

# CRACCUM



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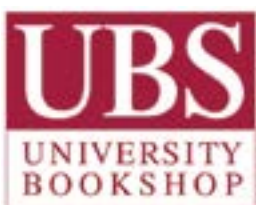
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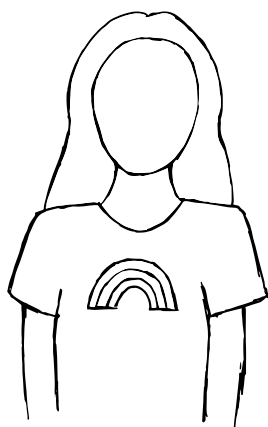
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## Guest Editorial



Isabella Francis

Hi everyone!

My name is Isabella and I'm your Queer Rights Officer for 2017. Good news: it's Pride Week! We've got a tonne of awesome events planned this week! Some of the smaller events are going to be super interesting, so make sure you check out the schedule on the AUSA Queerspace Facebook page—it's been updated since the list in last week's *Craccum*! Some of the ones I'm especially looking forward to are: the Trans Academic Symposium organised by Trans on Campus, the games night with UniQ, a couple of sessions with Ending HIV, and a screening of *Carol*.

The other big thing is that we're getting out to the satellite campuses, with morning teas at Tāmaki and Epsom on Wednesday at 11am and Thursday at 10am respectively, and an afternoon tea at Grafton on Wednesday at 2:30pm. I'm really looking forward to meeting everyone who comes along, so come say hi to me if you see me around—I might look frazzled, but I definitely want to meet people!

I have a few projects planned for this year—most of my time so far has been taken up by working on Pride Week, but as of next week I'll be working on some other seriously cool stuff. There's a (pretty accurate) rumour that Queerspace might be moving to a bigger and better home soon, so watch this space! In addition to that, I'm hoping to work with the University to help queer first-year students in halls adjust to uni life, and also foster collaborative projects among the rainbow groups at the university.

I wasn't sure how I was going to fill up this

page, and then I had the brilliant idea of using it to write a little bit on who is actually in the queer community. Educating non-queer people on our community isn't really part of my job—I'm here to advocate for our needs in the university—but when people who aren't part of the community are more knowledgeable about us, it can make everyone's lives easier!

So, first off, there are lots of different ways you can be queer, or LGBTQ+ (some people don't like the word queer).

A convenient way to understand sexuality might be a rough adaption of the Kinsey scale. At one end, there are people who are only attracted to the same gender. At the other end, people who are attracted to a different gender. In the middle, people who are attracted to all genders, and in between the extremes and the middle, people who have a preference, but are not exclusively attracted to one gender. Outside the scale, there are people who are not sexually attracted to others—what we might call asexual or "ace". A similar idea can be applied to romantic orientation—which is separate from sexual orientation! People can be interested in dating but not in sex, or vice versa. Or someone might prefer to date someone of the same gender but be open to sex with people of all genders. There are lots of different combinations!

Another part of the LGBTQ+ community is the "T"—trans people! Gender is separate from sexuality, so here's a quick rundown on gender. An explanation that's quite commonly used in popular culture is that "gender is social,

but sex is biological." At first glance, you might think that seems pretty legit—sex is all about what's in your pants, right? But it's not really that useful.

First of all, some people use it as an excuse to be transphobic and say things like, "He's *really* a female, though. It's just biology!" Secondly, sex is not at all a biological absolute. The characteristics that are typically perceived as "male" are things like XY chromosomes, the presence of high levels of testosterone, a penis, testes, and the presence of secondary sexual characteristics like facial hair. "Female" characteristics might be XX chromosomes, the presence of estrogen, a vagina, and secondary sexual characteristics like breasts.

However, there are many people (estimated to be approximately 1 in 100!) who don't fit neatly into one of these categories, which shows that sex is not a neat biological binary at all. This is known as being intersex, which is different from being trans, but it does demonstrate that sex is more of a continuum than a binary. This is useful for trans people, because it challenges the idea that there is a "right" body to be a particular gender (something we should challenge anyway—body positivity!). There are also people who aren't any gender at all, or fall somewhere in the middle of the continuum!

If anyone has any questions about Pride Week, or queer issues, feel free to email me at [gro@ausa.org.nz](mailto:gro@ausa.org.nz)! I hope to see lots of you at Pride Week and around Queerspace.

Love, Isabella. ♦



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# AUT INTRODUCES ALL-GENDER TOILETS

BY ELOISE SIMS

Following the efforts of a student campaign beginning in 2012, AUT has recently reassigned 165 of its campus toilets to all-gender to cater for the needs of its Rainbow students. The change, made in February, was designed to “provide a safe community for all our students”, according to AUT Rainbow Community manager, Audrey Hutcheson.

In speaking with *Stuff*, Hutcheson claimed that students had previously voiced concerns about their safety in using the bathrooms on campus.

“If you’re in transition and look too feminine to belong in a male bathroom, or too masculine to be using a female bathroom, being attacked verbally or physically is really common for these students,” she said.

The new bathrooms feature all-gender toilet signage, and are both self-contained and lockable.

However, the efforts have not been without their controversy. Family First claimed that “a number” of female AUT students have approached them complaining that the toilets are “irresponsible” and “backward”.

Family First spokesperson, Rachel

McKenzie, said in a recent press release that, “Students have a fundamental right to bodily privacy. Being around a biological male, in a bathroom or changing room, for women and girls who have been a victim of sexual or physical violence can be a trigger for them.”

Yet, as Hutcheson pointed out, not all bathrooms on AUT’s campus have been made all-gender—and AUT students retain the choice to use all-gender or gender-specific bathrooms, depending on what they are comfortable with.

A LGBTQ+ group at the University of Auckland, Hidden Perspectives, has spoken in strong support of AUT’s bathroom policy. In conversation with *Craccum*, spokesperson Lara Romsdal said AUT’s success had given the group high hopes of implementing a similar policy at the University.

“Hidden Perspectives hopes to raise this issue at the next LGBTI+ Network Meeting, and sooner to the Equity Team to give this initiative further traction.”

Romsdal said that while the University of Auckland has a pre-existing list of gender-neutral bathroom facilities across the four main campuses, the list merely indi-

cates disabled bathrooms that are meant to double as a gender-neutral space.

“Ultimately, [this] is not an ideal situation owing to accessibility overall for students.”

“What needs to happen is a forward-thinking initiative to create gender neutral facilities University-wide—not in pre-existing designations as previously mentioned—but as complete and purposeful facilities for all students.”

Romsdal also praised the brand-new Newmarket campus for their new bathrooms, which are automatically designated gender-neutral.

“With the exception of female-identified ‘single stalls’ in place on each floor to include faith-based requests, this new facility is exactly how bathrooms across the campuses should operate,” Romsdal explained. “Independent, purposeful and for all students.” ♦

IF YOU'D LIKE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT GETTING INVOLVED WITH HIDDEN PERSPECTIVES, VISIT THEIR FACEBOOK PAGE AT [HTTPS://M.FACEBOOK.COM/HIDDENPERSPECTIVESNZ/](https://m.facebook.com/hiddenperspectivesnz/), THEIR BLOG AT [HTTPS://HPERSPECTIVESNZ.WORDPRESS.COM](https://hperspectivesnz.wordpress.com/), OR GET IN TOUCH WITH EITHER HARRIET WINN OR CAROLINE BLYTH AT [HWIN986@AUCKLANDUNI.AC.NZ](mailto:HWIN986@AUCKLANDUNI.AC.NZ) OR [C.BLYTH@AUCKLAND.AC.NZ](mailto:C.BLYTH@AUCKLAND.AC.NZ) RESPECTIVELY.

# WINSTON SAID SOMETHING RACIST AGAIN, TAKE A SHOT

GINNY WOO TAKES US THROUGH WINNIE PETERS’ LATEST CONTROVERSY.

The NZ Herald, our national bastion of journalism and shoddy crosswords, recently released a report on the top 5 source nations for work visas. Courtesy of Statistics NZ, the numbers relied upon reflected a rise in work visas from the United Kingdom, Germany, and South Africa. The Herald conducted a lengthy analysis of the data and reported its rather obvious conclusion—the job-seeking immigrants that have everyone from here to Taranaki up in arms are coming mostly from other Western nations.

Predictably, Winston Peters wasted no time in sharing his opinion on the Herald’s analysis and let loose with a scathing statement which posited its own facts—

that the article’s consideration of Statistics NZ’s data was flawed because of the ethnicity of the journalists who wrote it. Specifically, Peters’ issue was that the article was bollocks; it failed to identify Asian migrants as the top concern for local jobs, and this failure was because reporters of Asian descent conducted the analysis.

The backlash to his comments was swift, with everyone from Dame Susan Devoy to the Prime Minister accusing Peters of the sort of sensationalist denial employed effectively by Donald Trump during his election year. Whether Peters was taking cues from America’s Most Hypocritical is largely unimportant in the scheme of things; the concern should be

that a politician has accused journalists of writing propaganda strictly on the basis of their ethnicity.

The statement reads like the kind of after-dinner conversation someone’s economically-liberal and socially-conservative uncle would initiate at Christmas, with its main criticism being that this was an “alternative facts” conspiracy aimed at justifying Asian mass immigration into New Zealand.

While it’s reasonable for us to expect the occasional verbal stoush during an election year, only time will tell if this becomes a series of unfortunate accusations that will hurt Peters’ party in the rat race for votes. ♦



## STUDENT'S NEW MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES GAIN MOMENTUM

BY ELOISE SIMS

A damning new report released last week casts a dim light on New Zealand's mental health services, showing that 95% of all those surveyed have had negative experiences with the sector.

The People's Mental Health Review Report, commissioned by community campaign group ActionStation, canvassed 500 people who had accessed or worked within mental health services in New Zealand.

The report contains many stories of lengthy wait times for appointments, a heavy reliance on medication for mental illnesses, and a workforce that faces severe resource shortages.

"In a number of stories people expressed concern that they couldn't get the help they needed until their health had deteriorated to the point of crisis," a spokesperson for ActionStation told *The New Zealand Herald*.

For students like Shailah Anderson, in her second year of studying Psychology and Māori Studies at Massey Palmerston North, stories such as this simply aren't good enough.

"I've found that mental health services often require people to be at a certain level of distress before they step in—and that can be dangerous," she told *Criccum*.

In response, Anderson has developed her own practical help project through the national Tuia rangatahi leadership programme.

"Being on the Tuia programme, we take

initiative to contribute to the community by starting up a project or committing to an existing one," Anderson explained. "I always knew suicide prevention was my number one priority so I was thinking what could I do [that was] practical and accessible?"

She envisages both an app, which would use a questionnaire to match people to the most suitable services to them—and a care package system. Anderson's ideas come largely from her own struggles with mental health, and her experiences with the New Zealand mental health system.

When it comes to the app, she said she was inspired to create it after flipping through a Manawatu and Horowhenua mental health directory.

"I was overwhelmed that this booklet was filled with all the services, and broken down so easily to find what service you are eligible for."

"I was annoyed that I didn't know this existed—and that it's free."

The app, she said, would ideally condense the booklet down to make it less overwhelming, and more accessible for mental health sufferers.

"I have tools and skills that worked for me, but didn't realise how basic and simple they were, and how easy it would be to put it altogether like a care-package."

"And the diary is something I didn't know

I needed when I was in the mental health service!"

Anderson envisages the care package containing an array of sensory items, like scented candles, as well as material coping tools such as stress balls, Play-doh, and a diary.

"The diary would have 5 sections—karakia, questions for appointments and new services, blank pages, colouring pages, and additional skills I've learnt from DBT, and others contributed by family and friends."

At the moment, Anderson explained, the project will only be based in the Manawatu region, thanks to the Tuia programme and the Palmerston North City Council's funding.

However, with further media exposure, she's hoping to get the necessary publicity to expand the service.

She's also keen for students interested in helping out to get in touch to contribute—through offering tech advice for the app, to contributing colouring pages for the care package.

"I think it would be cool to know what they think about the idea and what they wish they could've asked or known when going into a mental health service!"

"I think in assembling the care-package especially, I would like to hope people would be keen to help put them together—and feel good about helping." ♦

# BUDGET CUTS CRIPPLING YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

BY LAURA KVGSTAD

In February 2016, the government unveiled their decision to cut \$140 million from funding for mental health services. Due to the new budget constraints, the Central Auckland Youthline clinic was set to close down on May 4<sup>th</sup> last year—until an Auckland philanthropist stepped forward to donate \$20,000.

Youthline Wellington, however, is still struggling with the lack of funding. While managing to keep open through fundraising, only half of the shortfall for the service to continue operating has been raised. Youthline Wellington has over 100 volunteers, and just two paid staff.

Youthline's services are in considerable demand, as a 2014 report from the Mental Health Foundation shows that six per cent of New Zealand adults (more than 200,000 people) had experienced psychological distress.

The University of Auckland also recently published a study that found young people

between 12–18 years old had the highest rate of suicide across Pacific ethnic groups.

Youthline itself recently commissioned a report that showed that 400 young New Zealanders between the ages of 16–24 claimed embarrassment was their primary aversion to searching for in-person mental health help from friends or family. Instead, Google and social media ranked higher for young people in finding new information on mental health support.

This report indicated stress was the biggest issue facing young people, followed by a desire to be accepted, bullying, drugs, and suicide.

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, Youthline rolled out their joint new app venture with Coca-Cola, called Good2Great—in an effort to digitise its current services for maximum accessibility, in light of their financial restraints. The app aims to give the youth of New Zealand the confidence and knowledge to reach their potential.

The app uses virtual scenarios that have been adapted from real-life scenarios identified by young people. It is designed to help users navigate common challenges faced by youth, and encourages mindfulness and stress management.

Youthline CEO Stephen Bell says, “Young people who feel happy and able to cope with problems generally have a greater capacity to do well at school, enjoy life and contribute to the community.”

“Good2Great encourages young people to learn about themselves, develop practical coping abilities and be in a safe environment without fear of being judged.”

The Good2Great programme is aiming to have 5,000 young people complete the online course in 2017, alongside the 40,000 young people Youthline already support every year. ♦

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED WITH OR DONATING TO YOUTHLINE, PLEASE VISIT [WWW.YOUTHLINE.CO.NZ/DONATE-AND-HELP-YOUTHLINE/](http://WWW.YOUTHLINE.CO.NZ/DONATE-AND-HELP-YOUTHLINE/).

# WAIKATO UNI SLASHING HUMANITIES STAFF

BY ELOISE SIMS

Twenty-one staff members in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences are set to be cut from the University of Waikato this year, following declining student enrolment in humanities classes.

