

THARUNKA

issue 1 2018



kinky.



MANAGING EDITOR / LUNGOL

This issue is dedicated to my conservative Christian family (JK, they have no idea I'm doing this).

Kinky. What is it? Is it the Afro-textured crown worn by Black people around the world? Is it the chains and whips and leather of the BDSM scene? Is it the way one opens their heart to more than one partner? Or is it the type of sex that doesn't make you want to fall asleep out of boredom?

Kinky is simultaneously all and none of the above. Characterised by its divergence from the norm, kinky is a word often assigned to things that don't quite fit into the carefully constructed model of "normal" that society aggressively upholds. Your hair not straight enough? Kinky. Your sex not straight enough? Kinky. Your sex not vanilla enough? Kinky. Your lover not white enough? Kinky.

All of these things are perfectly normal and natural and healthy, yet their inability to be reconciled with a system of patriarchal racism, heteronormativity, cisnormativity, and toxic monogamy deem them unacceptable, and therefore, "kinky".

I grew up in a very traditional family in a very conservative country – everyone I knew believed in God and heterosexuality and sex was incredibly taboo. I'm almost twenty, and I still haven't had "The Talk" with my parents. In fact, I still avert my eyes when we're watching a film together and people start kissing, and I even leave the room when the action moves below the belt. As far as I was concerned, sex happened behind closed doors and between husband and wife. All I knew was that if I wanted to be happy, I needed to find a good wife and get a good job and have a bunch of good children via missionary-style sex. This is problematic because there are so many different ways to pursue happiness and love and pleasure that don't fit into this model at all (plus I'm also super gay – like, really, really gay).

I chose this theme because I wanted to encourage our community to challenge their own notions of "normal" and confront the biases they may have that alienate the people they are surrounded by. I wanted to examine, embrace, and celebrate multiple forms of departure from the norm that are just as healthy and just as fulfilling as the heteronormative, monogamous lie paradigm we've all been sold since birth. Why be normal if you can be yourself?

Oh, and if you're curious about the kinks I might be hiding up my sleeve... let's just say I'll get back to you when I'm not so tied up.



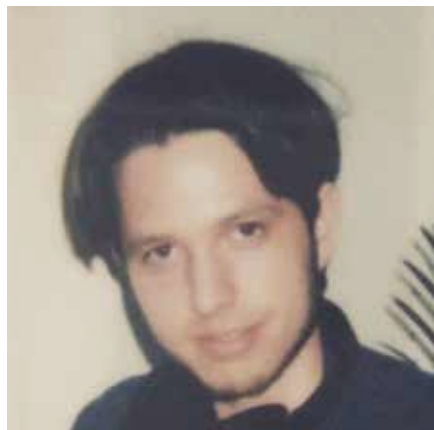
FEATURES / JACK

The word "kinky" brings a couple of things to mind, and not all of them are helpful. The most obvious definitions can be considered first: we (the editorial team) are clearly not concerned with curvy walkways, or spinal issues that would lead one to seek the (misinformed) aid of a chiropractor. Nor are we particularly concerned with quirks of character or behaviour, although that gets closer to our aim.

What is most useful about the word "kinky" is what's common to all the above – a deviation from what is considered "normal", "typical", or "straight". This is why we've been able to include articles ranging from Afro-textured hair, to polyamory, to the weird and wacky sexual behaviour found in non-human species.

Yet what features in each article, independently, is a demonstration that "kinkiness" is paradoxical. What we hope the reader will discover in the following pages is evidence of how the dichotomy of "normal" and "abnormal", on which the idea of kinkiness rests, does not hold up to serious scrutiny. Rather, what will be revealed is that a better approach to expressions of sexuality, or gender, or even types of hair, is to consider them as a set of possibilities, where each individual assumes either one or multiple. As such, "kink" is self-negating; the more we explore what is considered abnormal, the more we realise that any comparison to a norm is meaningless. This is, for me at least, a liberating conclusion.

And as for me, and how I'm kinky? You'll have to take me to dinner first.



CREATIVE / TOBY

Kinky: sexy, subversive, bendy, curly, deviant. Bold, underline, and highlight the sexy. That's what I thought, at least, when I was searching for pieces for this edition. After all, the idea of kinky is sexual, right? One of the first pieces I received was a series of delicate lacy artworks by the talented Charm Sing. Aren't these the kind of submissions I was to expect?

I was taken aback by the diversity of all our creative content, and I think you'll be surprised too. Axel-Nathaniel Rose took a novel approach to the term kinky, focusing elegantly on an intense moment between two young men through the eyes of a local cat. Perhaps this magazine's creatives weren't all going to be delicate descriptions of sex and subversion – as colourful and masterful as that writing is. Billie-Jean Bullard mastered this art without speaking. Her minimalist poem *orchestral* is sexual, a passionate whisper.

There are great pieces that explore sexuality - but many go beyond that. Deviance, difference, subversiveness, our bodies, these are things we're shy with, things we don't give away for free. These pieces, more than anything, were about trust - that intimacy revolving around a deep emotional or sexual passion that draws out the vividness of our experiences in relationships. Emily Olorin, in particular, explores the relationship between sexual and emotional intimacy in fine detail in her story (or poem?) *Swansong*.

I hope the writings in this edition stretch your mind about the power of kinky as it has for me. I was right to say one thing about kinky - it remains subversive.



ONLINE / SAHANA

Kink has no perfect definition, and it never will. My first encounter didn't give me the best impression, partly because I was taken by surprise and partly because it was a terrible depiction of kinky itself. Being kinky is an amazing combination of curiosity, boldness and creativity that some of us overlook or simply fail to accept. To all the fellows who think the subject would be relevant to not more than a segment of the population, I would say, "It is hard to find a topic that applies to all human beings, but this one applies to every single living creature!"

My understanding of kinky has evolved from being excited about handcuffs, ropes and spanking to analyzing the emotional awareness that individuals have. In short, I've learned to appreciate people who practice their freedom in their very own style.

One of the realisations that I had down the line was that it's a big mistake to think that people are either Vanilla or Kinky. One might prefer a higher proportion of kinky activities but that doesn't mean they never engage in Vanilla. It's like coffee, some like it strong and some like it weak, the contrast is just the ratios. I never really sat and thought how I was kinky... but I know it's somewhere in there.

This edition, the team and the other professionals I spoke to, managed to make me more and more curious about the topic. That is precisely what we want to do to our readers as well. We really hope *Kinky* makes you curious.



DESIGNER / AMY

As many who have met me quickly realise, despite first impressions, I am the least spicy person around. My kinks are pretty much just getting a good night's sleep, waking up with clear skin, and having more than 3 digits before the decimal point in my bank account.

As such, I bluffed my way through this issue contemplating how much of a normie I am and how limited my vocabulary actually was when it came to "kinkiness". I don't have conversations about kinky things. I don't really come across them (not even online, unless it's part of a joke). I definitely don't look for them. And that's why this issue is so fun.

Even if you're like me (so not kinky that vanilla is the wrong descriptor; I'm probably just tap water), this issue lets you think about things outside your norm. Things you might have had utterly zero interest in, or even concept of. And it's not like our tastes are really gonna change from reading this one thing, but maybe the way we handle our worlds might.

So I hope you have fun reading this issue like I did, and that your brain expands while you do. And if it doesn't, why aren't you a Tharunka contributor? Lend that superior brain volume to us for a bit!



Welcome.

"I first got involved with the SRC because I didn't just want to study at a University - I wanted to help shape it. I grew up in a country where nothing was achieved without advocacy, change required involvement and nothing gives us more of an opportunity to do this at university than the SRC.

So if you want to learn valuable skills, help other students and make incredible friends who are passionate and care about the same things that you do, then the SRC is the place for you."

**Student
Representative
Council**

arc.unsw.edu.au/src

– Zack Solomon
SRC President
srcpresident@arc.unsw.edu.au



Collectives.

Joining a collective is an amazing way to get involved in something you are passionate about whilst meeting a wide variety of people. Collectives generally meet weekly throughout session.

COLLECTIVE / REP (S)	MEETING TIME	arc.unsw.edu.au/src
Women's Angela Griffin	MON 12-1PM	/womens
Disability Axel-Nathaniel Rose	TUE 12.30-2.30PM WED 12.30-1.30PM	/disability
Environment Elizabeth Morley	MON 1-2PM (FOSSIL FREE) MON 2-3PM (ENVIRO COLLECTIVE)	/environmental
Queer Roisin McGee Meri Wilson Reuben Challis	MON 11AM-1PM	/queer
Welfare Max Kennedy	THU 5-6PM	/welfare
Education Toby Walmsley	TUE 2PM	/education
Indigenous Ian Brown	CHECK THE WEBSITE FOR DETAILS	/indigenous
Ethno-Cultural Humaira Nasrin	THU 12-1PM	/ethno-cultural
International Lanfeng Shi	CHECK THE WEBSITE FOR DETAILS	/international

The Team

/

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/

Tharunka acknowledges the traditional
custodians of this land, the Gadigal and
Bedigal people of the Eora nation, on which
our university now stands.

www.tharunka.arc.unsw.edu.au

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Any complaints should be made in writing
to the Marketing & Publications Manager.

