in the space, playing video games, reading, or doing whatever you like. They also have lots of other services including casework and counselling. There are people out there who would make good friends for you. I hope you find them soon.

Abe.

Contact an SRC Caseworker on 02 9660 5222 or email help@src.usyd.edu.au

# PUZZLES

## Sudoku - Easy

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

## Sudoku - Medium

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

## Target

L	S	I
I	N	O
U	C	N

excellent - 25; very good - 18, good - 12

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Missing Links

Find a word which comes after the first word and before the second one. E.g. the answer to *thin parrot* would be "king", producing "thinking" and "king parrot"

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. basic ship  | 7. there math  |
| 2. child wink  | 8. sit load    |
| 3. bin fish    | 9. lock vest   |
| 4. candid up   | 10. dove gate  |
| 5. deter field | 11. banana pea |
| 6. thou storm  | 12. tea board  |

## KenKen

*16		*4		*7
		*200		
*54		3		
	3	*11		

## Train Game

Using common maths operations, make 10 using the following numbers.

9145

# The Gay-ly Mail

## FINANCE

### Conservative politician's start-up 'Family Values' takes off

Lee Beryl unpacks the successful new business

Conservative politician Anthony Joyce has struck gold with his new business Family Values. After a life namedropping the well-worn phrase, Joyce decided it was finally time to put his words into action. Joyce told us, "well, it was hard - no one even knew what Family Values meant, so the conceptualisation stage took a while." This difficulty was exacerbated by Joyce's need to juggle his four families, finalise a divorce, and attend church.

What does Family Values do? "It's simple", says Joyce. "We provide you with an independent family valuation so you know your exact monetary worth". Joyce envisioned this business would be fruitfully applied in both public and private sectors. He suggested the start-up could help consolidate government service provision by allowing the government to deprioritise less valuable customers.

"Who wouldn't want to know which families aren't pulling their weight, value-wise?" asked the 68-year-old father of 17. "That's exactly what Family Values is here to fix."

## MORE:

How to: use Hamilton as a coping mechanism and substitute personality  
*Thea Tre Kidd, p. 4*

25-year-old learns to drive straight, no longer bisexual  
*Cara Crasz*

Exclusive: Queer community hires official new gatekeeper  
*Lach Dout, p. 13*

Deadly new trend: drinking whenever an online lesbian says "yearning"  
*Miss Yu, p. 17*

## LASTEST NEWS

### Salem reports

#### Co-dependant lesbians, gamers unaffected by pandemic

A small group of Australians obsessed with console games and/or their Sapphic lovers are only just learning of the nationwide lockdown instituted in mid-March. Gay gamer Aisha (24) first emerged from the alleged "sweet screen set-up" in the apartment she shares with her partner just this weekend. "The PS5 just got announced so that's really been my main focus right now," Aisha said. "I sort of just hang out with my girlfriend a lot of the time. She's so beautiful." Australians who both game and are gay were found most likely to have no awareness of COVID-19.

#### Politician's pay rises remain the only consistently bipartisan stance in Australian politics

Politicians once again acted as the greatest and only authority on the question of parliamentary salary increase as for, like, the 47th time in history parliamentarians voted to increase their own wages. Frenemies Liberal and Labor typically rebuke each other's policy reforms, yet the floor on Tuesday saw no such division. A sense of harmony descended upon the cabinet as every single politician stood side by side, regardless of creed, and voted, with pride, to steal from us. This rare and moving scene of bipartisan cooperation came just days after parliament ruled against including migrants, casual and arts sector workers in COVID protections.

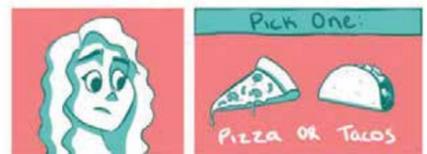
#### Eldritch abominations return to the cities

Since the onset of global quarantine, wildlife have ventured into once bustling city centres all over the world, from a sea lion in Argentina, a puma in Santiago, to even the horrific human-fish Deep Ones from every coast of every sea. Taking advantage of not only the quiet streets but our densely confined human populations the Deep Ones and other Lovecraftian squid-like alien nightmares mounted a series of attacks on our species and announced an impending Cthulhu invasion. We contacted ancient winged octopus god Cthulhu for comment regarding His controversial plan to eradicate all of humanity to which He replied via slime, "humanSR the ReaL diSeaSE"

#### Largely queer fanbase eagerly await the release of both Sims 5 and the DSM 6

One is a life simulator video game, the other the peak text in the classification of mental conditions - that both are runaway successes for the queer community is no surprise. The Sims offers heathen queers a chance to play the God they rejected, while the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders spearheaded the medicalisation and stigmatisation of a range of queer identities, as well as the multitude of other mental conditions many queers enjoy today. An ironic cult hit, pages of the DSM are a favoured substitute for papers when rolling blunts. Bisexual gamer and self-described 'anxious little bean' Dana eagerly awaits new developments in each franchise, attributing her love of each to a shared spirit - "They're both sorta creepy," she confesses. The Sims 5 is set to be released in late 2020, while the DSM does not actually have release dates: it's the DSM.

## Bisexual Problems\*



Art by Kate Scott

## TECHNOLOGY

Want your Tweet to appeal to The Gays? Try our foolproof formula:

1. Say the phrase "gifted kid"
2. Name something weird you did as a child
3. Turns out you were an anxious, people-pleasing repressed gay

That's it! Turns out all your childhood quirks were deeply sad. Enjoy your clout.

# Queen Hani

MIX TAPE

2020

1. Lilo - The Japanese House
2. Gotta Gimme Your Love -  
Sateen
3. Warm Pants - Dua Saleh
4. Dying Song - Montaigne
5. Sofia - Claio
6. Girls - Girl in red
7. America - First Aid Kit
8. Pussy is God - King Princess
9. Heart to Break - Kim Petras
10. Screwed - Janelle Monae
12. Eyes Wide - Bec andridge
13. Pretty Lady - Tash sultana
14. In Memory Of - Wolfjay
15. Maraschino Red Dress  
- Ezra Furman