Four positions have already been pulled, with 17 more staff members set to be made redundant within the year if a new proposal goes ahead. According to the Tertiary Education Union, such changes have meant the scrapping of subjects such as Women's and Gender Studies, Labour Studies, and Religious Studies entirely. Courses such as Political Science, History, Linguistics, Music, Geography, and Screen and Media Studies also face significant staffing cuts.

The move has been met with much anger from both staff and students, who have doggedly fought the proposal to strip the Faculty of an estimated 20% of its current staff.

Violin student Rachel Twyman helped to organise a koha concert to protest the

job cuts proposed for the Conservatorium of Music, which is estimated to deprive the school of three of its eight staff members. Twyman also created a petition that has since been signed by more than 2500 people.

In speaking with *Radio New Zealand*, Twyman said she simply felt she had to do something.

“We feel cutting three of our fulltime staff would jeopardise the future of the Music Department, and we wanted to stop that happening.”

However, Professor Alison Kirkman, the author of the proposal, said it reflects the declining number of students enrolling in these courses—citing Religious Studies classes at Waikato where merely one or two students are enrolled.

In response to criticism put to her by *Stuff*, she claimed the proposed cuts are designed to strengthen the humanities.

“A university of this size cannot teach every subject. We need to have a comprehensive degree for the Bachelor of Arts and Social Sciences.”

Yet for Lars Barbyn, Co-President of the TEU's Waikato University branch and Senior Lecturer in the School of Social Sciences, the proposal is simply not good enough.

“Losing 17 of our colleagues will have a huge impact on teaching and we are really concerned about what it means for the long-term viability of arts and social science subjects at Waikato University.”

“Now more than ever we need graduates of the arts and social sciences with questioning and curious minds.”

“If these proposals go through it will be increasingly unlikely that these minds will come from Waikato.”

Consultations on the proposal have now closed, and a decision is expected by mid-May. ♦





# SO WHAT THE FUCK IS REALLY GOING ON? TRUMP'S SYRIAN FORAY

*Jack Gradwell analyses our favourite orange despot's recent overseas offensive.*

On April 7<sup>th</sup>, Donald Trump announced his first major foreign policy foray—raining missiles down upon Bashar Al Assad's Syrian airbase. The airstrikes immediately begged the question—why did he do it? Only days earlier, the White House had illustrated its intentions to keep Assad in power, foster closer relations with Russia, and avoid bogging the US down in further Middle Eastern conflicts.

However, following a chemical weapons attack in Aleppo, Trump took a serious U-turn.

Trump's official line—that the strikes were a response “to the barbaric chemical weapons attack launched by the Syrian regime”—raises more questions. No evidence has surfaced to indicate that Assad actually launched the weapons—something Vladimir Putin has been quick to point out in his calls for an investigation. So why would Donald Trump, seeking to retain Assad in power and forge closer ties with Putin, opt to strike instead of waiting for one?

Contrary to President Trump's statement, the airstrikes had nothing to do with chemical weapons.

Frustrated by a Washington power machine that has halted his domestic policy, foreign policy remains one of the few avenues through which Trump can make an impact. Having come to power on a promise to reverse the perceived “decline” in American greatness, the chemical attack offered the perfect opportunity to assert America's global strength.

Back in 2013, Barack Obama warned that chemical attacks represented a “Red Line” that would be met with an American response. When sarin gas was used on civilians by Assad, and Obama failed to respond,

he was met with an enormous fallout, with critics claiming he had damaged American credibility.

However, Trump has distinguished himself from his predecessor—and in hitting a Russian ally, has put to bed any questions that he is an agent of Putin. While some isolationist elements in Trump's base voiced discontent, the overall result was to see Trump's harshest critics in Congress and the media sing his praises (John McCain, anyone?).

Simultaneously, by launching a limited strike, Trump did little to damage Assad's position, or to bog down America in another Middle Eastern conflict, or to create a Libyan-style vacuum that followed Muammar Gaddafi's overthrow. In essence, despite doing nothing to prevent the further use of chemical weapons, Trump has won support from even his greatest opponents.

However, shoring up support at home was not the only aim of the strikes. Less than a year ago, reputable media outlets were heralding Russia's return to superpower status.

This was not baseless rhetoric—for the past 18 years, Putin's brinkmanship has continually outmaneuvered successive American administrations. The pattern has been remarkably simple. Wherever Putin felt his interests threatened, he would quickly go where he knew American leaders were not willing to follow.

When in 2008 the Bush administration supported a revolution in Tbilisi, Putin seized Georgian territory and established puppet states. Knowing the White House's only possible response was a full-on conflict, Putin got away with it.

In 2014, the American-backed Ukrainian revolution was followed by the seizure of Crimea. Knowing acutely well that Barack

Obama would not respond in kind, Putin again came out on top.

With the Chinese President, Xi Jinping, present, Trump launched airstrikes in a brazen direct contradiction to everything he'd said in the past. Normally, as we've seen before, Putin would thus respond by escalating the situation further than the Americans were prepared to go.

However, this time, the randomness of the President's actions left Putin with no surefire way of determining what Trump was likely to do.

For example, imagine if Russia's National Security Council proposed invading the Crimean Peninsula now, rather than in 2014. After poring through the options, the question would arise of “how will Washington respond?”

While in 2014, Putin could answer with surety, “Nothing more than sanctions”, after Trump's Syria foray, the answer would now be, “We don't know”. The result? There's nothing the Russians can do and so the plan would inevitably be shelved.

Launching airstrikes in the Chinese President's presence, Trump announced to the world and Russia that he means business. He showed that America is no second-rate player, and that he intends to play out his goal of “Making America Great Again” on the foreign policy stage, as well as the domestic one.

Unable to respond in kind, Russia's only option has been to complain in the Security Council, while Trump's terrified NATO allies have rallied to his side.

Distracting his critics from failures and shoring up support at home, in Syria Trump has crazily pulled off what could be one of the greatest power plays since the end of the Cold War. ♦



## Rainbow Bridge

*Jade du Preez takes a look at the issue of same-sex marriage in Japan*

In August, New Zealand will be celebrating—or at least contemplating—the four-year anniversary of the Marriage Amendment Act. That private members’ bill, so fortuitously plucked from the ballot box, finally made a full journey through the house and into law. It did many things, including providing one of the better episodes of Parliament TV. Spoiler-alert: there was singing. There may have been tears. It was a big deal.

As someone who is gay-married (or at least civil-unioned-with-a-good-shot-at-switching-if-request-is-made-politely), this legislation is the kind that affects me personally. I like it. I also respect that it, and marriage equality, is not immune to critique.

Somewhere over the hemisphere, 9322km from my spouse, I am presently studying Law on exchange in Tokyo. Japan does not have equivalent marriage equality legislation. What Japan does have, though somewhat less visible, is an LGBTQI community. It also has a campaign underway with the goal of gaining marriage equality in time for hosting the 2020 Olympic Games. Ambitious? Yes. While Taiwan looks poised to become the first Asian nation with same-sex marriage legislation, at the moment it is not a reality in this part of the globe.

Earlier this month I attended an event at neighbouring Temple University entitled “Panel Discussion on Equal Marriage for LGBT Individuals in Foreign Jurisdictions and Japan”. Presented by Lawyers for LGBT Allies Network (LLAN)—the event involved a mix of professionals and students. When comparisons were drawn with other international legal situations, New Zealand got a mention. Nice. Speakers presented on International Law, the merits of the campaign and the desire to skip over civil-union or civil partnership-type laws, considering them of the dangerous “separate-but-equal” variety. Audience questions were insightful too. Those which might be more familiar here concerned the conflict and increasing division within the LGBTQI community; the different worlds moved in by cis-gendered white LGB persons and transgendered persons (particularly women) of colour. Whether marriage equality campaigns contribute to, or detract from,

advancing the interests and rights of the trans community is a live debate here too.

Assuming it’s a positive form of legislation, what might the challenges be here, as different to those faced in NZ or America? Religion isn’t so much a factor. In fact, most of the Japanese population will engage in both Shinto and Buddhist practice. A bit of Shintoism for this life and Buddhism for the next—totally fine to go both ways. Cool, eh?

Of greater relevance is what has been termed “Japan’s Love Crisis” or, less dramatically, the declining birth rate. Genetically-related family is considered by some to be under threat in Japan. My personal feeling is that capping standard work hours might help with such a crisis. Seriously. In Tokyo it seems you get to work lawyer hours without even being a lawyer.

Legally speaking, the relevant aspect of the Constitution of Japan that might be a hurdle is in the text of Article 24:

“Marriage shall be based only on the mutual consent of both sexes and it shall be maintained through mutual cooperation with the equal rights of husband and wife as a basis.”

If that was updated, then the applicable area of the Civil Code, articles 731–737 (which restrict marriage to opposite-sex unions), would require alteration. I think it’s fair to say it isn’t high on the political agenda at present. Japan’s Prime Minister, Shinzō Abe, and Leader of the dominant, conservative Liberal Democratic Party expressed the following in 2015:

“Extending the institution of marriage to same-sex couples was not anticipated under the current Constitution. It is an issue that concerns the very core of family values and, I believe, one that requires extremely careful consideration.”

Fun Fact One: the current Japanese Constitution was created in a faster-than-a-speeding-bullet-train post-war drafting exercise seriously involving the United States. The original Article 24, after “Marriage shall be based only on the mutual consent of both sexes” had included in parentheses “without pressure from parents or the husband”. Its authoress, Beate Gordon, had intended this to provide protection against arranged marriages. It’s

also known as the “Women’s Rights Clause”. Fun Fact Two: The Constitution of Japan 1947 has never been amended.

LLAN have a pending petition before the Japanese Federation of Bar Associations requesting review of the legislation. They argue that, similar to the US Constitution, articles concerning equality and dignity of the person should be given primacy.

*“Article 13. All of the people shall be respected as individuals. Their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness shall, to the extent that it does not interfere with the public welfare, be the supreme consideration in legislation and in other governmental affairs.”*

*“Article 14. All of the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin...”*

Japan has had some gains in terms of local wards issuing partnership certificates to same-sex couples. The certificates, which are signed by the mayor and largely symbolic, entail some additional benefits in relation to areas such as real estate and hospital visitation. The relevant locations include Shibuya Ward in Tokyo, Setagawa, Sapporo city, Iga, Takarazuka and Naha. In Shibuya, a thirty-minute train ride from my present location, the programme began as part of its “Ordinance to Promote a Society Respectful of Sexual Equality and Diversity.” A step forward, for sure.

So that’s the technical side. What can I say from chatting to couples I’ve met out and about? For foreign and binational couples, visas and recognition of existing partnership arrangements are a source of anxiety. Of the Japanese couples I’ve spoken to, difficulties with parents seem to be dominant. Women living together will be recognised as friends, but there exists a serious mental block with recognising them as, y’know, *together-together*. For many it makes white weddings at Tokyo Disney a rather lofty goal. Still it’s something worth pursuing—not weddings necessarily—but increased visibility. All that hearts and minds stuff is probably what needs work here. If the law can help, then all the better. *Ganbatte!*♦

# Rainbow Resources On Campus

Need information/support/a shoulder to lean on, and don't know where to look? Don't worry—there are many organisations on campus willing to help you out. These are the faculty-specific clubs on campus, but check out the Lifestyle section for more clubs!

**Rainbow Arts:** The Faculty of Arts is committed to celebrating our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex students and staff. The Rainbow Arts (Hidden Perspectives) group is comprised of queer and queer-friendly students, academics and professional staff working to improve the visibility of our queer community, and to foster a welcoming environment. They also host the annual Queer Quad, a fun and inclusive event for all, as well as weekly Hidden Perspectives events. For more information on Rainbow Arts or to get involved, contact [rainbowarts@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:rainbowarts@auckland.ac.nz).

**Rainbow Business:** This student-run club aims to represent the LGBTI community within the University of Auckland Business School. With year round social and networking events we hope to connect members of the club to wider industry partners, as well as campaigning for inclusive programs in the business industry. To join, email [rainbowbusinessuoa@gmail.com](mailto:rainbowbusinessuoa@gmail.com).

**Rainbow Engineering Network:** REN provides opportunities to meet and connect with fellow LGBTI students and staff, information about services, news and events, and a voice for LGBTI students and staff in Engineering. To join, contact Alcione Fagundes at [a.fagundes@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:a.fagundes@auckland.ac.nz).

**Rainbow Group (Medical and Health Sciences):** The Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences has established its own Rainbow Group to improve the visibility of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex students and staff, to celebrate the diversity of the faculty community, and to create a welcoming environment for queer students and staff. To join, contact [fmhs@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:fmhs@auckland.ac.nz).

**Rainbow Law:** Rainbow Law is a group for LGBTQIA law students and straight allies, to provide a gateway to the wider legal community and ensure an inclusive environment.

Join to hear about our events and initiatives, to take part in discussions, and to become a member of their community. Contact: [aucklandrainbowlaw@gmail.com](mailto:aucklandrainbowlaw@gmail.com).

**Rainbow Science:** Rainbow Science Network's vision is for an inclusive culture that acknowledges and respects all sexual orientations and gender identities, and values the contribution we collectively make to the life of the faculty. To work towards this we meet regularly to discuss issues, provide contact and support, and plan activities designed to raise visibility and awareness. To join, contact: [rainbowsience@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:rainbowsience@auckland.ac.nz). ♦

## FURTHER INFORMATION

*Find out the the locations of unisex toilets on campus, information about the (university-funded!) transgender student legal name change process, and more, at: [www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/lgbti](http://www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/lgbti).*

*Still have questions? Get in touch with your 2017 Queer Rights Officer, Isabella, at [gro@ausa.org.nz](mailto:gro@ausa.org.nz).*

## CHARITY/ORGANISATION OF THE WEEK

This week we're bringing attention to Outline NZ, an organisation that provides face-to-face and helpline-based counselling for LGBTQI+ New Zealanders. Outline NZ is free to call from all New Zealand landline and mobile phones, and is completely anonymous. Outline

provides specialist counselling for individuals seeking to discuss their sexual orientation or gender identity. You can learn more about, and support Outline, at <http://www.outline.org.nz>. If you need help, give them a call at 0800 OUTLINE (0800 688 5463). ♦



# Upcoming Community Events

As well as it being the Pride Issue of *Craccum*, it's also Pride Week on campus! Check out some of these awesome events!

## Hit up the Rainbow Expo

and start the week with a bang!