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THARUNKA WRITING COMPETITION 2017

TONGUE



We asked, and we definitely did receive!

Last year, Tharunka's Writing Competition welcomed submissions from all across campus. We wanted your hot takes, your poetry, your fictions, and your truths. We encouraged you to think taste, think flavour, think language, think speech, think discourse, think the shape and form and purpose of that slithery thing inside our mouths, and, of course ... think sex.

Former Tharunka editor, current News and Politics editor at Junkee and Company Secretary for Media Diversity Australia **Osman Faruqi** was our judge for all opinion submissions. Critically acclaimed author, novelist, essayist and UNSW Creative Writing lecturer **Stephanie Bishop** was our judge for all creative submissions.

Tharunka would like to congratulate **Lydia Morgan** and **Masrur Joarder** on their success in last year's competition, and we are pleased to include their pieces in our first issue of the year.

You have one

You have three Snapchat notifications.
You have four Facebook notifications.
You have seven emails.

Your LinkedIn profile has been viewed twice this week.

You will click here to sign up for a premium account, one month free trial.

You will apply for 32 available jobs in your field.
You will apply to them all, you will possibly get them all.

You will learn to negotiate your way to a higher salary.

You will work hard and climb your way to the top.
You will become an Expert Professional in Your Field and give seminars and reveal your top ten habits that helped you get where you are today.

Your bus will arrive at 8.35.
You have 42 minutes.

You are reminded that you have two upcoming events this weekend.
You are reminded that you will be attending one event this weekend.

You are reminded that you will know only one person at the event this weekend.

You are reminded that you had an event two weekends ago and that you drank too much gin and that you passed out in a bathroom stall.

You are reminded of a pool party when you were eight and running and slipping and two cracked front teeth and chlorine and blood and soggy chips and Fanta.

You are reminded of how much you once loved Fanta. You try to remember the last time you loved anything as much as you once loved Fanta.

You are reminded to click attending.
You click attending.

Your bus will arrive at 8.35.
You have 36 minutes.

You will get up in ten minutes.
You will shower and use floral lotion and brush your teeth for a full two minutes and apply makeup and arrange your hair into effortless beachy waves.
You will walk to work at a leisurely pace, you will arrive with time to spare. You will be free of sweat.
You will be easy, breezy, beautiful. You will be ready to lean in. You will at some point read *Lean In*.
You will remember to get breakfast before you go.

Your bus is delayed. Your bus will arrive at 8.37.
You have 33 minutes.

You will quickly learn *How To Get Beachy Waves*.
You have mastered Beachy Waves.

You will watch the CONSPIRACY THEORY PYRAMIDS REVEALED MINDBLOWING as you perfect your beachy waves. You will know that it was slaves who really built the pyramids. You will not entertain crazy theories. You will wonder how they did move four hundred and twenty three blocks per day over only twenty years and align them perfectly with the cosmos. You will remember that stars were probably brighter then, the sky was

new notification

darker. You will wonder how the slaves would feel to have their work credited to aliens.

You will watch CONSPIRACY THEORY JFK ASSASSINATION to gain a full overview of the current schools of thought in the conspiracy academia. You will wonder what the O in Jackie O stands for. You will find out that the O in Jackie O stands for Onassis, from a previous marriage to Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis, who once dated famous opera singer Maria Callas who was on that poster you saw in Athens. You will find out that Jackie O's maiden name is Bouvier, like Marge from The Simpsons. You will remember Richard Milhouse Nixon. You will wonder How many presidents' names in the simpsons? Did you mean "How many presidents' names in The Simpsons?"

Your bus will arrive at 8.37.
You have 17 minutes.

You have one Instagram notification. беременная мать has requested to follow you. You will wonder where your account name appeared that brought it to the attention of a Russian mother of two made to click follow. You will wonder if it is the result of an algorithm or if someone in India has been paid to follow and unfollow thousands.

You will wonder "How do Instagram bots work?"

Your bus is early. Your bus will arrive at 8.34.
You have 12 minutes.

You have three Snapchat notifications.
You will skip through most of them.

Your bus is early. Your bus will arrive at 8.34.
You have 8 minutes.
You will get up now.

Your forecast for today is sunny and-

You will get up NOW.
You have 5 minutes.

You will run to the bus. You will just make it.
You will realise you didn't change your socks.
You will lament for the entire bus journey on your dirty socks.

You will be home by 5.45.
You have 10 hours.

creative category winner: Lydia Morgan

2017
THARUNKA
WRITING
COMPETITION
WINNER

We Need To Stop Excusing Ignorant Men



There are few phrases in the English language more damaging to the mentality of both young boys and girls than the words: "boys will be boys". Unfortunately, it is exactly the type of argument that has been used to defend American sports journalist, Clay Travis, after he proclaimed nonchalantly that he "believe(s) in only two things completely. The First Amendment, and boobs" on CNN in September last year. The statement was made during a segment on whether or not ESPN host, Jemele Hill, should be fired after calling President Trump a "white supremacist". The comment and discussion of female anatomy in this context was much more than just irrelevant. The comment was sexist. Period. We need to call it exactly that.

Considering the fact that Mr Travis had the audacity to say those words on a segment anchored by a female news anchor, Brooke Baldwin, it is astonishing how quickly some have jumped to his defence. After Ms Baldwin ended the interview and subsequently criticised Mr Travis in a CNN op-ed, a number of people simply denied any wrongdoing on his part. Many of his supporters exclaimed "people are offended by everything these days" such as Twitter user @MayKelly, who wrote: "Brooke Baldwin needs to acquire a sense of humour... she was soooo offended". Others expressed their glee watching Ms Baldwin getting "triggered", as evidenced by the YouTube video titled "Clay Travis TRIGGERS Feminist CNN Reporter", which has racked up thousands of views and is one of many similarly titled clips. Then, of course, there were those who screamed "free speech!" on social media to somehow justify his actions. The problem with this behaviour is that these people are attempting to find ways to excuse an ignorant man. This is nothing new, and is not only very problematic, but damaging.

It is damaging for young women to hear that their appearance (as opposed to their character and their intelligence) is valued as importantly by some men as the First Amendment of the United States. It is damaging for them to hear similarly degrading comments from their peers and colleagues, and for their experience of sexism to be undermined by some who ridicule them for being 'triggered'.

Moreover, this kind of comment harms young men too. It gives them the green light to talk about women in a crude manner, inhibiting their ability to value people equally, regardless of their sex. The problem is only made worse when this kind of sentiment is everywhere. When boxing legends like Floyd Mayweather excuse President Trump's "grab them" comments as being how "real men speak", young boys are further encouraged to behave disrespectfully toward women, because it appears to be the norm. This, in turn, impairs their adult development.

However, it is important to not excuse ignorant men in other contexts as well. After one of the most popular online content creators and gamer, 'PewDiePie', used the n- word to express his frustration during a video game livestream, many excused his actions. In January 2017, PewDiePie paid people through the website "Fiverr" (a website which offers services by freelancers for money) to hold up a sign saying 'death to all Jews' for a video. In February 2017, he was accused of anti-Semitism and the use of Nazi imagery in nine of his videos in an article by the Wall Street Journal. After all this, it is surprising how much people are willing to accept before calling out PewDiePie's ignorance and offensive behaviour. Simply being 'ignorant' is not a good enough excuse to continue to support a man with such a large and powerful platform on YouTube. Defence of his behaviour is damaging to people of colour who are mocked by many for pointing out their experiences of racism, in the same way women are mocked for speaking out about sexism.

For someone to abuse their right to free speech to seek attention, intentionally offend, or to spread hate, only proves that they do not value it as highly as they should. It is now more important than ever to be cautious of whom we are calling a 'racist' or a 'sexist', not only so we do not mistakenly accuse an innocent person of having those attitudes, but also so that the weight of those words is not reduced. By the same token, it is important to draw a line and call certain ignorant men for who and what they are. Clay Travis and PewDiePie are no exception to that rule.

2017 is not the year that everyone 'chose' to get offended. It is the year when ignorant men have been given a greater platform to spread hate, due to the rise of social media and the anti-politically correct alt-right. We need to stop excusing such men for their ignorance and start calling them out for it. It is only then that we can start to combat discrimination in all its forms.



Swansong

I perch, trusting eyes locked with your own. I am achingly breathless in the blue that drowns me; I Ophelia, the curve of a lily at the bottom of a lake. A dove staring docile on the branches of a tree, giving its trust for the grain of corn you hold in your palm. There is not even the thought of what led to here; how is that of importance? The blue of your eyes, the tremble of your fingertips, heavy boots for walking, I am fascinated by your extremities. It has always been my weakness, this fascination. My curiosity is that of a cat's, without the lives to back it up.

All you need do is beckon, gently.

Gently, I take the gold on your palm to my lips. I pause, contemplate. As I swallow, you smile. The kernel dissolves and slides down my throat in a reversal of utterance, words dissolving into glottals and sibilants. My lungs are water and I cannot breathe until you place your palm on my cheek and the chill shocks me to a gasp. I have lost something, but I do not know what.

The first thing to go is the clothing. It slides to the floor and I tremble under your gaze, no cloth to shield me. Bare as a bird, I wish to twitter my displeasure, but my lungs disobey and stay silent. I have swallowed my words, or you have taken them, I am not sure which. Mute, I can do nothing but sink.

The coolness of your palm slips from my cheek to land on my chest. You make the first cut on my shoulder, it is all I can do to exhale. 'Good girl' you praise. The blossom of pain crosses my sternum, approaches my navel. What have I given? Myself, my physicality for you to do what you will. I have given you my nakedness, more than just skin deep, my still-beating heart to pluck from my chest. Through no deception have you attained this, and I feel no resentment, just anticipation. Terror, too, sits in my navel, a warm counterpoint to your cold hands. You pass your palms over it - it growls.



Your intensity slides over me, freezing water to ice. The paper of my skin is ultimately uninteresting; a million men have had their chance to write on that. You look cursorily at their scrawlings, etched into the layers, and run over a few scribbles with your trembling fingertips. That tremble draws me in again; the illusion of weakness that washes away with the meltwater. You pull back to observe, taking my skin with you. On its inside, a layer of fat glistens away. Still, my lungs are filled with fluid, I cannot move. I am hypnotised by your fascination as you probe deeper.

My quaking tendons, straining muscle, are the next to go. Then, plop, the racket of fish guts into a pail, and my ribs peel back as well. Bloodied wings emerging from each side of the wound, framing my true nakedness. Terror flees its cage to leave me empty, expectant, hollowed out with the force of your gaze and ready to be rewritten. You could write your will on every curve of my rib and, buried so deep within me, and I would have no choice but to obey. Instead you choose to leave the cream unetched and focus your gaze on my viscera, your real curiosi.

And there it sits. A glistening clot, slightly to the left of my chest. The remainder of the past, flickering, a little bird roosted under the ribs. A slight smile at the corner of your lips twitters back to it, a swansong that only the two of them can understand. Then, hup! With a delicate twist of the wrist (no trembling when it counts - never when it counts), it is excised. You cradle it in your palms as a child and swallow it in one gulp.

Am I to be yours, now? I perch in front of you, a robin dyed crimson. Puffing out my chest, I flutter my wings. Does my song now speak to you alone? I open my mouth to speak; the clear vowels rise like balloons.

by Emily Olorin

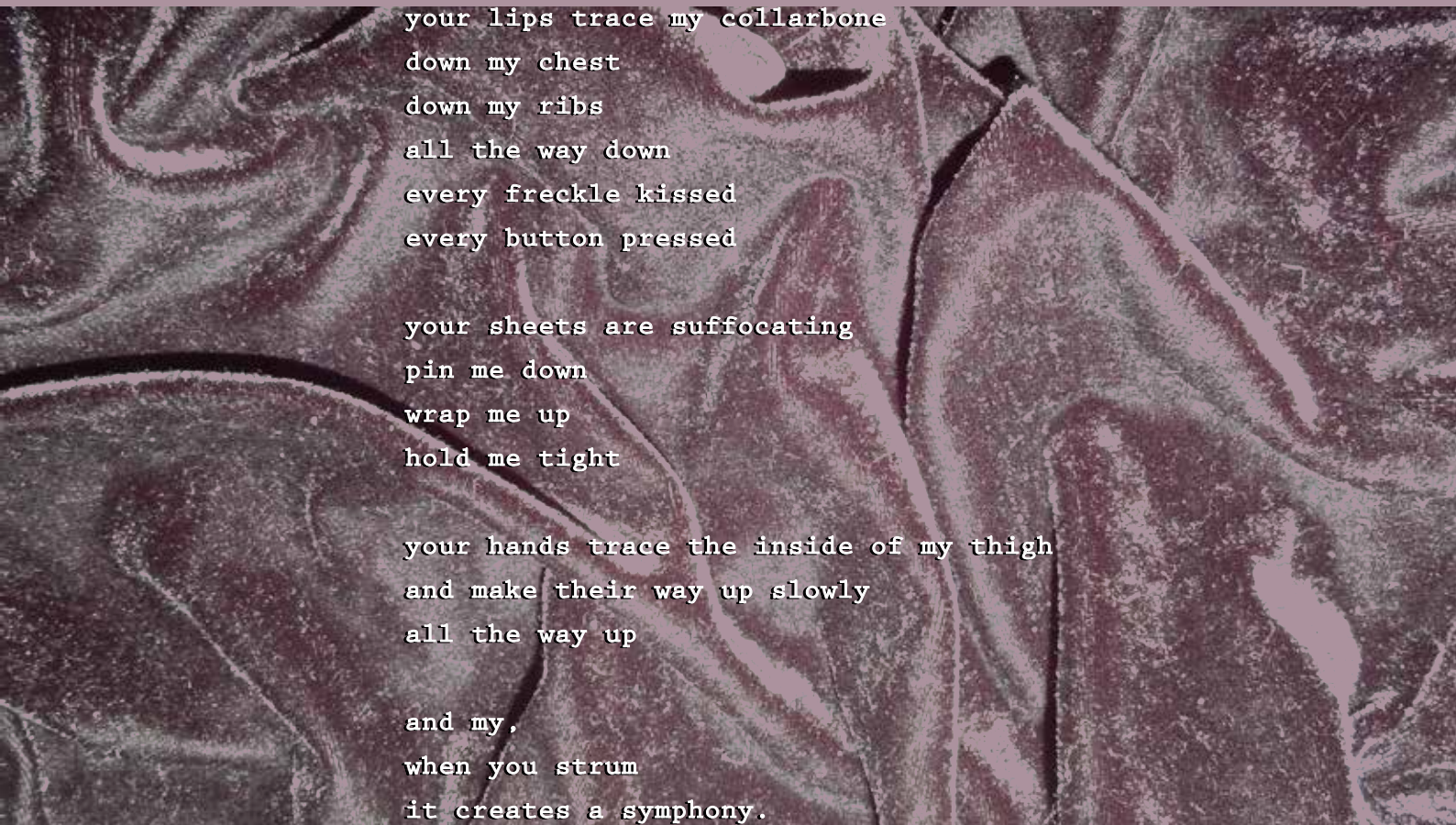




Lace Collection by Charm Sing



orchestral



your lips trace my collarbone
down my chest
down my ribs
all the way down
every freckle kissed
every button pressed

your sheets are suffocating
pin me down
wrap me up
hold me tight

your hands trace the inside of my thigh
and make their way up slowly
all the way up

and my,
when you strum
it creates a symphony.

by Billie-Jean Bullard

Comment Section Stories

SOURCED FROM [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=3AdP15xIAvE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3AdP15xIAvE)

I MET MOONDOG IN HAMBURG
IN 1972 OR 1973...



... DURING MY FOOTLOOSE RAGGED-
ARSE "HIPPIE" DAYS.



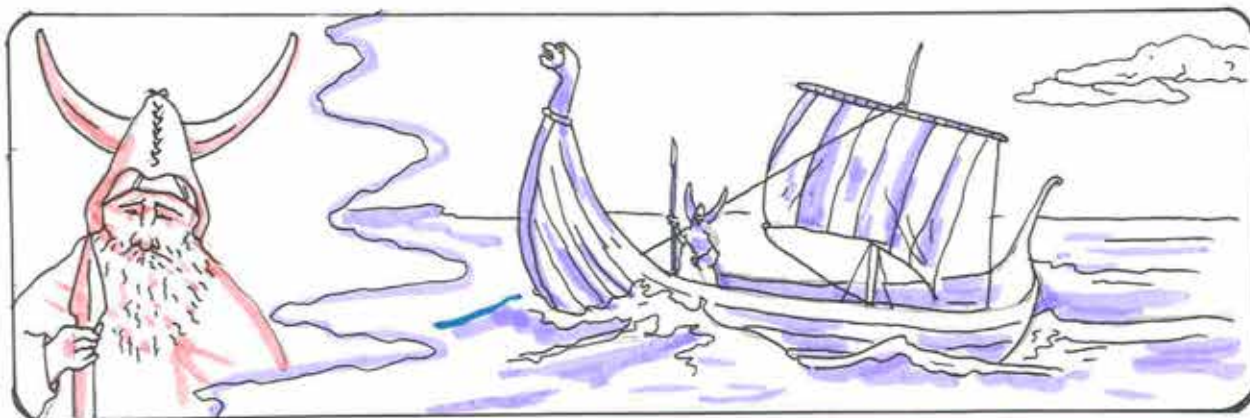
HE CARRIED A LARGE STAFF. A MOSES-LIKE IMAGE.