**When:** Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May, 12pm–2pm

**Where:** The Quad

**Price:** Free!

**Age restrictions:** None!

**Event info:** "There will be a free BBQ (vegetarian and vegan options available), candyfloss, popcorn, performances from musicians and Ngā Tauria Māori. Many of our Rainbow Groups around campus will be there with presentations. Get amongst!"

Come along to

## UniQ's Games Night!

**When:** Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May, 6pm–9pm

**Where:** UoA City Campus, Conference Centre, Room 340

**Price:** Free entry

**Age restrictions:** None!

**Event info:** "UniQ will be hosting a games night during AUSA pride week! Whether it be a game of go fish, or the black humour of Cards Against Humanity, there will be something there for everyone. If you have a game that you would like to bring along, feel free to do so!"

## We're wrapping up the week with a Mardi Gras Party!

**When:** Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May, 7pm–Late

**Where:** Shadows Bar

**Price:** Free entry

**Age restrictions:** R18

**Event info:** "From all walks of life, all communities, all places, you are welcome. The Mardi Gras Party is the final event on the AUSA Pride Week calendar, and we are going hard. Dress up is HIGHLY encouraged. SPOT PRIZES. DANCING."

A full list of all **Pride Week** events and activities can be found on the AUSA Pride Week Facebook event page. ♦



## What's On

### West Side Story THE CIVIC

Get your tickets ASAP for *West Side Story*—one of the greatest musicals of all time! Centring on the rivalry between two teen gangs in 1950s New York, this is a show you don't want to miss! Playing at the Civic for two weeks only, tickets are available from Ticketmaster.

### Urzila Carlson SKYCITY THEATRE

There are tonnes of great shows at the NZ International Comedy Fest, and South African comedian Urzila Carlson's stand-up gig *Studies Have Shown* is one of them. You can see her perform this Friday and Saturday at the SKYCITY Theatre for just \$28. Tickets available from Ticketek.

### The Comedy of Errors

DRAMA STUDIO, UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

Stray Theatre is putting on their production of *The Comedy of Errors* this week. This hilarious Shakespearean romp is a classic tale of shipwreck, mistaken identity and TWO lots of identical twins. Catch it this week in the Drama Studio from May 10<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup>. Tickets are \$15 for students and can be bought online and at the door. Check out their Facebook page for details.

### The Body Laid Bare

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY

With more than 100 artworks from the Tate in London, this installation will examine the human body in all its forms and our fascination with it over the past two centuries. You will get to see artworks which have travelled out of Europe for the first time. The exhibition is on till July 16<sup>th</sup>. Student admission is \$18. ♦

## GUIDE TO...

## Being LGBTQ+ at Auckland Uni

There are a several groups on campus that people who identify as LGBTQ+ can join to make friends, get support and more! The university has also made some moves towards supporting total equity, as outlined below.

**Faculty Rainbow Groups:** Several faculties within the university have Rainbow Groups, which provide LGBTQ+ staff and students with a space to celebrate their sexualities and create a community on campus. Aimed at improving the visibility of Auckland University's queer community, the Rainbow Groups welcome queer and queer-friendly students, and host a number of events throughout the year. For more details, check the university website and the Community section!

**UniQ Auckland:** UniQ is University of Auckland's club for LGBTQ+ students. The group's main interest is in hosting fun social events where queer students can make new friends and feel welcomed. UniQ also talks to the university administration in

an effort to create greater equality for LGBTQ+ students.

**Unisex Toilets:** There are a tonne of unisex toilet facilities on campus, which might not seem like a big deal, but is definitely a step in the right direction. A complete map of the toilets can be found on the university website.

**Trans on Campus:** Trans on Campus is a support network and social group for gender diverse students and staff. It is also a space for advocacy of trans rights. Gender diversity is supported on campus, with the university agreeing to cover the cost for trans students to get a legal name change if needed.

**Queerspace:** AUSA's Queerspace is a community space for queer students to socialise, network and get some space for the bustle of campus life. You can also book Queerspace out if you wish to hold a meeting or gathering. ♦

## How to Make a Rad Rainbow Cake

### Ingredients for the cake

700g butter, room temperature  
700g caster sugar  
1 ½ tsps vanilla extract  
9 eggs  
700g self-raising flour  
120ml milk  
Food colouring (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple)

### Ingredients for the buttercream icing

400g butter, room temperature  
800g icing sugar  
120ml milk

### Method

1. Preheat that big boy oven of yours to 170°C. Grease six 20cm circular cake tins and line with baking paper (I know this is a fucking excessive amount of tins to have, and if ya don't have them, well this is going to take a long fucking time).
2. Beat butter, sugar and vanilla extract until that shit is pale and creamy. As you do this, add one egg at a time, and beat damn well. Also, add the flour gradually, mixing well until smooth (like Rob Thomas and Carlos Santana).
3. Divide milk into six separate large bowls, and add and stir one colour to each bowl to get the colour

you want. (Don't be daft and mix colours. This isn't primary school art class.)

4. Put equal portions of cake mix into each bowl of colouring. Mix and whisk, fuckers. (Don't be daft and use the same spoon for this. This isn't primary school art class.)
5. Place these colourful mixtures into their tins and level the tops. Bake for twenty minutes and allow them to cool completely, otherwise you will fuck up. Use a big muthafuckin' serrated knife to cut the tops off the cakes so they're all the same height (ALERT: this has the potential to go horribly wrong).
6. To make that sweet, sweet icing, beat the butter for five minutes until light and fluffy, adding icing sugar in gradually and mixing milk in at the end, yo.
7. Wipe the sweat off your brow, coz shit is about to get Mary Berry real on you. Spread a bit of the icing on whatever you want to assemble the cake on. Assemble in this order: purple cake, icing, blue cake, icing, green cake, icing, yellow cake, icing, orange cake, icing, red cake, icing. If you followed that, well fucking done.
8. Spread a thin layer of icing around the cake to hold it together a little, put in the fridge for 30 minutes and wait. Go kick a ball around or something. Remove cake from the fridge when it isn't slipping all over the show and spread the rest of the icing around it.
9. You've got yourself a rad rainbow cake! ♦

# The Literal Closet

*Grace Hood-Edwards looks at the history of gay fashion*

Historically, the world of fashion and the LGBT+ community have been inextricably linked. In a society that was hostile, alienating and dangerous to the community, LGBT+ persons used—and still use—fashion as a way of signalling to others that they were gay. Oscar Wilde famously began the trend of the carnation for Victorian men, where other indicators for gay men since then have been green suits, red neckties and suede shoes. Famous lesbian signifiers through the twentieth century have been ties, short haircuts and the colour violet. This coding hasn't ceased simply because society has got its act together and is gradually becoming more accepting. It's common for heterosexual people to talk proudly about their Gaydar, when in actuality they're simply picking up purposeful signals being put out there by LGBT+ individuals.

The metaphor of "coming out of a closet" is not a random one, as fashion and coded forms of dressing have been a part of documented gay culture since the 1890s. A history of oppression and secrecy necessitated the need for hidden identities within the community. LGBT+ persons had to learn to analyse clothes and dress themselves, in ways which would communicate their sexuality without being recognised in homophobic society. Each decade had a coded visual language where, for men, in the 1890s it was a red necktie and, in the 1930s, bleached hair. After the 1960s "menswear revolution", in the 70s a ten-



dency towards hyper-masculinity emerged that saw the rise of heavy boots, jeans and plaid. Interestingly, these elements of a lumberjack-look are still present as gay signifiers today, but are more commonly associated with LGBT+ women.

Some other markers used today are cool hats (beanies and caps), button down shirts, Converse, large vests, and blazers. In the early twentieth century, the blazer or "mens jacket" was a key item in the typical lesbian dress—it was also paired with a monocle. There has always been a trend for lesbians to adopt more masculine forms of dress, which only began to change in the 1970s. In America it was actually required by law for a woman to be wearing three pieces of women's clothing, and it was illegal for a woman to dress completely in men's clothing. The borders constructed between "butch" and "femme" began to breakdown in the 1990s, a change instigated by the emergence and popularity of feminism and punk. Fashion began to diversify to the point we're at today, where you are encouraged to wear whatever you like.

It was Oscar Wilde himself who quipped that "Fashion is a form of ugliness so intolerable that we have to alter it every six months." So whilst there are many guides and articles online for styles of LGBT+ dress, it's your choice to take their advice or not. Dressing the way you want to is the most important element of style. ♦

## Proud Purchases

Given that it's Pride Week, we figured we'd share some cool treats and trinkets that you could treat yourself or others with to show off that pride. All of the following items can be found on Etsy.

**Cross-stitch patterns:** Crafting can be good therapy and when it comes to cross-stitching, you don't need much beyond a needle, some thread, some Aida cloth, and a dab of determination. Etsy is awash with a bunch of patterns that feature catchy LGBTQ+ positive slogans, and the patterns with digital downloads can run as cheap as \$6. Nab a pattern and some bits and bobs from your local crafts store to put together a piece of art that you can display proudly on your wall to show how much queer rights matter to you.

**Pins:** Beautiful enamel pins have become an artform in their own right, and there's no shortage of them to be found online. Etsy boasts various pins from rainbow hearts, to rainbow dinosaurs, to a fairly impressive Freddie Mercury likeness. These will look swell

on your bag strap, or your backpack pocket.

**Patches:** After getting just a taste for the thrill of sewing from your foray into cross-stitching, it's worth taking a look at the many patches Etsy has to offer. Rainbows feature again, along with powerful fists, hearts, calls to resist. If you're in need of something to jazz up that denim jacket you bought secondhand, or a little sum-sum to turn a plain t-shirt into a statement piece, these patches are just the ticket.

In a world where we see the powers that be taking swipes and stabs at the members of our LGBTQ+ communities, it's important that we're vocal about the importance and ongoing significance of queer rights. Whacking a patch or pin on your bag, or a (masterfully crafted) cross-stitch on your wall won't solve all the world's problems by any stretch—but it's one way to start a dialogue, encourage acceptance, and show the world just where you stand on the issues that matter. ♦

## Top 5... Gay Bars in Auckland

### Family Bar 270 K RD

As the largest gay bar in Auckland, Family is a colourful, bustling joint that's open every night. There are dance floors, gaming machines and multiple events, including drag shows and karaoke. The best part about Family? The vibe. Welcoming, inclusive and just plain fun.

### The Eagle Bar 259 K RD

Eagle Bar's free jukebox is just one reason to visit this intimate, quirky space. The bar makes a mean Long Island Iced Tea and the music is great, with a piano onsite for those that fancy a play. This is a good place to start your night out.

### Caluzzi Bar and Cabaret 461 K RD

Established in 1996, Caluzzi is NZ's original drag queen cabaret. You don't want to miss a performance here—the costumes are gorgeous, the queens fabulous and the music amaze. Not to mention, the bar also serves some mighty fine food.

### Twist Club 262 K RD

Twist has a huge bar and features cage dancers and drag performances. With pool tables and a smoking area, this is a good place to go and chill or have a lazy drink. When it gets late, the DJ will have you dancing for the rest of the night.

### Encore Entertainment 350 K RD

Encore offers dining, live shows and venue hire. Performances range from song and dance to comedy skits, and the food is served buffet style (yaas). The staff are welcoming and the vibe is super fun. Not to be missed: the Boogie Wonderland Show. ♦





# HOT LESBIANS IN ADS ARE SLOWLY KILLING US

*Bloom criticises the media for its negative and harmful portrayal of lesbians in advertisements*

WARNING: THIS ARTICLE CONTAINS DESCRIPTIONS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT, SEXUAL ASSAULT, DRUG ABUSE, AND ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

We (lesbians and bisexual women) are becoming increasingly visible thanks to the legalisation of gay marriage and outlawing of homosexual discrimination in most countries. Because of this, straight people may assume that we are now in a “safe zone”, right? Hell no! There is one thing that is slowly killing us: mainstream media! The media turns us into vulgar “hot lesbians” in advertisements, rather than respecting us as “ordinary” human beings.

## FOR (STRAIGHT) MEN: “HOT LESBIANS” IN ADS ARE THEIR “EYE CANDY”

It is absolutely irritating to see how we are being portrayed as “hot lesbians” in advertisements aimed at straight men, including adverts for food, alcohol, and sports gear. Depicting “hot lesbians” is just to service a male erotic fantasy. The framework of “sexy lesbians” actually reflects heteronormativity. Heteronormativity is society’s sexist system that privileges men over women and heterosexuality over homosexuality. Heteronormativity rigidly creates

the binaries between these gender and sexual aspects. It instructs every aspect of our life to conform to gender and sexual norms. According to heteronormativity, men should be active, tough, and also treat women as their sexual objects. Meanwhile, women should be passive and serve men physically and sexually. Homosexuality and bisexuality are seen as deviant by heteronormativity.

However, the twenty-first century offers flexibility. Homosexuality and bisexuality are still okay as long as they are subservient to heterosexuality. In other words, lesbians and bisexual women are “fine” as long as we are objectified as “fun threesome sex toys” for straight men.

Unsurprisingly, commercials aimed at men commodify us as the straight guys’ “eye candy” to attract more big boys to buy their products. The image of “hot lesbians” reflect these males’ ideals of “hot chicks in bed”; (fake) hot lesbians who are toned, thin, have blonde hair, big boobs and bumps. Also, the “hot lesbians” in these advertisements perform erotic or sexual acts, such as kissing and caressing each other. Their actions are carried out to arouse men intentionally, rather than for pleasing themselves. This could be proved by how these fake lesbi-

ans are constructed to look at the audience as if they are about to tease the guys into “having fun with them”.

The framework is also used for soft pornography. In some TV ads, a fast food ad’s two sexy lesbians and its cheeseburgers perpetuate the metaphor of “a pair of women are pieces of meat for men”. The camera focuses on the models’ big boobs and bumps. This clearly objectifies the lesbians’ bodies as “threesome sex toys” for straight dudes.

Consequently, straight men see “us” as their erotic pleasure due to media objectification. 58 per cent of British straight guys perceive lesbians and bisexual women as their sexual fantasy. Similarly, the majority of New Zealand high school boys assume that lesbianism and female bisexuality are just a “performance”. A New Zealand schoolboy commented: “I think sometimes [girl on girl practice] is not a sexual thing. It is just to get us turned on.”

In Thailand (my home country), most Thai men think lesbians and bisexual women are “sexual objects” too. This is because the depiction of “hot queer chicks” is not just popular on the mainstream media, but also mainstream pornographic websites. For instance, if you’re on the Thai version of Google and search the

“...the majority of New Zealand high school boys assume that lesbianism and female bisexuality are just a ‘performance.’”

word “lesbian” (Thai: เลสเบี้ยน), it’ll bring you hundreds of Thai porno websites. That’s damn disgusting!