I RECOGNISED HIM FROM HIS
FIRST ALBUM.



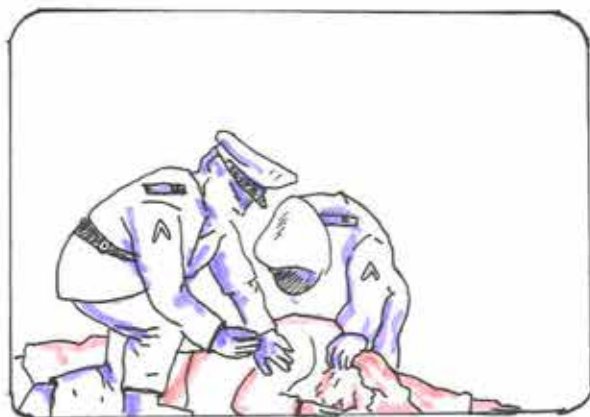
HE WAS TRYING TO DISTRIBUTE HIS POETRY IN A WALKING
STREET. I CHATTED WITH HIM AND HELPED.



HE SAID HE WAS ON A QUEST TO SEARCH FOR HIS VIKING ROOTS. I HAD JUST HITCHED OVER FROM THE U. K. ON MUCH THE SAME BUSINESS.



HIS ONLY COMPLAINT WAS THAT THE GERMAN POLICE TOOK THE SPEAR POINT OFF THE END OF HIS STAFF.



MY ONLY COMPLAINT WAS I HAD JUST BEEN RELEASED FROM THE KRANKENHAUS AFTER BEING USED AS A BASKETBALL BY THE POLIZEI.

MOONDOG WAS FOR ME A GUIDING CULTURAL PHANTOM. HIS TIMELINE WENT HIS WAY AND MINE WENT MY WAY...

LIFE'S NOT ALL BAD, I FEEL PRIVILEGED TO HAVE HAD THE CHANCE MEETING WITH HIM. UNIQUELY INSPIRING.



AUTHOR: [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/CHANNEYUCeZdRDTk_ZYttrCNQ60g](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeZdRDTk_ZYttrCNQ60g)

by Lydia Morgan

They are

The Cat curled around the lamp post, the fur of their tail sweeping side to side against the metal, making it sing. The kinks of their tail made odd angles in the night as they circled around. They were black in the dark, but under the light they were brown - deep, pure brown. The light protected them from onlooking eyes with the sheer brightness of it, the surrounds nearly impossible to look at. Faded posters on brick fences, once blaring red and neon green, spoke only in black and grey as people walked by. Winds like hell, with heat that left all metal and stone warm to the touch hours after the sun had gone down. It could have been Autumn - the leaves were dried, brittle, cracked.

The Cat settled themselves there, in the warmth of the light and its pole, purring with the passing traffic. The Boys giggling at the third lamp along the road had crinkled their pants when they rolled them up to their knees, and their white buttoned shirts had stained when they had undone them, revealing their singlets. Their hands were meeting against the pole, fingers interlocking, only pulling away as they twirled around with scattered laughter, caught between words.

The Cat watched. They examined their paws, eyes half shut, with a self-satisfied contentedness. Their ears were piqued for the sound of approach, whiskers twitching as their nose did. The Boys smelled faintly of something The Cat didn't know, past the smell of the heat and perspiration, and spoke softly and carefully as if someone was watching. Still, The Cat let themselves doze with the humans' presence looming.

Their hands were catching electricity on the metal, stinging them. Still, they laughed, then chuckled, then murmured, then silence. "We were going to tell them," said one. His voice had cracked on 'tell'.

"But we danced instead," said the other. He was shorter and whiter, and took the Sad Boy's hand. Properly took it, not skittering

a

Cat

touches over the pole. He pushed his fingers through the gaps of his. Their hands were glowing warm, sweaty, and the touch was skittish; uncertain.

"You said you wanted to dance." He did not quite sound desperate.

"I said I wanted to tell them and dance." There was no petulance in the words, more a prediction of betrayal, of hurt. The Cat opened their eyes to find the Sad Boy looking at them. They blinked slowly, and the Sad Boy had looked away, back to the other Boy and his shaking hands. Their hands were in no way the same, but they

moved in unison to retract them from the pole. It was too hot for that, and certainly too hot for them to hold each other. The shorter one leaned up from the balls of his feet for his arms to settle around the other's neck.

"When it's not holidays?" Short Boy whispered, right up against his ear. "We'll tell them after New Years."

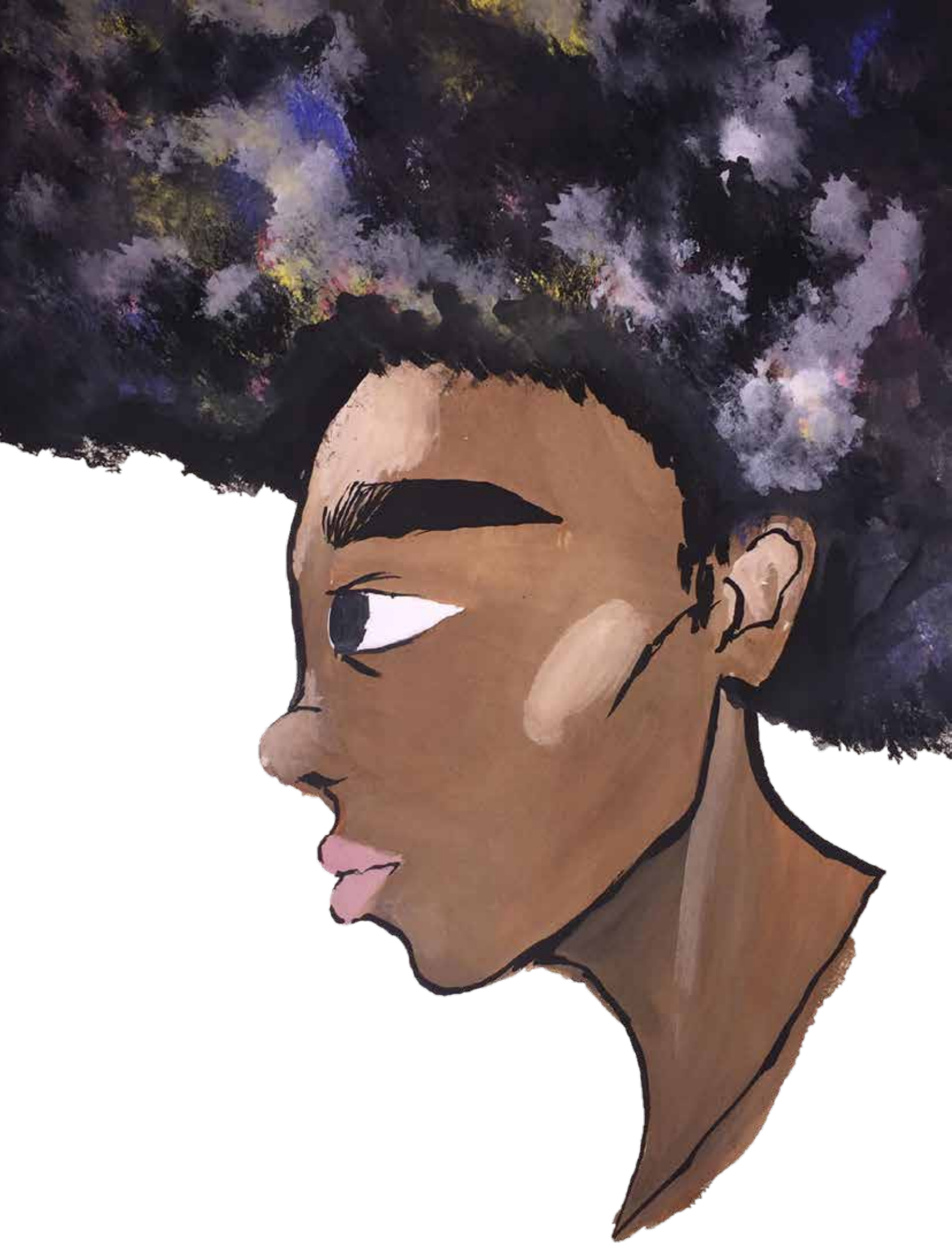
They were nodding into one another's shoulders, both of their faces wet. Their