## FOR (STRAIGHT) WOMEN: “HOT LESBIANS” ARE JUST A FASHION

What’s even more irritating is the image of “hot lesbians” used for ads aimed at straight women! The advertisers use us as a “cool” selling point for straight girls. In other words, our sexualities are manipulated by them as a “cool” (and horrible) “fashion” for straight women to get guys turned on in an exciting way.

Linking to heteronormativity, the image of “hot lesbians” is just promoting a new way to objectify women’s bodies. Under this sexist cultural system, straight women are influenced just to value their sex and beauty as the only way to be recognised in a patriarchal society. To put it simply, becoming sexual objects for straight guys is the only way for straight girls to become “hot”. As lesbianism and female bisexuality are seen as deviant, these selfish advertisers commodify us in the adverts to grab the consumers’ (particularly straight girls’) attention. Straight girls won’t just consume the ads’ products, but also this idea of “girl on girl” being something that is “cool”. It is a new, sexist and offensive form of marketing at straight women.

In advertisements, “hot lesbians” are often depicted under the notion of perfect feminine beauty: dressed sexy, toned and slim—as something straight ladies dream of. In the framework, the hot (fake) lesbians usually appear to hold hands or kiss each other in a hypersexual manner. Most of the printed ads objectify them by not showing their full faces and focusing on their naked backs, legs or butts. This depiction

is popularly used among clothing and perfume, and not only crudely portrays us as a cool trend to get a guy’s attention, but also makes straight girls see us as “fake”!

## WE, REAL LESBIANS & BISEXUAL WOMEN, ARE THE VICTIMS OF THESE “HOT LESBIAN” DEPICTIONS

Straight dudes view us as their arousing “threesome sex toys”. Meanwhile, those attention-seeking straight girls see us as a cool trend to get the boys turned on. Hence, we are just seen by them as “fake”. To put it another way, our existence as lesbians and bi-women is not regarded as “real” by straight human beings. Instead, we are badly treated for straight people’s “cheap entertainment” in this heterosexual-dominated world.

No doubt, we are at risk of becoming the victims of sexual harassment and assault—about 5 to 10 times more likely than straight women. In addition, bisexual women are twice as likely as lesbians to be assaulted. According to a recent study, 60 per cent of bisexual college students feel unsafe on campus—especially at a party. We are more likely to commit suicide or engage in drug or alcohol abuse—approximately 20 times more than straight girls. These are the damned results of portraying us in such a degrading way. I was harmed by the widespread images of “hot lesbians” on Thai mainstream porno websites. After coming out as bisexual, I suffered all sorts of harassment and discrimination both at home and my work in Thailand. My family and colleagues thought I was just weirdly

“seeking attention” from audiences. My parents even blamed me for not being a good role model for my younger siblings:

*“Shut up! Don’t tell anyone that you’re gay! You’ve already ruined our family’s face. I’m now ashamed of you.”*

*“I think... you should be fixed, Bloom.”*

It was hell. I was even inappropriately “touched” by my family member. I was extremely traumatised. Because these things happened to me, I was too terrified to spend time with my first girlfriend publically. Fear, trauma and loneliness. I almost committed suicide by jumping off the second floor of my house. At one stage, I tried to do drugs to ease this emotional pain. All of these things happened to me because mainstream society treated me as a “sexual object”.

## HEY, MEDIA! STOP IT! THAT’S ENOUGH!

I will make this bloody clear: we are **not** a straight guy’s “toys”. Our sexualities are **not** a vulgar trend aimed at attention-seeking straight girls. Our desires are just part of what we are as normal human beings. Depicting us as “hot lesbians” for straight people’s entertainment is unacceptable. Real-life lesbians and bisexual women are being humiliated by this; it is an extremely disrespectful depiction. As a bisexual woman, I’m writing this article to speak on behalf of every lesbian and bisexual woman who has felt the impact of this media influence. I’m urging every mainstream advertiser to please, *please* stop portraying us as “hot lesbians” on your televisions, posters, and billboards. We already live in a heterosexual-dominated world. Otherwise, more “real-life” lesbians and bisexual women will be slowly killed by those “fake lesbians” from ads. ♦

“...advertisers use us as a ‘cool’ selling point for straight girls ... our sexualities are manipulated by them as a ‘cool’ (and horrible) ‘fashion’ for straight women to get guys turned on in an exciting way.”

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**PRIDE**  
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**PRIZES  
TO BE  
WON!!!**

THURSDAY 11TH MAY 6PM

HOT DAMN IT'S A

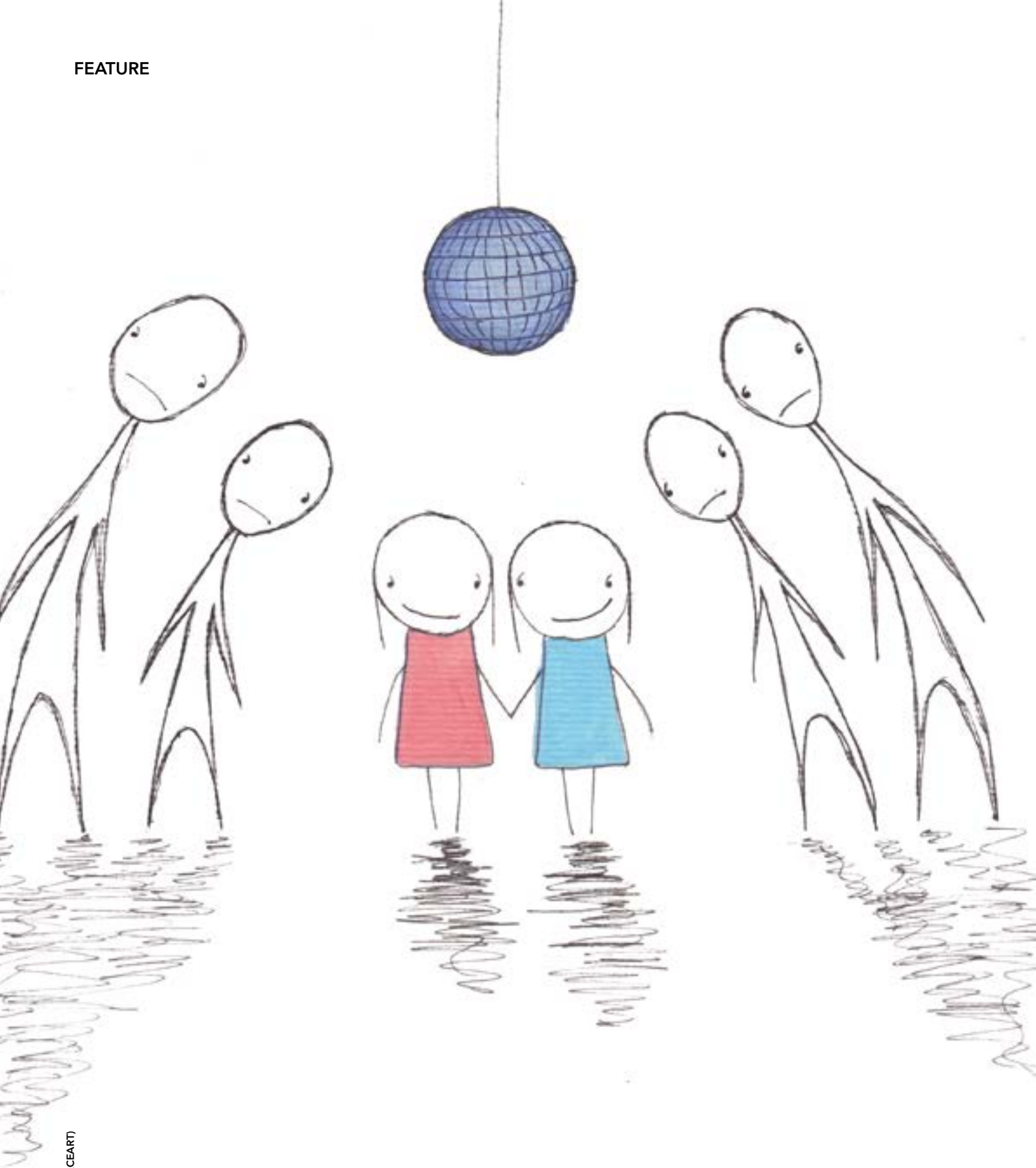
**QUEER  
SLAM!**

SHADOWS BAR

**SHADOWS**







# THE UNSEEN TEENAGERS

*Charlotte Hawkins reveals how our future teachers are unequipped to deal with LGBTI students at high schools*

As we are all aware, the last ten years have been fantastic for Queer Rights. We have celebrated the passing of the Marriage Equality Bill, public toilets and changing rooms are making allowances for transgender patrons to use the one that fits their gender identity, and more and more films, television programmes and video games are using LGBTI characters or relationships to show the diversity of humanity. These breakthroughs are huge, and significantly affect the lives of the Rainbow Community all over the world. In New Zealand, we are lucky because we have a much more accepting environment than many other countries. However, there are still groups of people in the New Zealand LGBTI community who are completely ignored and put by the wayside. One of these groups is our LGBTI teenagers, children and school students.

I am training to be a secondary school teacher with the University of Auckland. One of our mandatory papers involves a lot of discussion about racial and cultural diversity in New Zealand schools and how to address this as a teacher. We have talked about normalising Te Reo in the classroom, and making an environment for Pasifika students that helps them to express themselves. We have expressed how to make all students feel comfortable, no matter where in the world they come from, and making allowances for cultural differences. While all these things are brilliant, as it helps to promote an inclusive environment for all cultures, not once have any of my professors mentioned the Rainbow Community. We have never addressed how to tackle homophobia or transphobia in our classrooms, and not once has it been mentioned how to help a student who feels isolated because of their sexuality. The Faculty of Education are completely ignoring a fundamental part of being a teenager—sexuality.

When I was at school, health class was purely about “not getting pregnant”. Nobody

discussed what it meant to be LGBTI or that this was even normal. As a bisexual teenager, I had no idea if there was something wrong with me, or how I could handle the feelings I had. When I was 15 I got my first girlfriend. We went to the school social together, and danced like all the straight couples did, we kissed during a slow song like all the straight couples did, and we held hands around school like all the straight couples did. At the social, people stared at us, and laughed. Some people threw lolly wrappers at us. One of the teachers told us to stop kissing. None of the straight couples were told to stop kissing. For the whole year people laughed at us in the corridors, and called me a “dyke” or a “lezza”. My girlfriend’s sister often told me to stay away from her. People did not accept us. Worse still, the teachers did not protect us. The problem is, straight is “normal” and we were not that. Nor were we the type of girls doing it to “get male attention”. Simply, we were teenagers with feelings for each other—and *that* (for some reason) was threatening and scary.

I had hoped, with all the breakthroughs and acceptance movements of recent times, that by the time I got to teaching, LGBTI students would be accepted and normalised. I seriously hoped that no children would have to go through what my girlfriend and I had to go through at school. Yes, teenagers can be horrible to each other, but what’s needed is protection by the teachers and normalisation within the school environment. This has never been mentioned in any of my lectures at the Faculty of Education. LGBTI teenagers are some of the most at-risk groups in our community. According to a 2009 study, one in five LGBTI teenagers have attempted suicide and self-harm<sup>1</sup>. These are the students I am going to be teaching in less than a year’s time, but I

have never been told how to deal with this complicated and highly emotional issue. As a woman within the LGBTI community, I have the necessary experience, and I’ll be able to help any LGBTI students with more authenticity than others. But what about those future teachers who have no knowledge or experience of LGBTI issues? What about those future teachers who are completely opposed to Queer Rights? What about those teachers going into religious schools? None of these people will have a clue what to do if faced with an issue surrounding an LGBTI student. How can we be well-equipped to be good, effective teachers and leaders if we are completely ignoring a huge part of our community?

I want young LGBTI students to be able to come to school and to not be afraid of what might happen in maths class today. I want them to be able to come to me or another teacher and tell me they’re having trouble with bullies or feelings—and I want to be able to help them! Acceptance starts young—we want a generation of young people growing up aware of LGBTI and totally okay with it. We are not circus freaks, and it is not a phase. We are dealing with growing up, puberty and feelings just as much as any other teenager. Schools do not accept bullying based on race, so why do so many LGBTI students get bullied because of their sexuality? Our schools need to be a safe place, where anyone’s sexuality, gender identity, race or religion is accepted and embraced. The Faculty of Education is turning out thousands of teachers a year, and they need to start addressing the elephant in the room. LGBTI students are going to exist—whether they like it or not! It’s time we start educating our future educators on the Rainbow Community, and make our schools safe, wonderful, accepting environments. I would hate to see any child going through what I went through.

Shame on you, Faculty of Education for ignoring this vital information! Get with the

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/2987987/Suicide-risk-for-gay-bisexual-youth>



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# SILENCE MAY NOT BE GOLDEN

*Leah Lynch unravels the struggles of queer narratives and representation*

Upon sitting down to write this piece, I was interrupted by the arrival in my inbox of an email from a Queer Book Club I have recently joined. They were going to read a text called *Parker and Hulme: A Lesbian View* at their next meeting. Those surnames, Parker and Hulme, probably mean little to most of us. Indeed, most of us Kiwis know less of those surnames, and rather more of a film called *Heavenly Creatures*. We have been inculcated with an abstracted, mythologised, sensationalist version of this film. If you happen to be from Christchurch, like me, you've probably walked in Victoria Park, the infamous place where Pauline Parker and Juliet Hulme, two teenage girls, killed one of their mothers with a brick. These girls were in love (but that's irrelevant, or all too relevant, isn't it?). In what follows, I do not offer a corrective to the myth, but I do try to suggest some of the hows and whys of its tenacity.

You see, in reading the email from the book club, I realised that the pathologised, hyped-up version of the Parker-Hulme story was the first narrative of desire between LGBTI women I had encountered. It certainly left an imprint. When most "well-meaning" people discuss the case, they frame it so that lesbian desire is pathological and that it, almost inevitably, leads to something grisly and unspeakable; matricide, for instance. They talk about obsession. Unhealthy desire, you know. I've heard this story multiple times; it's a Christchurch myth.