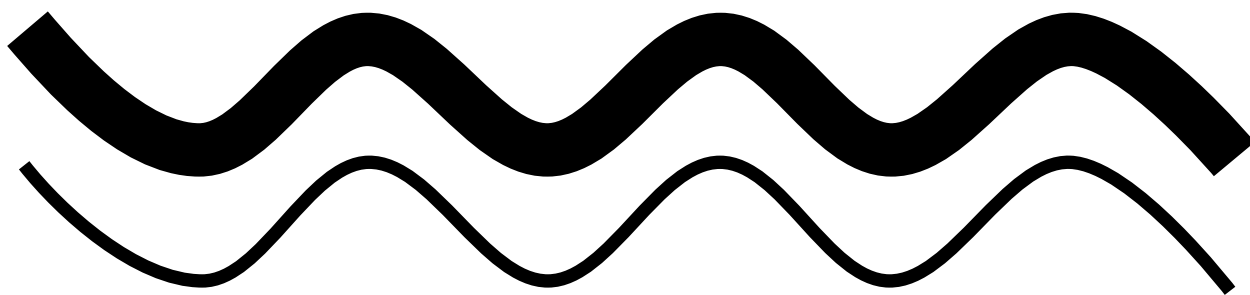
singlets clung together with sweat, and still they sat there on the roadside, tugging their shirts off and winding their arms around each other.

"It'll be better next year. We're... we're..." No-one heard what they were, and Short Boy may well not have finished the thought, as the fireworks began with a cacophony, like, thunder, a hammer, gunshots, a waterfall alike. The Cat jumped up and wailed, which, too, went unheard. The sky was too many colours, and it was too loud to speak, so The Boys stayed still, holding each other.

The Cat's tail kinked and twisted around Short Boy's forearm. They didn't even protest when they were picked up and placed, balanced, between the Boys' knees.

by Axel-Nathaniel Rose





NATURAL HAIR

Rebellious, Defiant, Kinky

Afro-textured hair is common in populations of predominantly African and Oceanic descent and is characterised by its natural arrangement of coils and curls of various tightnesses. Black hair has been subject to widespread criticism and fascination for centuries, and its history is rife with persecution, harassment, and discrimination. In recent years, Black women in particular have been embracing their curls in a radical movement celebrating their natural, kinky hair and rejecting the oppressive nature of Eurocentric beauty standards. But to understand the significance of kinky hair, and wearing it in its natural form, it is important to examine the intersection of racism, white supremacy, colonialism, and toxic standards of beauty.

Black bodies have been, and continue to be, policed and exploited, dating back to the first waves of early colonisation. Their physical characteristics and cultural practices were weaponised against them to perpetuate harmful stereotypes of incompetence and inferiority, fuelling white supremacy around the world. These racist attacks manipulated and engineered the way Black people were perceived so insidiously that they still inform

many racial biases that exist today, centuries later. Everything about Black people that distanced them from whiteness became symbolic of their alleged inferiority - their skin colour, their languages, their traditions. And their hair. Kinky hair, named for its significant divergence from straight and wavy Eurocentric hair textures, became a powerful tool in the marginalisation of Black individuals. It became equated with filth, poverty, and shame. The pervasive attacks on Afro-textured hair conditioned Black individuals to see their natural hair as flawed and undesirable, and further emphasised whiteness as the ultimate standard of beauty.

This led to the widespread practice of Black people, specifically Black women, altering their hair in an attempt to better align with the Eurocentric beauty standards that were aggressively forced upon them. This was traditionally done through applying relaxers, getting perms, or wearing wigs. These practices were incredibly common across Africa, the Pacific, the Caribbean, and other areas populated by people with Afro-textured hair, and are still very popular today. The popularity of the process of "straightening" kinky hair, regardless of geographical

location, is indicative of how widespread and pervasive anti-blackness is. Colonisation itself was rooted strongly in perpetuating and disseminating white supremacy and the dehumanisation of indigenous populations. It shows that from countries like the United States, where Black people are a minority, to Ghana, where they are the overwhelming majority, anti-blackness has been so deeply ingrained within the consciousness of the global public that the act of a Black person wearing their hair naturally and unapologetically is considered revolutionary.

On the surface, this may appear to be a superficial concern irrelevant to the discourse surrounding racism, but the othering of Afro-textured hair has severe ramifications for Black people, regardless of whether or not they choose to wear their hair naturally. Wanting to alter one's appearance to closely resemble that of someone else is not inherently problematic. There are Black people that genuinely do want to straighten their hair for their own individual reasons. This is a matter of preference, not race. However, it becomes problematic when the modification of one's appearance becomes an expectation rather than a choice. This expectation is rooted in the marginalisation of Black people and the exclusion of Black bodies and features not just in terms of what is beautiful, but in terms of what is acceptable. This creates a toxic culture in which Black people are required to emulate a foreign standard of beauty to gain access to professional and academic spaces and to be treated with basic decency and respect.

Emulating Eurocentric beauty standards as a Black person comes at a cost. "Straightening" Afro-textured hair is an unsustainable practice that results in long-term, permanent hair damage and premature hair loss. Other practices use harmful chemicals that cause adverse side effects following prolonged exposure to them. Many Black people are pressured to align themselves as closely as possible to white, Eurocentric beauty standards for survival, often at the expense of their own health and safety. As dramatic as that may sound, there has been a pattern of systemic discrimination against

Black people all over the world denying them access to employment and education for the simple crime of wearing their hair naturally.

In Bentleigh East, Victoria last year, South Sudanese twins Grace and Tahbisa of Bentleigh Secondary College were told to remove their braids because it was apparently not representative of their school. Despite arguing that their hairstyle was culturally significant and helped them to keep their hair neat and healthy, their school refused to reconsider their decision, citing their strict uniform policy as their defence. Caleb Ernst faced similar backlash after his school, St Joseph's College, demanded that he shave his dreadlocks. He fought back, explaining that locs were the easiest way for him to look after his hair and provided an avenue for him to reconnect with his Nigerian heritage. Unconvinced, his school suspended him and expressed that his "extreme" hairstyle would not be tolerated on campus because it violated their uniform policies. Ernst transferred schools following the inability of his school to come to an agreement with his family and the adverse effects his suspension had on his academic performance.

Uniform policies have been a frequent rationalisation for the unfair treatment of Black students with kinky hair. Although uniform policies have to comply with anti-discrimination laws here in Australia, the key issue seems to be that these policies are written with only one type of student in mind – a white student. This further perpetuates the false narrative that whiteness is the default, and that everyone else needs to emulate it. It completely disregards the fact that different hair textures have different needs, and it ignores the nuance of hair diversity by assuming that one set of uniform rules can apply equally to everyone.

This discrimination expands beyond academic settings. Many Black people, including Akua Agyemfra and Tiffany Bryan, have lost their jobs as a result of their choice to wear their natural hair. Agyemfra, a server in Toronto, was fired after an assistant manager told her that all employees must wear their hair

down or straight, and that her bun was unacceptable. Even after demonstrating that her hair doesn't fall downwards naturally, she was still sent home. Bryan was subjected to constant harassment targeting her hair, and was pressured by her employers to fashion her afro into more Eurocentric hairstyles. Despite finally acquiescing, Bryan was terminated from her post as a security guard in New York City because her natural hair was deemed inappropriate.

The Natural Hair Movement is a not new – it has been seen in the 19th century following the abolition of slavery in the United States, the early 20th century saw the rejection of white beauty standards in Rastafarianism, and the Black Panthers of the American Civil Rights

era openly and unapologetically reclaimed their own standards of beauty. Natural Hair today is more than just a fashion choice – it is a political statement. It defiantly proclaims that beauty can be found in what is natural and what is normal. It is the bold embrace of one's inherent beauty in the face of a world and a system that tries to deny its existence. It is the radical self-acceptance and self-love that rejects the pressures of conformity in the face of institutional and systemic racism. It is the fearless choice to challenge the Eurocentric beauty standards that glorify a singular race at the expense of everyone else. Kinky is the new normal.

*written by Lungol Wekina
illustrated by Indianah Johns*





MEET THE POLECULE

*An interview with Siren Vandoll
by Sahana Nandakumar*

**PLEASURE-SEEKER.
HEDONIST. SENSUALIST.
SEX NERD.**

Siren Vandoll is an Australian sexuality educator & consultant who works to empower people through education, creation, and advocacy. She uses her unique skillset and collaborates with individuals, groups, organisations, and companies to promote sex positivity, share knowledge, and promote inclusivity. She sits down with Tharunka's Sahana Nandakumar to shed some light on the increasingly visible polyamory community.

"Life's very simple. If you are curious about something, then give it a go!"