The closest we Mainlanders come to an urban legend. It's something parents deem acceptable to recount to their quite young (and in my case, sensitive) children when out for a Sunday stroll in the park. You walk past the spot and shiver. The crime certainly was grisly, but in retrospect I shiver also for two young women whose desire, however inchoate, was itself considered grisly. I don't believe I received a positive narrative of LGBTI desire between women until at least my mid-teens, not because my family was prudish or homophobic; quite the opposite in fact. Yet even in these adolescent years, such narratives as I had access to continued to be mired by pathologising accounts. Think *Black Swan*, where the utterly gorgeous Natalie Portman only acts upon queer desire when she appears to have gone insane, and in so doing, according to the narrative (il)logic, becomes even more insane. I sat through that at age 16. I was on an exchange in Switzerland, it was my first *outing* with my host family, and I thought, please please please let these bi\* desires fade. Please, God (nothing like a queer film to make me get all Catholic) let it be a phase (but, Jesus, Natalie Portman is a babe).

However, that's already far too much about me. Narratives: they are at their most effective, oftentimes their most violent, when we cease to recognise them *as narratives*. Narratives are those wonderful structures we impose on the cluttered, at times chaotic, world we live in. They are useful, especially if you like order (I line my cosmetics up ruler-straight, so trust me on this one). Some people argue that they are natural, as in humans innately work through stuff via narrative; maybe, but what is inborn is not always good. Narratives are what I study most days, when I can get out of bed, am sufficiently caffeinated, and the like. I often doubt the validity of such work, yet as a spontaneous conversation at the pub or even a gay bar will

affirm, this is most likely because I've been doing it for a while now, and am wont to forget that not everything I am lucky—or perhaps unlucky, in the sense of burdened—to know is common knowledge.

The anecdote I began with, Parker and Hulme's tragic love story, is about narrative content. Let's talk briefly about narrative form which, before you call me out, is ultimately inextricable from content. For the sake of pragmatism, however, allow me to speak of the formal aspects of a story. (These, if you're not a lit. student, are not all tuxedos and ball gowns and drinking champagne; rather, when we read for form, we are concerned with the order and shape, how the text—literary, filmic, photographic—brings things into relationship with one another; it's very, very important.) Form can lead to discussions so filled with jargon that even the nerdiest of us (yours truly) risk suffocation. These discussions sometimes feel like nitpicking on steroids (with a bit of acid thrown in for good measure). However, it seems the most subtle, most buried, sometimes most minute aspects of form are capable of insidious violence. Or conversely, the most overt of these—think the heterosexual romantic resolution of every second Hollywood film, to take a particularly glaring example: what is at issue here is that a narrative form has been so naturalised that it passes for *natural*. It is an explication of these matters that makes the literary labour worthwhile. Unpacking these narratives, which allow for what we might think of as retroactive naturalisation, and which come to function as a yardstick with which to beat all those who step out of line, is as necessary as it is tedious. For natural, in our ever-binary world, defines itself against, and is held diametrically opposed to, the unnatural, the artificial, the queer, all of which come to carry invariably negative, moralising tones.

It is important, then, to keep in mind that these narratives, in contradistinction to their "natural" status, are by no means ahistorical. This offers us a pressure point, the realisation that they have not always been the same, and need not remain the same. As scholar David Halperin writes, "Sexuality represents a seizure of the body by an historically unique apparatus for producing historically specific forms of subjectivity." It is this seizure which so often leads

us to see heterosex where it is *not*, thus reifying its pre-eminence, and eliding queer bodies and relationalities. We are seized by apparatuses of narrative, of sexuality, and not only seized but oblivious to these, the key to sustaining the natural being the obfuscation of its labour as such.

Naturalised narrative, as I have been suggesting, all too often = heteronarrative. That term is not mine. We owe it to Judith Roof. It's been reworked a lot since its 1990s infancy, and, I think, improved by a number of other scholars, especially queer theorists. Heteronarrative may include, at the level of content (but note how quickly this blurs with form), those milestones by which straight couples (and a whole bunch of queer couples too) (de)lineate their lives—adulthood, marriage, house, kids, retirement, REPEAT (or, reproduce!). Such “straight” aesthetics coincide with linear, reproductive time, and promise continuity through heterosexual monogamous relationality. Even generation Tinder and its attendant never-ending supply of no strings attached sex has done little to erode this sanctified narrative. In such circumstances, queer narratives can come to look like an oxymoron. I tried to find a way out of this bind last year for my dissertation, but it is a tricky and at times counterproductively “scholarly” endeavour. That one must have recourse to 20+ theorists to provide a blueprint for such a narrative, highlights the elitist, preventative state of affairs. It is true that many of my comments here are the critical commonplaces of gender studies and queer theory courses. I am not being radical. Yet the persistent failure of these insights to translate into “real-world” change justifies what might otherwise seem an at times, purposefully reductive rehearsal.

I unearthed a queer narrative in Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood*. It took me 12,000 or so words to explain it. If you have heard of that book, it is probably because you have taken a course with my brilliant supervisor, Professor Erin Carlston. Otherwise, the text remains tragically underread. What is more, if queer narrative form is a 12,000+ word kind of thing, there's little hope it's hitting the mainstream anytime soon. That's pessimism. It's my pessimism, and I try not to let it become queer negativity. For it is *not* that people are not innovating (they are, all the time, in wonderful ways); rather, form remains one of those ghastly things, where you need a colossus of jargon in order to undo the original jargon's violence.

The trickle down to us poor suckers is slow. Too slow. Statistics' chilly figures announce to us that people are killing themselves because their stories are not recognisable in, and cannot, without undue violence, be assimilated to, the extant, widely-available narratives.

If you think I am being disingenuous, myopic even—if you think, that is, there is no lack or crisis in LGBTI representation—you are not alone. Most people, in our not only quantitative but latterly quantified world of “likes”, assume equal numbers = equal (which, it is worth noting, we queers do not have anyways). It is a problem that leaves one grasping at how to argue for equity in representation, for *ethical* representation, without sliding into that nasty swamp better known as morality. A part of me itches to say: *We need to up the representation, and stop policing the representation* (think, bashing Cara Delevingne and Kristen Stewart for “cashing in” on bisexuality. As a bi woman, there's no cashing in to be had; you just get twice the shitstorm). Yet, it is in our very failure to realise the inextricability of social progress and economic exploitation, how progress in the former can only be superficial without a paradigm shift in the latter, for example, that we queers have, if anything, regressed.

When I complain about the dearth of queer content, friends and family are quick to cite a character on their favourite Netflix show who is gay, a film with a trans\* protagonist (almost always played by a cis-actor) and which, they'll charmingly forget, went straight to DVD or streaming. In those truly desperate moments, they'll roll their eyes and tell me about a friend of a friend who watches a programme that had a queer character on it *once*. (I am polemicising. There are, as I have noted, a number of programmes, films, books—just last month a queer fairy tale for children was published here in New Zealand—which chafe against the monolith; but bear with me, the point, however clumsily articulated here, is that there are not enough of these narratives, and that the current stock is far too homogenising). Queer actors, particularly gay men, are still wont to suffer the “oh, what a waste” by-line of “disappointed” straight cis-female fans. That such characters and actors are almost always in the singular, equipped with the accoutrements of “inoffensive”, normative or heavily stereotyped embodiment (the overly-femme lesbian, the effeminate gay man you've never met, the trans- character who

just wants to assimilate) fails to register in the “straight” imaginary as problematic. I'm not denying these, sometimes derisively labelled, “homonormative” people exist. I know some of them, and they're dear to me. But a proliferation of such palatable—and in our neoliberal society, ultimately saleable—narratives (these narratives, all too often, of what straight people want queer desire to look like, a close approximation of straight desire) does little to erode the problems of under- and mis-representation.

Thus, whilst acknowledging that our narratives have come a long way, and not wanting to step on the toes of those who have spoken before me, I think it is important, not least of all in the face of a political turn to the Right, to reconcile ourselves with the fact that we still have a long way to go. Pride Week makes it seem timely to consider the failure and exploitative nature of conjunctions of queer and neoliberalism, say, something Marxists (an unhelpfully reductive grouping perhaps) have warned us about for a long-time, but in the face of which we queers have at times proven slow on the uptake. We have failed to realise that acquiescing in safe representation, or representation at any cost is counterproductive, or worse divisive—those narratives of the white middle-class assimilated queer alienating queers of colour and the working class.

Queer is at its most powerful when it is anything but complacent, and when it does not resign itself to articulating within sanctioned frameworks, even while it will at times defer to these for pragmatic reasons. Lee Edelman's comment that, “what is striking about ‘Silence = Death’ as the most widely publicised, gay-articulated language of response to the ‘AIDS’ epidemic...is its insistence upon the therapeutic property of discourse without specifying in any way what should or must be said” seems not to have lost its purchase on the way we talk about queer. Though silence is surely not the answer, and Edelman knows this, we would do well to remember that when speaking within what remains a heavily “strai(gh)tened” socius, more is not always better. My mind wanders back to the lingering silence of that infamous spot in Victoria Park where, years later, I walked alone, *sans* straight narrative. A respectful silence, or even a wordless scream, in which we might look for new ways to talk about queer, seemed better to me in that moment than a hollow speaking for, or narrating of, Parker and Hulme •

Queer is at its most powerful when it is anything but complacent, and when it does not resign itself to articulating within sanctioned frameworks, even while it will at times defer to these for pragmatic reasons.

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## RESTRICTING THE RAINBOW

*Claire Black uncovers the restrictions of LGBTQIA content online*

In mid-March this year, YouTube users started to notice something strange about the site's Restricted Mode setting. The feature, introduced in 2010 and quietly tucked away at the bottom of the website, was designed to filter out mature content for those who chose to use it. This might be schools and libraries looking to block videos involving sex and violence on their computers, or simply individuals who didn't want to stumble across explicit material. But people were suddenly beginning to realise that it was also blocking a huge number of non-explicit videos. And it was not just any videos that were getting caught up in Restricted Mode. From music videos to makeup tutorials and educational videos to personal vlogs, it seemed that huge numbers of videos with LGBTQIA

creators and content were getting filtered out. Equivalent videos with straight content for the most part remained visible.

This all came to a head on March 20<sup>th</sup> when the Twitter account "YouTube Creators" was prompted to release a "message to our community". The statement claimed that YouTube was proud to represent LGBTQ+ voices, and that Restricted Mode did not block LGBTQ+ content per se, just videos that "discuss more sensitive issues". This statement was met with outrage by prominent YouTubers and ordinary users alike. Replies to the tweet pointed out that videos with swearing, violence and drug use were available in Restricted Mode while things like makeup tutorials for trans women and coming out videos were blocked.

People were quick to note the homophobia and transphobia in suggesting that videos of LGBTQIA people simply living and talking about their lives was somehow "sensitive". As more and more people became aware of the issue, hashtags such as #YouTubeRestricted and #YouTubeIsOver sprung up on Twitter, and users started to test the boundaries of the feature. Videos started popping up with titles like "GAY flag and me petting my cat to see if youtube blocks this". And this 21-second video of a drawing of a pride flag and a hand petting a cat quickly did join the ranks of the restricted content.

Facing a huge backlash, including from some of their biggest names, the following day YouTube conceded that videos were get-

ting unfairly restricted. As of one month later, YouTube claims to have fixed the engineering issue that was causing videos to be incorrectly filtered. And it is true that a significant proportion of the incorrectly blocked videos have since been restored, although videos such as “Femme Invisibility: We’re Here Too! We’re Queer Too!”, “Bisexual Erasure and Why It’s Awful”, “Orlando LGBTQ Vigil in London Soho”, and yes, “GAY flag and me petting my cat to see if youtube blocks this”, remain inexplicably unviewable.

It seems unlikely that YouTube set out to block large swathes of LGBTQIA content. The platform claims that the mode works on “community flagging, age restrictions and other signals” for its filtering of content. So maybe homophobic and transphobic users consistently flagged LGBTQIA content as inappropriate and the algorithm took their word for it. Maybe the filter associated some combinations of keywords with sex and sexually explicit content, even when the videos themselves were sexual content-free. Maybe it was a combination of factors. We may never know.

What is clear is that this YouTube example is far from an isolated incident of LGBTQIA content and users being singled out online. In 2009, #AmazonFail trended on Twitter after authors discovered a “glitch” in the website’s sales rankings. Books with gay themes and characters were being automatically removed from the rankings for containing “adult content”, regardless of actual content of the books. In 2010, a group of hackers figured out which words were blacklisted from the Google Instant search function: the feature that suggests possible searches as you type in your search terms. Many sexually explicit terms, “bisexual”, “lesbian” and “gay man” were blocked from showing up. Google again claimed this was a “bug”, though it took a further two years and campaigning by activists before “bisexual” was unlocked in 2012. In 2013, Tumblr users discovered that as a side effect of a crackdown on sexual content, results had stopped showing up on the “lesbian”, “gay” and “bisexual” tags on the site’s iPhone app. Then once again last September, users realised that all Tumblr posts tagged #lesbian had become temporarily marked as Not Safe For Work (NSFW), meaning that no posts were visible for this search in Safe Mode. Instagram also hit the news in 2016 when a researcher compiled a list of hashtags

which were censored on the platform. The list of censored tags included—you guessed it—#bi, #lesbian and #gays. In every one of these cases, the companies claimed it was an innocent mistake, the misfiring of an algorithmic attempt to crack down on adult content. But what starts out as an unfortunate glitch on one platform quickly starts to look a lot more like an unfortunate pattern across many.

A common theme across these examples is the sexualisation of LGBTQIA identities. It’s true that tags and searches like lesbian, bisexual and gay do get spammed with porn, and this speaks to a much bigger problem about how these identities are perceived and sexualised. But when algorithms automatically equate terms like “lesbian”, “gay” and “bisexual” with explicit content, this just makes the problem worse. In response to the Instagram example, UK-based LGBT website *Pink News* argued that the ban on the hashtags wasn’t homophobic or biphobic because it was just part of the platform’s attempt to fight porn. But when LGBTQIA content is automatically marked as explicit, sexual, and unsafe for children, this lumps together sex with every other non-sexualised aspect of these identities. It is this sort of thinking that fuels the idea that exposure to queer and trans people is inherently inappropriate, and even dangerous, for children, which in turn impacts how LGBTQIA people are viewed and treated by the people around them.

This sort of filtering can also limit how LGBTQIA people see themselves represented and access important information online. Over recent decades, the internet has come to play a huge role in the lives of many queer and trans people. Social media platforms, websites, and apps allow LGBTQIA people to access resources, connect with others, and explore their identities in ways that simply may not be available to them offline. Studies have backed this up, finding that LGBTQ youth in the US spend more time online, are way more likely to have made friends online, and are often more open about their sexuality or gender online. So when LGBTQIA content is restricted for whatever reason, this significantly impacts these individuals.