The above statement was made by one of Australia's prominent sexuality educators and consultants, Ms Siren Vandoll. She has worked, and advocated for awareness and change, in the worlds of sexuality, relationships, identity, feminism, and social justice for over four years. As both a theorist and a practitioner, Siren gives Tharunka a unique insight into her experience with polyamorous relationships.

"You'd rarely think about having a 25-minute open conversation about your boundaries and preferences with a tinder date, but most polyamorists never forget to."

WHAT IS POLYAMORY?

Siren defines polyamory as a "form of ethical non-monogamy that's related to the cultivation of multiple relationships, usually romantic and sexual, with the consent and knowledge of all parties involved".

illustration by Scarlett Li-Williams

It is easy to be confronted by the possibilities raised by polyamory. Siren points out that many of us are conditioned to think that monogamy is the right way to conduct one's romantic and sexual life, resulting in the automatic assumption that everything else is wrong. She recalls that when she was 12 years old she thought she was a terrible person because she couldn't imagine herself with one other person forever. In her mind, effort has to be taken to unlearn the toxic messages children are conditioned with to better understand one's own, and others', sexuality.

POLYAMORY AND CHEATING

When asked about polyamorous relationships being labelled as "cheating", Siren explains that the informed consent from all partners creates a clear divide between cheaters and polyamorists. Polyamorous relationships are built on the explicit definition of the terms of the relationship for all involved. This is achieved by abandoning traditional assumptions about relationship dynamics, allowing a greater level of transparency and honesty that isn't always the norm in monogamous relationships. Siren explains, "You'd rarely think about having a 25-minute open conversation about your boundaries and preferences with a tinder date, but most polyamorists never forget to."

Polyamory lends itself to a kind of collective communication, which is not as common in open relationships. "We have our own 'polecule' (Poly molecule/poly family) and we are aware of our responsibilities to each other," Siren says. In this way, polyamory is characterised by its likeness to an eco-system, while open relationships are more centred on the primary couple.

Each polecule functions with its own unique dynamic. The "kitchen table" ecosystem describes a polecule where all partners enjoy meeting and getting along with each other.

Alternatively, the "parallel" ecstem is characterised by partners that are aware of each other but do not necessarily interact with their partners' partners. However, at the end of the day, each individual in the polecule is well aware of their emotional responsibilities.

"Informed consent from all partners creates a clear divide between cheaters and polyamorists."

Siren further explains how polyamorous relationships themselves aren't immune to cheating. "One thing I love about poly is that because it's not the norm, you have the freedom to pick and choose the rules and boundaries that work for your relationship, but when you lie or you break the rules, then you are cheating in the relationship" she says. Common examples of infidelity in poly relationships are agreeing to have safe sex with other partners and failing to do so, or not disclosing emotional changes. Ultimately, she explains, poly boundaries may be different from monogamous boundaries, but they can still be breached.

JEALOUSY, COMPERSION, AND POLYAMORY

Siren attests that she has learned a lot from her years of non-monogamy. She claims that the freedom to continue to meet people made her stronger as a person, more explicit in her communication, and empowered her to be a self-advocate. "When you've got to be radically honest and upfront and emotionally responsible so often, those skills make you a better friend, a better colleague, and prepare you for any kind of relationship." On the other hand, Siren acknowledges the risks in poly relationships, expressing how some struggle with time management, or date too widely and don't understand one's own, or one's partners', limits. As she considers polyamorous relationships to be just as valid as their monogamous

counterparts, it is unsurprising that they can be just as damaging if not taken care of.

“Could jealousy be present in polyamorous relationships, and how do you go about managing it?” As soon as I said the word jealousy, Siren predicts the entire question, as it was one of the most common questions she is asked.

“Jealousy is a human emotion and all of us obviously do feel it at times, but these relationships are all about communicating your emotions and finding a collective solution” she replies. Siren highlights how jealousy is caused either by one participant’s needs not being met, or by a partner engaging in actions that increase a participant’s feelings of insecurity. There are more complicated situations, Siren says, including when one partner feels inferior to another, and explains that eradicating inferiority complexes takes time and effort from all parties.

“Polyamorous relationships are built on the explicit definition of the terms of the relationship for all involved. This is achieved by abandoning traditional assumptions about relationship dynamics, allowing a greater level of transparency and honesty that isn’t always the norm in monogamous relationships.”

The discussion of jealousy leads us to a conversation on “compersion”, a feeling of joy one has when witnessing the joy of another. Siren expresses gratitude for such an amazing feeling, but clarifies that it is a common misconception that all people who are polyamorous feel compersion. She emphasises that one isn’t a bad polyamorist if they don’t feel compersion. “Compersion isn’t just for the poly world; it’s something for all relationships. The moment we stop thinking that someone’s happiness is at the cost of ours, we’ll automatically feel compersion”.

ON SEX-POSITIVITY

Some come out as polyamorists at a very young age, but the transition from monogamy to polyamory is more common. When asked about how tough transitioning is, Siren says that the change is unique to every individual. There are no guides or instructions on how to transition in the best way. The only advice she has is to “take it slow”. It could take years to complete the transition, but, to Siren, the healthiest way is to take stable, baby steps. In particular, coming out to one’s existing partner can be really tough, and it’s important to navigate the transition with much care.

To Siren, making up one’s mind, and being upfront with one’s ideas, both help make a smooth switch from monogamy. She finally adds, “my solution for most problems is to just talk about it and be open about it, and you’ll see that tough times feel much easier immediately”.

Sex positivity for Siren isn’t about being the kinkiest, most polyamorous, or most open individual. Rather, it means rejecting the common narrative of shame, dirtiness, and unnatural disgust surrounding atypical sexual activity. She believes polyamory and sex positivity go hand-in-hand, but acknowledges that there are still polyamorists who carry internalised sex-negative thoughts. She explains that sex-positive communities play a major role in monogamous and non-monogamous individuals feeling more confident and valid about their sexual needs. It is common for polyamorists to be “slut shamed”, but these communities give them the strength to keep pursuing their happiness.

POLYAMORY AND TYPES OF LOVE

However, sex isn’t everything that Siren and other polyamorists care about. Polyamorous ace and aromantic individuals, for example, engage in multiple emotional relationships with no sexual

expectations. “We have this one word for love in English and it just describes one type of romantic relationship, whereas in reality there are so many kinds of love, and so many ways to express it” she says. To Siren, some like sex and some don’t, and it doesn’t make any relationship better or worse.

When comparing open relationships to polyamorous relationships, Siren explains that they each prioritise a distinct type of love. Polyamorous individuals are more focused on emotional connection and romantic love, whereas open relationships are more focused on prioritising physical affection.

“We have this one word for love in English and it just describes one type of romantic relationship, whereas in reality there are so many kinds of love, and so many ways to express it.”

WORDS OF WISDOM

For the new buds of the poly family, Siren’s advice is to be in touch with one’s emotions, research appropriately, and continue learning about the polecule. Additionally, she recommends finding poly communities and socials, getting support, never stopping experimentation, and always being mindful of one’s wellbeing.

Siren has something for the non-poly molecules too! Ongoing education, irrespective of whether one wants to engage with polyamory or not, can help to break down incorrect knowledge and prejudice, and may help to improve the lives of others.

At the end of the conversation, Siren had one last nugget for all of us to take home,

“We are all human; we all screw up. So if you are curious about something, then give it a go!”



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AND ON HER WEBSITE: www.sensiren.com**



Corals of Heron Island

THE NATURE OF SEX

What wildlife teaches us about reproduction, gender, and pleasure

Imagine looking at the full moon over the sea on a warm, early-October night. A moonlit, starry sky over a vast and still ocean with no land in sight. The waves moving with the tide ever-so gently, and the reflection of the moon's white light just quietly glistening off the surface of the water. The ocean is all that can be seen far and wide, but now, looking down into the water's depths, a faint tint of orange is suddenly visible. Like a cloud underwater, the foggy orange mist seems to grow with swirls of amber, gold, and faint glimpses of pink and yellow. It rises and spreads, drifting elegantly in the currents. To witness this romantic and enchanting sight is to specifically

see coral sperm and eggs fill the oceans around Australia.