This works in a couple of different ways. Imagine a teenage girl who is just starting to explore her identity and tries searching for “lesbian” on Tumblr in Safe Mode. She will usually come across selfies of other young women and couples, posts of people talking about their ex-

periences, and GIFs from popular TV shows, the sort of content that works to normalise her developing identity. If she had tried to do this during the period when the tag was flagged NSFW, she would instead see no results. And if she then tried to turn off Safe Mode she would be forced to scroll through a huge number of very explicit photos and gifs to find that same content. This sends her a very different message about what it means to be a lesbian and makes the non-explicit content much harder to find.

It is hard for queer businesses and websites to remain afloat at the best of times; their potential audience is limited and often lacks spending power. The (straight-owned) behemoths of online media like BuzzFeed and Huffington Post are big enough to keep producing queer-themed clickbait no matter what other platforms do. But when social media and search engines put up even small barriers to finding queer content, already-struggling independent outlets reliant on views are hit hard. This was seen in the recent takeover of formerly queer-run AfterEllen, and the even more recent announcement that GayNZ.com is shutting down at the end of this month after 16 years of operation. People often argue that we are losing physical spaces like gay and lesbian bars because of the internet, but these online spaces are also struggling to survive.

So while YouTube, just like Amazon, Google, Tumblr and Instagram before it, claims that the Restricted Mode debacle was an innocent engineering error that has since been resolved, it is really part of a much bigger problem. When algorithms mark LGBTQIA content as explicit, this is because the algorithms are created in the context of a society where queer and trans people are frequently oversexualised, by people who have not thought through the consequences of their code. And when LGBTQIA content is made less accessible, even accidentally, the repercussions reach far beyond the inconvenience of having to look harder to find it. ♦

*Claire is currently recruiting interview participants for her Masters research on how LGBTQ+ young people use digital technologies. If you are a 16–24-year-old LGBTQ+ person who is interested in taking part in a 30–60-minute interview about your experiences with websites, apps and social media, email her at [cbla247@aucklanduni.ac.nz](mailto:cbla247@aucklanduni.ac.nz).*

But when algorithms automatically equate terms like “lesbian”, “gay” and “bisexual” with explicit content, this just makes the problem worse.



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## If I want to be Senator by the time I'm 30, I've got to stop dicking around!

With Anoushka Maharaj

I have never been particularly adept at choosing the “right” things (shout out to that atrocious bob cut in 2012, and all the men in my life). When I was younger, my courageous acts of good were limited to choosing Earthcare products and free-range eggs—but even then, I didn’t really understand ethical consumerism. Now, at the ripe age of 21, I have acquired a vegan best friend, and a bevy of other nerds who have coerced me into trying out their gluten-free, vegetarian or pescetarian lifestyles... but I draw the line at paleo, I’m sorry. I just can’t. *But anyway*, my main point is that “ethical consumerism” has transcended beyond just what you literally eat. It includes what you listen to, what you read, what you watch, etc. which reminds me—when I was young, I did not appreciate the genuine feminist treasure that was *Legally Blonde*. It is a film containing three of my all-time favourite things: education, empowered women supporting each other and sweet, sweet revenge. It quashed the absurd idea put forth by trash bags like Warner that loving pink or being into fashion is somehow synonymous with being stupid. But my favourite ideas purported by *Legally Blonde* were that 1) one person has the potential to make extraordinary change, and 2) education has the enormous potential to make you a better person.

During Bernie Sanders’ campaign, most of my favourite musicians—such as Vampire Weekend, Grizzly Bear and Julian Casablancas—jumped on board to support him, whether it was playing at rallies or encouraging fans on their various social media accounts to get out and vote. While I was initially floored by Bernie’s excellent policies and his history with activism, what was most moving was the passion he evoked in young people. And this was owed, in part, to having people you love and admire endorse him so confidently. After Satan was elected, a musical project named, “Our First 100 Days” started up, involving different indie bands who released a song every day, with all proceeds going toward now at-risk organ-

isations that supported reproductive rights, LGBT rights, and environmental conservation. Knowing that bands you love were using their platforms to support minorities was extraordinary, and it inspired hope. Bands like Grizzly Bear, Best Coast, Twin Peaks and The Drums were using social media to remind people to admonish hateful ideas that swam in our communities, with some bands even going so far as to allocate part of their earnings toward organisations that needed support. The Smith Street Band donated \$5 out of every pre-order package toward Headspace, a mental health foundation for young people; Run For Cover and Pinegrove donated 100% of their proceeds toward Planned Parenthood; Frightened Rabbit used Bandcamp to donate 100% of proceeds toward ACLU Nationwide. While it’s not always the easiest to change our diets, a small way to “consume ethically” is through supporting musicians that have conviction and can utilise their status and money efficiently.

Ed Droste of Grizzly Bear has been a powerful advocate for LGBT rights and gender equality, using his Instagram to talk about issues that were as terrifying as they were unjust. After Bernie was sabotaged by the DNC fell behind in the election, musicians like Droste and Ezra Koenig fiercely urged fans to vote for HRC, saying, “If you choose Trump, or frankly, a third party (of which I wish we had more viable options) you are essentially enabling the dismantling of rights and oppression of all POC, LGBTQ people and WOMEN, and that is NOT ACCEPTABLE TO ME.” After the election, to stay silent about these issues was indefensible. And because artists like these have tremendous pull, their consistent support for equal human rights has meant they are held to a higher standard and in turn, hold us, their devoted audience, to a higher standard, too.

Another excellent project is the “Equalise My Vocals” campaign, happening right here in New Zealand, which involves a series of panels

discussing “local wahine/LGBTQI+ musicians and industry professionals”. Led by local musician Coco Solid, the campaign started after her “Can I Live” crowd-funder received more donations than was asked. It was also fuelled by her rage that, despite the stir caused by several women coming forward to expose Tidball for sexual assault, there was no productive response—specifically, there was no shift in social approaches to issues like these. Including her own negative experiences with men in the music scene, her goal was projected with determination: “We have to start fostering music environments where this kind of hostile, exclusionary or predatory culture towards women isn’t possible anymore. That starts with talking about it as much as possible.” Thus, began her collaboration with *The Spinoff* to provide a platform for women and transgender artists in local music, and to facilitate much-needed conversation about their experiences, both personal and professional.

So often, we love musicians and actors blindly, believing they couldn’t possibly have done the things they were accused of (rip MJ, Johnny Depp, etc.), that they couldn’t be anything but the people we knew them to be. We love them for the support they have given us, for the works of art that have inspired us. But they are still people, and even if they give us healing tunes and beautiful films, they are still flawed and very real. We, as the audience and the consumers of this material, have a responsibility to hold our representatives accountable for their actions. We cannot reward them with unwavering support when they have committed heinous acts. And as a generation that constantly consumes media, it is incredibly important to pay close attention to the character of those who create these bodies of work. We must stay vigilant. Integrity and honesty are important now more than ever, and as much as we must practice it, we must in turn expect it from our peers, from our media and from our institutions. ♦





# The Rise of LGBTQ+ Issues in Mainstream Music

*Opinion by Neil Lindsay*

Music has never been a stranger to LGBTQ+ issues. Hell, music has led the charge on equality and LGBTQ+ rights for more than half a century at this point. Village People (and their magnificent assless chaps), showed that homosexuality in music was here to stay, and that was *40 years ago*. TV and film have long been playing catch-up to music's LGBTQ+ influence, but even then, music has a long way to go before *true* equality is reached.

It's 2017, and the world has changed since the almighty peak of homoeroticism that was the 70s. Sure it's less flamboyant than it once was, but LGBTQ+ issues are being embraced by many facets of musical society. We have Frank Ocean crooning his way to the top of the hip-hop world, Lady Gaga singing "Born This Way" in front of a conservative Super Bowl crowd; we even saw a drag queen win the Eurovision song contest. Music has embraced these artists so much that it's easy to say that LGBTQ+ music is entirely included nowadays, but is this really the case?

A major issue these artists face isn't so much the fact that they are the faces of the LGBTQ+ music movement, but that sexuality is sometimes seen as their defining feature. No one talks about Conchita Wurst's Eurovision performance because it was a great song—they

talk about her as "the bearded woman who won Eurovision"—a lingering problem from when the Village People roamed the musical wilderness. Artists like Sam Smith, no matter how much they showcase their musical talent, will sometimes be portrayed as first and foremost "gay artists", or "trans artists".

However, improvement has been made over the last few years in the music scene in terms of incorporating LGBTQ+ themes. Macklemore's ability to produce rap songs for "soccer moms" did actually go a long way towards introducing LGBTQ+ conversations to the mainstream. With "Same Love" blaring through the radio all day long, it really did encourage the active incorporation of two things: making hip-hop increasingly mainstream, and making the topic of sexuality more prominent. There's even been an increase of LGBTQ+ artists and conversations in hip-hop as a result—and that's in a genre that stereotypically only concerns itself with girls, drugs, sex, and alcohol. As much as Macklemore is a terrible example of a "music pioneer", he did attempt to use his platform to bring LGBTQ+ issues into the musical mainstream.

Major credit for incorporating LGBTQ+ issues in music should be given to Lady Gaga. Gaga's form of performance and behaviour

practically magnetised the LGBTQ+ community. Her influence even coined a scholarly term—"Gaga Feminism", a manifesto exploring increasingly free gender and sexual roles. Her music is catchy, her lyrics are super vague, and her music videos are pretty risqué—a combination that somehow appeals to everyone basically. The key to Lady Gaga's music is that it not only appeals to the LGBTQ+ community, but also makes mainstream society feel involved as well, walking the tightrope between inclusionary and exclusionary. It brings people together, but at the same time makes them special; blending it together in a perfect radio-friendly smoothie.

Music has changed over the last few years, no one can doubt that. There's definitely been progress made in terms of promoting LGBTQ+ artists, but a little more can't hurt. Equality isn't quite there, but music has at least been trying to lead the charge in reaching it. ♦

*Editor's Note: This piece focuses on influences in mainstream music—there are certainly plenty of other notable musicians outside of the mainstream worthy of attention and accolade! Check out Hayley Kiyoko, Tegan and Sara, Openside, or Anika Moa (for something a little closer to home) as a starting point!*

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## Gwan Rostam

MUSIC REVIEW BY HELEN YEUNG

Hey all you Vampire Weekend fans, remember the craze over Ezra Koenig's nose dent and the hype we had when *Modern Vampires of the City* was about to be released in 2013? By now I'm sure you've fallen head over heels multiple times for the band's fusion of preppy aesthetics, colourful indie pop noises and quirky lyrics. Well if you don't know already, Vampire Weekend's songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Rostam Batmanglij, who left the band last year, has since started a solo project under the name ROS-TAM—recently releasing a new video for his song “Gwan”.

Despite his departure from the band, the track is still reminiscent of Vampire Weekend's fusion of classical music with indie rock. The music video for “Gwan”, picturing Rostam wandering through the streets of New York City and crossing the Brooklyn Bridge, is paired throughout the song with a light and airy cello arrangement. In a recent press release, Rostam states, in reference to “Gwan”—“*I've had experiences where my life will try to tell me something in a dream—and sometimes it's something I'm not ready to hear...so I think maybe this song is about trying to listen to what your subconscious mind is trying to say to you*”.

This theme of a surreal, self-discovery is definitely reflected in the song's lyrics. His warm, bouncing vocals echo to a light beat that does not overpower the cello arrangement. Despite being a New York-based artist, claiming his happiness in the city within the lyrics, he then says “*took a friend's car to the ocean*”. Ending with a self-reflective question of “*are you ready?*”, Rostam is perhaps symbolising a decision to move on to better things. Or better yet, maybe he is indicating the beginning of his career as a solo artist. ♦



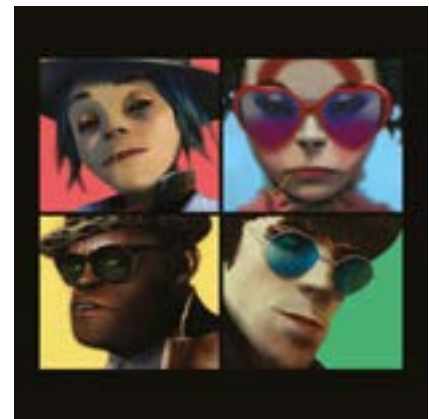
## Heart Basel The Drums

MUSIC REVIEW BY ANOUSHKA MAHARAJ

Hailing from New York City and praised for their excellent mix of indie pop and surf music, The Drums are back with two new singles off their upcoming album, *Abysmal Thoughts*. Unlike the sonic abomination that was Weezer's return, “Heart Basel” is simply delightful—it is classic Drums, complete with groovy riffs and falsetto exultations.

The Drums have always had this remarkable ability to create miserable tunes that you could dance to. With “Heart Basel”, for instance, lead singer Jonny Pierce states that the track was borne of his experience with a turbulent relationship—“‘Heart Basel’ is a song about him treating me ‘kindly’ at Art Basel in Miami and then treating me like garbage after he got what he needed. You live and you sometimes learn.” Pierce also mentions that he received professional help and had to learn to love himself again. The track is incredibly honest, with tragic expressions like, “*oh, the tropical weather / It must've softened your heart / And now we're back on the streets in California where the air is joy / And your heart is closing up in plain sight*.”

The Drums have had to adjust from being an entire band to just Jonny, and, judging by the release of the first two singles, *Abysmal Thoughts* is a much more intimate and careful creation as a result—even the album cover is special, being a photo of Jonny's boyfriend. *Abysmal Thoughts* is out on June 16<sup>th</sup>, and while we don't know what the rest of the album has in store, we know that it is sincere, and mapping the course for Jonny's growth: “*I learned to stop looking at myself as worthless and inadequate and start realizing that I can do this*.” ♦



## HUMANZ GORILLAZ

ALBUM REVIEW BY MARK FULLERTON

*Humanz* sucks unwashed anus.

Editor: No

Editor: That's not going to be it

Editor: Pls Mark

Mark: but it's true.

Editor: Write more.

*Humanz* is atrocious. If you waited seven years for the triumphant return of your favourite (and, let's be honest, only) cartoon band, well, strap yourself out and don't even bother with the ride because *Humanz* is going to be a complete fucking waste of time.

Editor: More.

Remember how you felt when you discovered *G Sides* and *D Sides* and *The Fall*, and then how you felt when you listened to them and realised that one song is literally Damon Albarn saying “*blah blah blah*” over and over again? That ecstatic rush, then the crushing disappointment. Each of those albums had maybe one good song each, and so does *Humanz*—opening banger “*Ascension*”. That's about it.