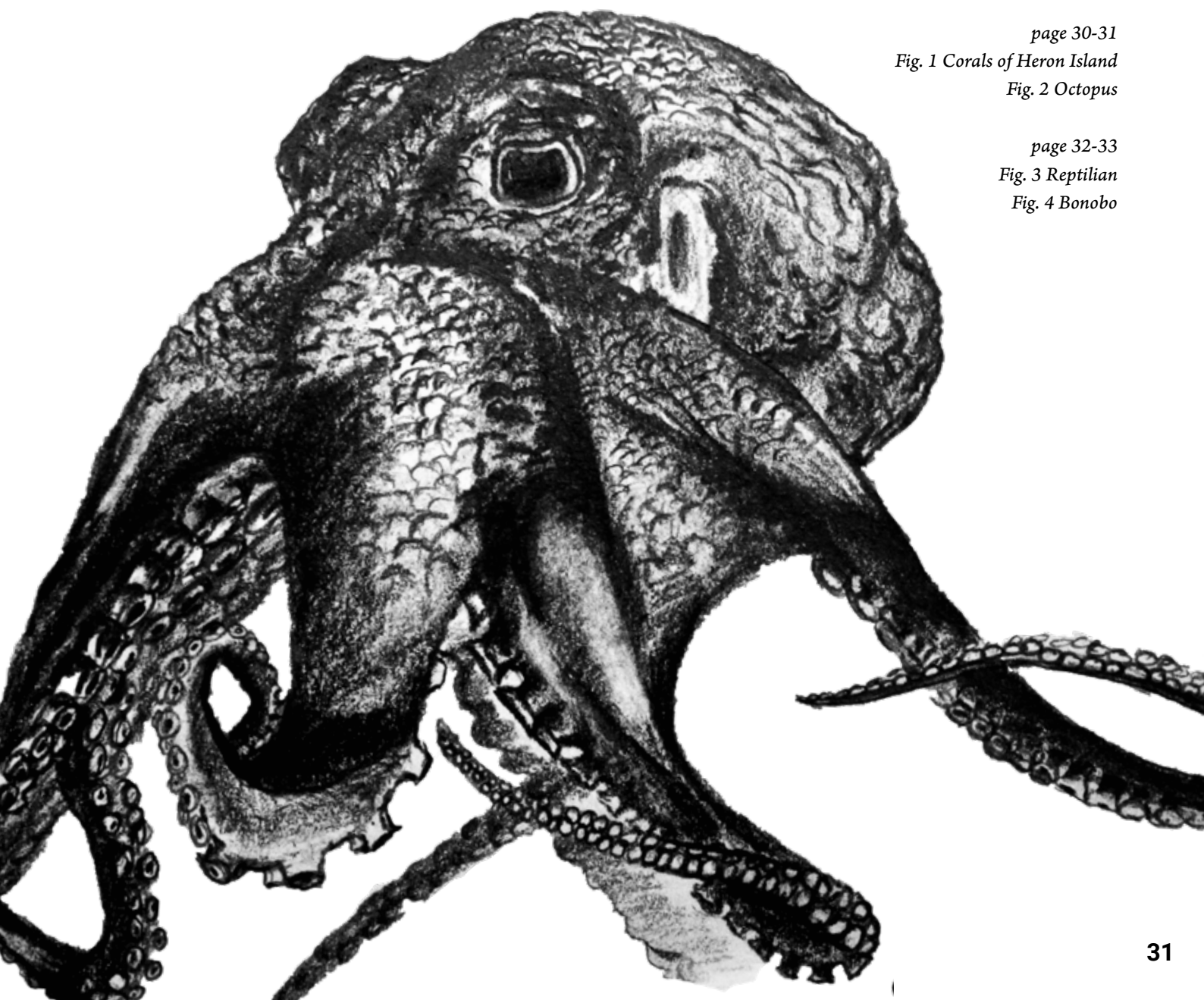
The natural, biological world is commonly examined by philosophers and scientists exploring what the meaning of life could be, through investigating universal features. Observing all forms of life on this earth, including bacteria, fungi, plants, and animals, reveals the aspect that unites them all – their dedication to survival and reproduction. The importance of reproduction is based on the need to produce new generations for the continuation of a species.

So, is there anything more to life than reproduction?

An animal example that demonstrates life is only worth living for sex is the octopus, as they soon die after performing the act. On top of it being lethal, octopus sex is a rather dull and dreary activity for both females and males. The males have a specialised arm (called the hectocotylus), which contains their sperm and functions similarly to a penis. The male sticks the hectocotylus into the female octopus and they both sit on the sea bed, motionless, for around an hour. Despite having three hearts, octopuses need to prevent their heart rate from accelerating in order to preserve energy and oxygen, and therefore cannot afford to become excited. After this thrilling mating event is over, it is all worth it - the octopuses can look forward to a life of prolonged aging, forgetfulness

and vulnerability (as they slowly lose their ability to camouflage) before dying. So, in addition to being a mundane activity, octopus sex is life-draining. Furthermore, it is common for females to starve to death whilst maintaining the fertilised eggs. A rather tragic love story.

The mayfly is another example of a life dedicated to reproduction. They live for a year or so as a nymph, an early, juvenile stage in which they are infertile and cannot reproduce. When they finally reach adulthood and attain sexual maturity, they usually only have 24 hours left to live. During this day, their sole purpose is to reproduce before they die. Therefore, adult mayflies do not eat, sleep, or drink - they simply focus on ensuring that their mission is completed. Nothing says romance like time pressure.



page 30-31

Fig. 1 Corals of Heron Island

Fig. 2 Octopus

page 32-33

Fig. 3 Reptilian

Fig. 4 Bonobo

However, there is a key difference between reproduction and sex.

Reproduction is the making of offspring, a new generation, but sex is not the only way living creatures can reproduce. Sex is only one of the many ways to continue a species. For example, bacteria and some fungi usually tear in half and split to form two identical new clones, a process known as “asexual reproduction”. Some animals, such as coral and fish, release their eggs and sperm into the open water, in the hope that the egg and sperm come together to produce offspring in a process known as “spawning”.

Nature swarms with examples demonstrating that sex is not a simple equation of ‘male and female results in offspring’. It is anything but unusual to encounter homosexuality and hermaphroditism, both of which are methods of reproduction. For some animals, these methods are what they depend on for the survival of their species.

Hermaphroditism is a wonderfully adapted method of reproduction, and utilises the fluidity of the defined sexes. It is completely natural in multiple animal groups (such as reptiles and fish) for an individual to switch, pick, or disregard their sex. Typically, hermaphroditism occurs during mating, in raising offspring, or in response to isolation. For mating purposes, it allows flexibility in situations

where one animal needs to take the role of producing eggs and another takes the role of producing sperm. There are various ways animals can decide which role is taken by whom, but this form of reproduction allows a greater chance of continuing the species. All clownfish, for example, are born with genitals that are non-functional. The largest fish undergoes a change to release eggs (known as the dominant female), while the second largest fish undergoes testis development to produce sperm. Furthermore, if the dominant female dies, the second largest fish will change again to produce eggs.

Sometimes, however, males are just not needed. New Mexico whiptail lizards, also known by their common nickname ‘lesbian lizards’, are an all-female species. Despite all members of the species carrying eggs and having no male genitalia, these females still engage in mating behaviour with each other. Rubbing their bodies against each other provides stimulation and releases chemicals whilst they are ovulating, which results in the production of offspring. In addition to the all-female method, a New Mexico whiptail can also be born through heterosexual sex, between a male Western Whiptail lizard and female Little Striped Whiptail, or vice versa. Therefore, whether it is between a male and a female whiptail lizard or between two females, the species continues.



Sex is not necessarily solely about reproduction.

It is a reasonable and rational to assume, from a biological perspective, that other animals enjoy sexual acts. Sexual pleasure increases both the duration and frequency of sex, thus leading to a greater chance of successful reproduction. Sex, therefore, is universally known to be pleasurable. Oral sex is not only exclusive to humans either. In fact, many other mammals including bats, bears, and primates appear to perform similar stimulating acts.