Each Gorillaz album has a distinct vibe. The vibe on *Humanz* seems to be “not a Gorillaz album” because their stylish mix of funk, soul, rock and hip-hop of albums past is abandoned for a string of big featured names and heavy synth and where even is Damon, shouldn't he be singing, no, no, he's just popped out to laugh at how many people are going to LISTEN TO THIS JOKE.

Remember in January when “*Hallelujah Monkey*” came out? And you were like “Well, this is okay, but kinda boring, hopefully the rest of the album is okay.” Prepare yourself for some serious disappointment m8s.

Editor, on Google Doc: DANCE MONKEYBOY

Mark: i'm about thirty seconds from bailing on this review completely so don't fucking push me.

Remember how you felt when you first heard “*Clint Eastwood*” and “*Feel Good Inc.*”? Now wave goodbye to those moments as they pass you by and head into the ether, because you sure as hell aren't going to get any more from *Humanz*. ♦



## Personal Shopper

FILM REVIEW BY SAMANTHA GIANOTTI

I love ghosty shit. I google “cool ghost stories” on the reg. I’m constantly convinced there are otherworldly beings in my house, regularly met with protestations of “are you sure” and “did you really see a shadowy figure in your room or was it just your dressing gown” and “please stop you’re tearing this family apart”. I was jazzed for *Personal Shopper*—a fancy French film that seemed to have all the trappings of a high-brow Hitchcockian thriller that I could use to trick people into talking about ghosts with me for at least a week, under the guise of *discussing cinéma*.

And there is certainly plenty to discuss in your post-movie shake down. Kristen Stewart is Maureen, a young medium in Paris working as a personal shopper for a woman she despises, waiting to make contact with her twin brother in the city where he died. Stewart is the film’s touchstone, her grief and paranoia acted out perfectly through twitches and stammers and the tiniest of gestures. Framed by Maureen’s own desperation for confirmation of the afterlife, her perspective clouded by loss, *Personal Shopper* is intentionally vague and illusive.

Director Oliver Assayas largely steers away from horror conventions, weaving the paranormal into the everyday through daylight encounters with spirits, and the incredibly effective use of texting for the big screen. But the film’s successes are counterweighted by some real doozies; conversations that seem to stretch on into oblivion, the plot’s vaguery steadily becoming more frustrating than intriguing, and an iMessage tête-à-tête with a maybe-ghost that sounds like the sort of pseudo-philosophical quasi-sexual shit you begrudgingly reply to on Tinder after you spend one too many Saturday nights in watching reruns of *Project Runway*.

If you’re willing to sacrifice certainty of story in light of some thoughtful spook-em-ups and a solid performance, *Personal Shopper* is showing at the Rialto for those of us who missed it at the International Film Festival last year. ♦



## Persona 5

GAME REVIEW BY JASPER LAU

In what continues to be an extraordinary year for gaming, *Persona 5* (*P5*) was released in April without much fanfare. Part dungeon crawler and part Japanese high-school simulator, *P5* is arguably one of the best JRPGs released in recent memory with over 100 hours of gameplay and a fascinating cast of characters that makes you wish that your high school was this kinky.

Set in modern day Tokyo, you get to play as a high school student who has been expelled from his previous school and been sent to live in Tokyo. In a weird turn of events, you eventually get sucked into an alternative reality called the Metaverse, where you become part of a vigilante group that sets out to change various people’s distorted desires. As the narrative progresses, there is also an overall larger conspiracy at play that is constantly lurking in the background.

The game does an excellent job in bringing new players up to speed with its mechanics, whilst offering experienced players a level of complexity through its in-depth systems. Like any good *Pokémon* game, the core mechanic of the *Persona* series has been its turn-based combat system, where you are focused on finding the elemental weaknesses of your foes. Outside of combat, you spend a majority of the time prioritising your social activities such as strengthening your bonds with your allies or going to study (yes, even this game makes studying seem fun)—which all boosts your stats and skills when you do go to combat in the Metaverse.

Despite some notable weaknesses in the game—such as the languid paced opening sequence and the overburdensome use of cut scenes throughout the game—what really holds *Persona 5* together are the quirky characters and story that goes beyond your stock-standard RPG archetypes. *P5* treats the players as adults and, as such, is unafraid to explore dark themes such as crime and punishment, loneliness and even suicide. Ultimately, *P5* stands out as being an extraordinary experience and one of the best gaming experiences you will have this year. ♦

## Pride Week Film Recommendations

BY GRACE HOOD-EDWARDS

It can often be stressful searching for positive LGBT+ content to watch when you just want a pick-me-up, and don’t want to be crying your eyes out over another tragic character/story. Here’s a quick list of films with great representation that you can cuddle up and watch without worrying about the ending.

***Carol*:** An eloquent and romantic movie, *Carol* stars Cate Blanchett and Rooney Mara in a love story about a divorcing woman falling in love with a shop assistant. This intoxicating love affair is set in the 1950s and is a sumptuous film, perfect for a late night and a glass of red wine.

***The Way He Looks*:** This Brazilian coming-of-age drama is a sweet and compassionate movie about a young, blind boy—Leo—and him finding his first love in the new boy—Gabriel.

***Imagine Me and You*:** Starring Lena Headley and Piper Perabo, *Imagine Me and You* is a full-blown lesbian romantic comedy. This British picture is witty and sweet, and has a classic rom-com ending sequence.

***Saving Face*:** Another rom-com style film, *Saving Face* tells the story of Wil—a Chinese-American surgeon—and her romance with Vivian, a professional dancer. This movie is funny and light-hearted, and Wil and Viv’s relationship is at turns sexy and charming. The mother-daughter relationship is really at the centre of this movie though, and is certainly worth watching.

***The Handmaiden*:** Not necessarily happy all the way through, this psychological thriller is set in Korea in the 1930s and is a staggering and intelligent depiction of love and betrayal. With stunning visuals, this movie is intensely satisfying and is a must-watch for any movie lover.

***Cloudburst*:** Shining a much-needed light on the elderly LGBT+ community, this epic lesbian road trip movie is about love and living life to the fullest. Uproarious and foul-mouthed, it follows Stella and Dotty who run away to Canada where they can finally get married. Full of love and joy, this movie will have you laughing and crying by the end of it.

***Big Eden*:** This adorable romantic film is about a young artist called Henry who flies back to his idyllic hometown when he hears that his grandfather is dying. Whilst there, Henry has to deal with the return of his childhood crush Dean, and burgeoning feelings for the shy and kind Pike. The movie is sweet-natured to the core, and is one of those beautifully implausible films that we just love to pull out on a rainy day. ♦



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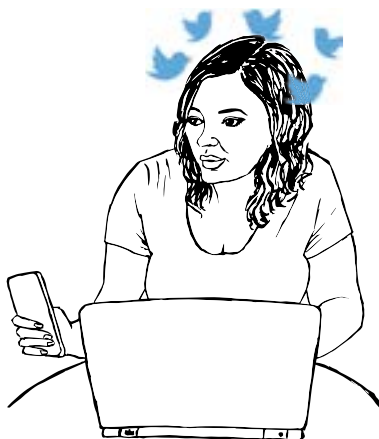
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## Wired In

With  
Rachel Berryman



## On an Island in the Sun

*Each week Rachel, social media enthusiast and online lurker extraordinaire, keeps you in-the-know about what is topical and trending across the world wide web.*

Despite my love of it, there's a lot to be wary about on social media. Catfishes. Stalkers.<sup>1</sup> Those Facebook Memories posts which remind you how much more outgoing, social and happy you were three years ago. And though I fancy myself well aware of the dangers of social media, every so often a news story comes along that heightens my paranoia all the more.

Back in December 2016, an online marketing campaign for a new, boutique music festival was causing a stir online. Influencers across social media were posting links to the official website of Fyre Festival, spreading the word about the "immersive music experience" held on a private island in the Bahamas (purportedly once owned by Pablo Escobar) over two weekends in April and May 2017. A number of Instagram's finest had been recruited to promote the event, with models such as Bella Hadid, Hailey Baldwin, Emily Ratajkowski and Alessandra Ambrosio appearing in a short trailer disseminated online. Throughout, footage of the women wandering along pristine beaches, lounging on yachts, driving jetskis and swimming in clear blue waters was frenetically interspersed with stock footage of backlit raves, unidentified performers and large airplanes. In all, not particularly informative, but definitely #grammable.

Meanwhile, the festival's website boasted nothing short of a transcendent cultural experience: "We've tapped the brightest minds in music, cuisine, art and hospitality to mastermind experiences designed to delight and seduce. From innovators and thinkers to multi-plati-

num artists, you will find yourself one-on-one with some of the greatest talent on the planet."

But this not-to-be-missed opportunity wasn't going to come cheap. Pre-sale tickets (including travel to the venue on a chartered flight, festival attendance, gourmet catering and shared accommodation) started at US\$950. Those desiring a more luxurious festival experience could pay anywhere from US\$1,000 to US\$125,000 for more decadent VIP packages.

MC'd by rapper and festival co-owner Ja Rule, Fyre Festival's official line-up featured Blink 182, Major Lazer, Migos and Disclosure, among others. The organisers also promised a grandiose island treasure hunt involving over a million dollars' worth of prizes, and the option to "spend the weekend sea-bobbing, snorkeling, playing on water trampolines, and doing yoga on the beach."<sup>2</sup> #swag #instagood #f4f

Smash cut to April 27<sup>th</sup>, the day before Fyre Festival was scheduled to begin. Private charter planes full of excited festival guests started descending on Great Exuma Island, and not long thereafter, #fyrefestival's flattering façade began to falter.

Guests were shuttled from the airport to the venue in yellow school buses, eventually arriving at a desolate dirt field occupied by a smattering of domed disaster relief tents—a far cry from the luxury beachfront locations featured in the teaser trailer. Mattresses lay in stacks around the site, soaked through by a storm the previous night. In lieu of proper storage, guest luggage was thrown by staff into a large shipping container, with security nowhere in sight. The concierge desks were little more than wooden hut skeletons with laminated signs tacked to the front. Someone, somehow, had forgotten to order the alcohol.

Guests who had paid for gourmet catering were served pieces of white bread, garnished with slices of processed cheese and a small side salad, in a styrofoam container.

Needless to say, Fyre Festival was not living up to the #hype.

Distressed guests quickly took to social media, documenting the increasingly chaotic scenes around them as they waited for word from the organisers about how to get home. #fyrefestival, #fyrefestivalfraud, #fyrefiasco and #lordof-hefyres began trending on Twitter, attracting hundreds of thousands of digital onlookers who revelled in the *schadenfreude* of watching the wealthy attendees' great expectations shattering one by one.

Unbelievably, it wasn't until 8am the next morning that Fyre Festival was officially cancelled.

"Due to circumstances out of our control," the organisers wrote on their website, "the physical infrastructure was not in place on time and we are unable to fulfill on that vision safely and enjoyably for our guests."

No shit, Sherlock.

The guests were all eventually flown off the island, with each promised a full refund—as well as VIP access should they decide to attend the *second iteration* of the festival the organisers are already planning for mid-2018.

And despite the very *thought* of a Fyre Festival 2.0 seeming entirely ludicrous, it perhaps isn't so much more incredible than the origin story of its predecessor, which gained the trust of thousands using little more than flashy editing techniques, some aesthetically pleasing graphics, and the performed trustworthiness of a group of young women whose full-time occupation is selling their exorbitantly glamorous lifestyles. Look at how well that turned out. ♦

1 If you've got some free time this week, I'd recommend watching Kim Kardashian-West's recent interview on *Ellen*, where she discusses her traumatic experience in Paris last year. One of the most surprising moments of the interview is the revelation that the armed men who forced their way into Kim's hotel room had been obsessively following her on social media for more than two years, tracking and cataloguing her jewellery purchases via her Instagram uploads.

2 Mims, Taylor. "First Ever Fyre Festival Comes With Accommodations and a Private Plane." *Amplify Magazine*. December 14, 2016.

**By Popular  
Demand**



*With  
Michael Clark*

## Ode to *X-Men*: How *X-Men* Portrays Social Change

*Each week Michael, long-time writer and all-round teddy bear, tries to persuade you to take pop culture seriously.*

I know I said last week I'd continue talking about *Hamilton* and that article is still on its way. But right now, I want to address the theme of the issue and reflect on something that was an influence for me growing up. Queer characters and themes were (and still are) wanting in the media. Yet, there was one scene I saw in a film that influenced my own beliefs growing up. That film was *X-Men: The Last Stand*, the last in a trilogy, and it was when one of the characters tries to remove painfully one of his own body parts to avoid being exposed as different.

Let's set the scene.

In the *X-Men* canon—comic, films, whatever—a small percentage of people are born with a mutant gene. The gene develops somewhere around puberty and manifests as superpowers unique to the individual. These “mutants”, as they are called, are known to be feared and are othered. As a result, mutants learn at an early age that they are not normal and hide their abilities in fear of being ostracised. A lot of mutants hate themselves for it. Some, like the character above, try to alter themselves to appear like they don't have it.

The political situation is tense. There are laws being proposed that force individuals to disclose their genes. And while being a mutant is not yet technically illegal, there are no laws against discrimination, and some fear it's only a matter of time before laws are passed where mutants are outlawed.

The prevailing ideology, which stems from a fear of the unknown, is that mutants are unnatural, or outside of the normal. In the third film, a drug is invented to suppress the gene and it is marketed as a “cure” for mutation and the true tragedy within the film lies within mutants' willingness to take the conversion. Some of the trilogy's most powerful moments are when these ideas are illustrated on an individual level like Bobby (Iceman)'s tense, we-don't-talk-about-it relationship with his family, with his mother's banger line,

“Bobby, have you tried not being a mutant?” hitting home the ridiculousness of this perception.

The *X-Men* film's plot sits within this delicate socio-political landscape and the idea of affecting social and political change is proudly, if often clumsily, approached. While the *X-Men* plots of the early comics reflect America's civil rights movement, the film's mutants are a clear and unashamed stand-in for queer people. Some scenes you could replace a mutant character with a queer character and it would still work—I'm pretty sure it's why Patrick Stewart and Ian McKellen signed up for the roles. I always experience the same of level of emotional tension during Bobby's mutant coming out scene that I would with a YouTuber coming out to everyone.

The trilogy highlights two ways of affecting change within a socio-political environment embodied within two conflicting characters: Charles Xavier (Professor X), who advocates mutant rights through discussion and education; and Magneto, an extremist who fights for mutant rights using his ability. While the two advocate for the same rights, the films favour Xavier's pacifist approach of persuasion through kindness and discourse in opposition to Magneto's more forceful activism aimed at inciting revolution. The two characters, brought up under two very different circumstances, understandably represent two extremes on the protest spectrum, but Magneto is vilified for his attack protestation and I am not sure how I feel about it.

I saw an extremely well done piece of theatre by a friend of mine during Pride this year that was well researched and elegantly written concerning the homogenisation of queer identities for commercial or political gain. Of course, I support the sentiment of the piece—addressing the whole “buy a rainbow flag, or you're not an ally” or “oh, we're ANZ and we support LGBTQ+ and that makes us good people, switch to us” sort of thing—but when my friend and I left the theatre

after the show, he turned to me and said that he didn't agree with the way the show was done, and I can get where he's coming from.

The show was protest theatre—persuasion through attacks. While it's true that all media is never not persuasive, when one does it with this level of vigour and aggression, lunging at us with a sword, we tend to put up our shields in defence. Audiences just feel attacked or insulted and the whole opportunity to create a discourse with the intended target is entirely missed. My friend advocates a subtler approach, effecting change through carefully constructed discourse resulting in gradual systemic change.

I grapple with the question of whether or not attack protest is the best form of persuasion. New Zealand has a long, proud history of protest and we've been able to achieve social change much quicker than other countries. And a lot of social change has been based on attack movements. Malcolm X, the Black Panthers, the Stonewall Rioters all used aggressive—arguably violent—tactics, but are now seen as cornerstones for advocating change. To vilify Magneto's actions would be to cut out a whole chunk of influential events in achieving mutant rights. I'm inclined to say that both Xavier and Magneto are integral in the movement for mutant justice, from Magneto's call to action and forceful push of mutant rights to Xavier's more refined ability to create political discussion and run with the push initially incited by Magneto.

While a little messy, the *X-Men* original trilogy explores necessary angles of a movement, highlighting the relationship between social and political change, exemplified by a scenario not too far from home. However incoherently the movie approaches these concepts, I'm glad they approached them nonetheless, because it was something I needed to see back when I was twelve coming into a hostile, unforgiving environment. ♦

## Amateur Hour



With  
Jordan Margetts

# The Brief Diagnostics of An Anxious Generation

*Each week Jordan, disgraced former-editor-in-chief, tries to impart political wisdom but mainly just cries in the shower.*

Three Arts graduates are sitting forlornly around a dirty glass outdoor table. The darkling sky is striated by orange and magenta as the sun sets behind an almost-winter horizon. And we're all shaking our heads and sort of avoiding eye contact. And two of us are chain smoking (Dunhill Switches—so you get that menthol hit at the end and can pretend the whole exercise in proto-carcinogenic inhalation was basically a stinky breath mint). And we're all drinking vodka-and-soda. And we've all just admitted something: we're sad. At some basic level I'm sure the reasons for our sadness come down to personality, a coincidentally shared tendency towards melancholy. But a column about three Arts graduates' respective personalities (and flaws therein) wouldn't make for great reading. And we all agree on two broad problems: (1) We don't want to go and get grown-up jobs, because we aren't good at them, and we might not be good at much, but the things we are good at don't lend themselves to grown-up-job type situations. And (2) that all of our friends, who we used to hang out with at uni, are increasingly leaving to get grown-up-type-jobs and don't seem to regret them as much as we'd like.

It *does* seem a little like the quarter life crisis is becoming a thing. And people seem to deal with it (usually) by either diving head first into some awful sounding career ten years before they'd be expected to a generation ago, or by staying at university forever and feeling glum. Like, I'm basically fairly certain that as a generation we're a bit sad, or tense, or something. And *prima facie* this shouldn't make sense—we're materially better off than almost any other point in history. Information and education have been democratised to a degree hitherto unimaginable. Thanks to the internet we socialise almost constantly (couldn't be alone if we tried). This column is some sort of truncated and, as usual, **caveat—probably wrong**, attempt to parse out why.

My theory goes something like this: we millennials—and by millennials I mean the young versions, let's say sub-thirties—are generationally defined by two broad traits: **boredom** and **anxiety**. Let's talk anxiety.

### Anxiety Type 1: Economy

I don't mean anxiety in the clinical sense. I'm

not qualified to comment. What I mean is that we're basically shit scared in a couple of ways that I don't think our parents' generation was. I think these anxieties come in three broad types.

First off we're totally terrified about the economy, or, more specifically, about houses. I've had actual conversations, with actual friends, who are sub-25, who've said things like:

*"Do you ever just worry you'll never afford a house?"*

*"Fuck the baby boomers. At least they got cheap houses."*

*"Man, my 50k trust fund won't even get me a deposit on a decent apartment."* [sic]

I think this is the confluence of two narratives. N1: A happy life consists of a very particular trajectory where you go to university, get a responsible degree followed by a sensible job. At uni, or at least by the time you're working, you figure out some sort of partner. Not too long after your responsible degree gets you a responsible job, you can start responsibly saving for a responsible house in which you and your responsible Significant Other can have a batch of responsible children who you'll responsibly parent so they can go and start this whole cycle of responsigasm all over again.

N2: The economy is difficult and scary. And house prices are through the roof. And basically you can't afford to get your responsible house without some kind of parental-type-windfall or a very substantial loan (but recall loans are not *responsible*). So there's a good chance that the world is set up in such a way that you can't possibly fulfil N1, and what the fuck are you gonna do now?

So the cause of anxiety type 1 is fairly simple. Basically you can't do what you're supposed to. And despite this not being your fault, we're no less wedded to our responsibility-and-failure type narratives, and weirdly this kind of tension results in a little nervousness.

[Post script: also apparently we're losing our jobs to robots soon...]

### Anxiety Type 2: Geo-Political (etc.)

There are some obvious weird tensions at the moment. News feeds inundated with Trump (who might be in the middle of causing some kind of global-nuclear catastrophe?) and Brex-

it, and what looks like a wave of new (or rather old) racism in all these pleasant white-people countries we always thought were good and well-behaved. And all the journalists we (I) read and trusted etc. for all of last year turned out to be practising a sort of collective wish-thinking rather than telling us what was actually going on.

But beyond the specific terrors of 2016, we've grown up in the era of a global "War on Terror". I think I was like 9 when the Twin Towers went down. And basically from there we've lived in a world of scary stuff going on (so the story goes). More recently we had ISIS. Russia is also back in the game—etc. etc.

This isn't exactly novel. Many of our parents lived in constant fear of The Bomb. But the point is this: what with a specific type of economic haplessness contrasted against unending and rather narrow middle-class expectations of what it means to be "successful", combined with a seemingly unstable, or at least in flux, global political situation, the young millennial has spent much of her time skulking in shadows cast by disparate and daunting pressures. And aside from trying to parse that out in any real way, I suspect these tensions place certain broad strains and stresses on the young mind, which is in the shitty position of being both totally aware and totally impotent.

### Anxiety Type 3: Global

Speaking of both aware and impotent, the ultimate looming existential threat of our times is that the literal globe is going to shit. To the point where, by the time we're adults, a great many coastal cities may be uninhabitable, with animals dying and ecosystems collapsing, etc. (Check out the NRDC website for what I would write here if I had more space).

Conclusion: Three Arts graduates sitting on a deck. The red sky reminds them of a dying globe. Their phones remind them that politics keeps moving without them. And the deck itself reminds them they'll never own houses. So what's the point of being responsible?

### **Recommendations:**

*Infinite Jest* by David Foster Wallace



## How to Talk About Sport



*With*  
Mark Fullerton

# Beau-Den, or: An All Blacks Fan-Fic

*Each week Mark, disgraced former-editor-in-chief, tries desperately not to let his friends down and really, really tries to write a sports column but somehow still ends up writing porn.*

*What exactly makes people so uncomfortable about a gay All Black? A study done by GayNZ in 2015 showed that a staggering number of young New Zealand athletes felt like they had to conceal their sexuality from their teammates. We had an All Black coming out as gay being called “the final frontier” by gay Olympic rower Robbie Manson back in 2014. We still have no openly gay All Blacks, and our late-night sport radio hosts were called out for dropping homophobic slurs on air as recent as last year.*

*What now follows is a dramatic rendering, a fictionalised passionate pairing. But, as fans of TV, film, books and the like have come to discover, when there’s no room made for inclusion on the main stage, we have to carve out a little bit of room ourselves.*

November 1, 2015

It could have been me. It should have been me. But fate had other ideas. I wasn’t in England—Beauden was. When Beaudy scooped up that flailing kick from Benno and sprinted down to dot it under the posts, and when my—his—team mates all piled on top of him in congratulation, I couldn’t help but feel a twinge of regret. That should have been me. Not as Dan’s understudy, no. I’ll never be that good. But as SB and Jules lay their muscular frames on top of Beaudy, ruffled his gorgeous golden locks with their meaty fingers, gazed lovingly into his blue eyes, I felt another twinge—this time in my pants. I released it from its cotton constraints, and thought back to the first time, the only time, when we had connected, physically, spiritually, orally, the memories flooding back faster than the blood to my engorged manhood.

13 June, 2012

Reado showers naked all the time, so I know what he’s packing. I know what I like, and I like what I see. He knows it too. He’s seen me watching. How could I not, walking back to the locker room after a hard day’s training? His thick member, veins bulging, masculinity radiating through his sunken eyes and Bradley-Cooperesque smile. But I didn’t

care for him—forwards aren’t really my thing. I like them nimble. Quick. Instinctual. And even of the backs, I only had eyes for one.

Beaudy was across the room, talking to Daggo. I tried my best to be subtle, but he caught me staring. His hair was longer back then, a shaggy mop that most All Blacks have before they realise that a Barkers suit and Adidas endorsement can make anyone hot and shave the sides and gel it over. But I liked his 2012 look. It was raw. Rugged. Manly.

Eventually the locker room emptied out. I spent as much time as possible digging around in my kit bag, ostensibly looking for my new Jockeys but really just biding my time until the Franks brothers cleared out and moved on and it would be just me and my Beau. I quickly glanced up, and my heart sank. Daggo had gone, and so had Beauden.

I was so engrossed in my heartbreak that I didn’t even hear the shower turn off, nor did I hear the moist slaps of his feet slopping down the hall.

“Oh... hey Aaron,” he says from across the room.

“Hi Beauden,” I reply, slightly startled by his sudden appearance. “Good job out there. I really like y... what you’re doing. Keep it up.”

I quickly look away. He doesn’t. He flashes a cheeky smile, and takes a step towards me.

“I couldn’t do it without you,” he says, looking deep past my eyes and into the very essence of my soul. What does he see in me? I wonder. “I feel like I can really relax around you,” he continues. “Just be my own player.”

I turn away, partially to avoid his piercing gaze and partially to hide the raging erection that has just sprung up in my new Jockeys. But Beauden is no fool. Nothing escapes him. He gives a slight chuckle and makes his way over to my bench, taking a seat. I crouch over even further. Why don’t they make these damn new Jockeys erection proof?

Slowly he moves over to me, his towel clasped barely, barely knotted, coming loose, forward he comes until we breathe the same air, we see the same path forward, we are the same being and then slowly, torturously... we kiss.

Deeply, passionately, I run my hands through

his hair and he strokes my chest, coming to rest on my nipples and cheekily tickling them before moving down below my waistband. I shiver and moan gently as he nibbles on my ear. My meat popsicle has never been so hard in my life.

He pulls away, moves south, pulling down my new Jockeys and flinging away his towel to expose his own cum gun, dripping with anticipation. He looks me in the eye as he takes my whole length in his mouth. As his moist mouth envelops my purple-helmeted warrior of love, I felt the years of sexual tension melt away.

The next moments were a simultaneous lifetime and briefest of moments. He sucked me off as I reached down and slowly stroked his groin ferret. He moaned, and the vibration on my one-eyed yoghurt slinger sent me into another sexual dimension. He increased the suction and pace and I grinded and moaned and I couldn’t take any more but he just kept pumping and I slowly reached an explosive climax. He pulled away at the last moment and I emptied myself all over his towel, about six or seven ropes.<sup>1</sup>

And then there were no words to be said. He threw his towel into the washing basket and walked back to his bag, crisp buttocks bare to the world, teasing me, torturing me. He pulled on his new Jockeys, slung himself into some trackies and a hoodie and some jandals and then, with a final nod, he left.

November 1, 2015

I rubbed myself to completion, then cleaned up. People don’t understand. They joke. But why do you think Beaver didn’t fit his shirt? Because Andy Ellis likes ‘em chubby, that’s why. And seriously—why else would anyone play a sport which regularly involves packing eight men as close together as possible, sticking their hands between each others legs? ♦

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*1 I’m all about the ropes.*

# KISSES AND QUIZZES

## EASY (ONE POINT)

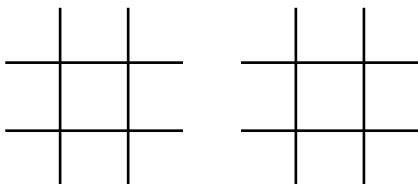
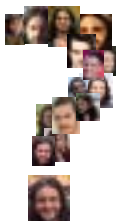
1. In what year was the Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Act passed in New Zealand?
2. Which actress and comedian has been engaged in a long-running feud with the current President of the United States?
3. Puck appears in which of Shakespeare's plays?

## MEDIUM (TWO POINTS)

4. British athlete Tom Daley competes in which sport?
5. Who is the current CEO of Apple?
6. Man Booker Prize winning novel *The Bone People* was written by which New Zealand author?
7. Louisa Wall is the MP for which Auckland electorate?

## HARD (THREE POINTS)

8. Lauren Hubbard recently won a gold medal at the Masters Games – but who is her father?
9. Who wrote the music for *West Side Story* and *On the Waterfront*?
10. What links the voice of Dory to the actress who played Lindsay Fünke in *Arrested Development*?



# BABY'S BOTTOM SUDOKU

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

Answers 1. 2013 2. Rosie O'Donnell 3. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 4. Diving 5. Tim Cook 6. Kerri Hilme 7. Manurewa 8. Former Auckland Mayor and cereal magnate Dick Hubbard 9. Leonard Bernstein 10. They are married (Ellen Degeneres and Portia de Rossi)

# HERALD'S HEROES

Every week we'll trawl the comments section of the NZ Herald Facebook page to find the hilarious, the repulsive, and the outright absurd.

In this week's *Herald's Heroes*, Mark Fullerton breaks the prime directive: leave nothing but likes, take nothing but screenshots.



# the people to blame.

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## SHADOWS "CONTRIBUTOR OF THE WEEK"

# SHADOWS

Michael Clark

*Head to Shadows to redeem your \$50 bar tab!*


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