Bonobos are apes that are widely known to engage in frequent sex, even while it is impossible for the female to get pregnant. This includes females engaging in sex when already pregnant! Bonobos engage in sex just for pleasure, for fun, or even as a pastime activity. A renowned Japanese primatologist called Takayoshi Kano recorded, whilst studying bonobos, that sexual pleasure was not exclusive to male and female partnerships. Kano documented "Genito-genital rubbing" between females, and that two females would hold each other "and begin to rub... (probably clitoris) rhythmically and rapidly" (Kano 1980)¹. During the

same year, a scientific paper published in the research journal *Science* evidenced that female stump-tailed macaques are able to experience sexual climax and orgasms as human females do.²

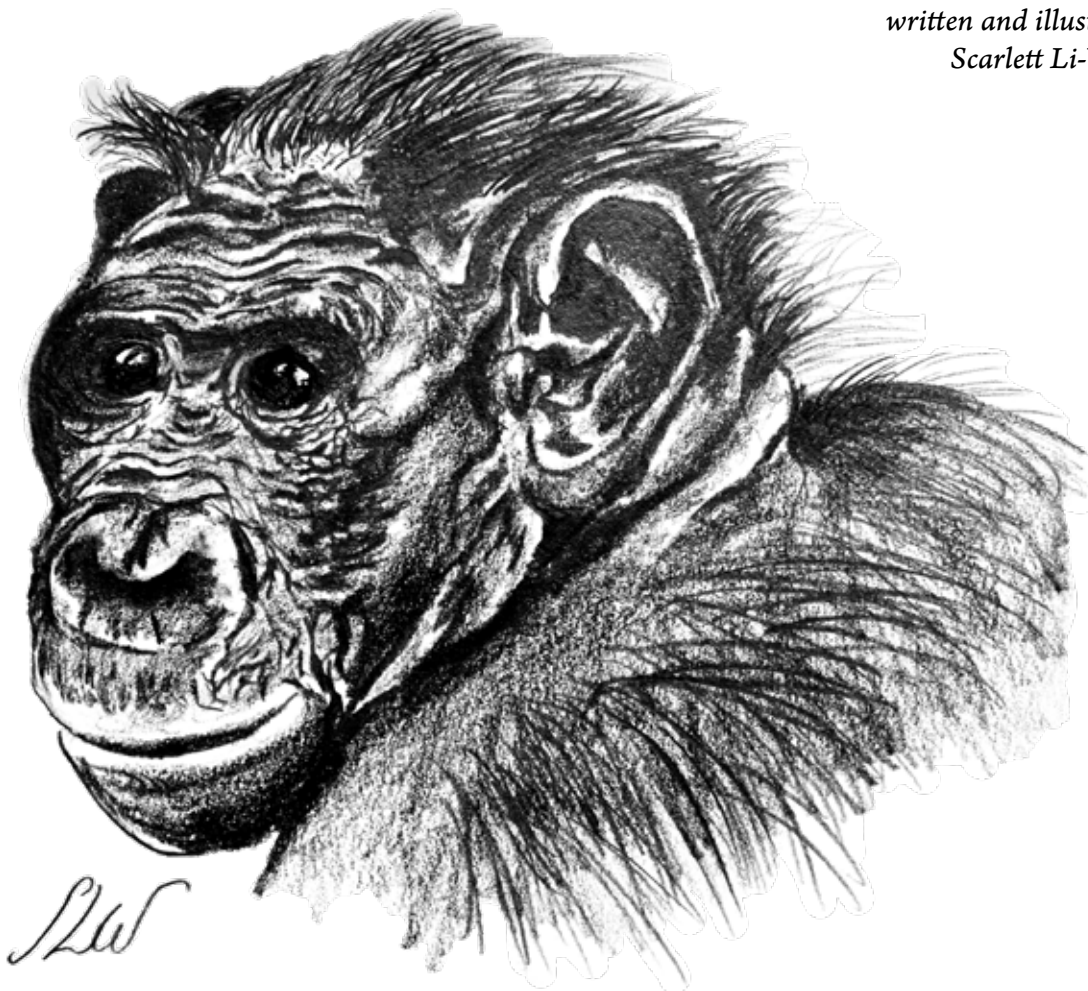
Female lions, to give another example, have sex an unnecessary 2-3 times an hour every day during the ovulation period. It is therefore not unusual for a female to have sex 40 times a day. If the male of the pride is not up to that much demand, female lions are also known to go elsewhere and court with another male of a different pride if she is unsatisfied with her male.

The natural world is a surprisingly sensual one, filled with a different sort of methodology and practice. It shows that reproduction may not be the only reason for sex and it is an eye-opener to what we consider to be "natural" or "unnatural".

Kano, T 1980, 'Social behavior of wild pygmy chimpanzees (*Pan paniscus*) of Wamba: A Preliminary report', *Journal of Human Evolution*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 243-254, DOI: 10.1016/0047-2484(80)90053-6.

Goldfoot, D., Groeneveld, W., Slob, A and Westerborg-van Loon, H 1980, 'Behavioral and physiological evidence of sexual climax in the female stump-tailed macaque (*Macaca arctoides*)', *Science*, vol. 208, no. 4451, pp. 1477-1479, DOI: 10.1126/science.7384791.

written and illustrated by
Scarlett Li-Williams



MY RACE IS NOT YOUR FETISH

Dating is hard for everybody.

The anxiety involved in trying to give a good first impression, the fear that you might not be interesting enough, and the possibility that you may actually be alone with a serial killer make for a wonderfully unpleasant experience. Nearly everyone questions whether it's all worth it in the first place. That is, of course, until, it's 10PM and you just finished watching the eighth proposal video in a row on YouTube and/or it's 3AM and you need another human being (or beings, no judgments here) to do sexy things with your pelvic parts.

But dating as a queer man, specifically a queer man of colour, presents its own unique challenges. I have to admit; I didn't want to write this article. How was I supposed to address racism and internalised homophobia in 750 words? In 1000 words? And what about femmephobia, fatphobia, and misogyny? I would need an entire book. Maybe three. Examining racial bias in the queer community is a daunting task, but it is a problem that needs to be addressed. I hope, by writing this, to start a difficult, but necessary, discussion.

THE GOLD STANDARD

The queer community is already marginalised – homosexuality is punishable by death in a dozen countries and carries prison time in many more. Australia still considered homosexuality a capital crime until 1949. Despite legalising same-sex marriage last year, the queer community in Australia, much like the rest of the western world, continues to be plagued by secondary marginalisation and a toxic culture of ignorance and exclusion.

On top of the existing marginalisation of queer sexuality, racism is rampant in the gay community. White supremacy is continually perpetuated through queer media by the glorification of a particular type of man, the Golden Gay Guy (GGG), if you will – tall, masculine, young, muscular, and white. It's seen everywhere. The covers of *Attitude*, *Out*, *DNA*, and other queer magazines are plastered with white guys sporting white teeth and washboard abs. The leads in *Brokeback Mountain*, *Call Me by Your Name*, and countless other same-sex male films are masculine white guys with deep voices and big arms. Even our porn stars are overwhelmingly similar in their whiteness, musculature, and apparent masculinity. It has even reached a point where whiteness and straightness are essentially favoured over actual queerness. Straight white men like Scott Eastwood, Liam Payne, and Justin Trudeau have been on our magazine covers because of their proximity to the notion of the GGG. James Franco has appeared on multiple queer magazine covers, despite a history of gay-baiting (the act of alluding to homosexuality to capitalise off of queer interest) and routinely perpetuating bi-erasure (the harmful denial of the existence of bisexuality and other forms of polysexuality and same-sex attraction). Never mind that these men are not queer and are on the cover of a queer magazine; at least they're tall, masculine, young, muscular, and white.

What does that say to queer men of colour that the community which claims to represent them actively contributes to their erasure and alienation? It says that we don't exist. It says that rather than embrace and represent us, our community would rather venture outside of itself to indulge in the GGG at our own expense. How can we be seen as sexy when we aren't even seen at all?

I understand the scepticism this could invoke. I get it. How could the singular image, which constantly bombards a community from multiple different sources and mediums, possibly have any effect on an individual after prolonged exposure? "What's the big deal? It's just a magazine cover." "It's just porn, it doesn't mean anything." But it does mean something. It is a big deal.

If an entire group of people is conditioned to believe one type of person is the realisation of carnal desire, this manifests as a subconscious bias. In this case, a subconscious racial bias.

NAKED RACISM

I have seen this bias present itself in two distinct, yet equally harmful, ways. The first is outright, overt racism thinly disguised as a "preference". I call this Naked Racism. Dating apps like Grindr are filled with profiles saying "whites only" and "no blacks, no asians", proudly and unabashedly proclaiming a complete disregard for an entire group of diverse, distinct individuals, who have been reduced to a one-dimensional collection of stereotypes. On the surface, this could be attributed to the perpetuation of the GGG; if you're only conditioned to find one thing attractive, then it's only natural to explicitly pursue it. Some would argue that Naked Racism is, in this space, not really an issue because Grindr and other similar apps are allegedly platforms primarily used to facilitate casual sex. If one considers casual sex an extension of masturbation, then racial "preference" isn't a problem if all someone is seeking is instant sexual gratification where the other participants are purely used to fulfil a fantasy or desire.

The counter to this argument is that no sex is entirely casual. The use of another's body should always include a level of common recognition, and a failure to recognise the casual sexual partner as a human being deserving of respect, by refusing

to even consider entire racial groups as potential casual sexual partners, is dehumanising and unfair. This line of reasoning is even weaker when Naked Racism manifests in spaces, both physical and digital, that are used to pursue relationships outside of just casual sex. Now, by saying "whites only" and "no blacks, no asians", Naked Racism proves to be a more insidious disregard for the actual non-white person. In these wider spaces, not only are their bodies dehumanised and disregarded, but the humanity and individuality of non-GGG queer men is automatically nullified and deemed worthless in the pursuit of deeper romantic and emotional connections.

Naked Racism has become marginally less socially acceptable in the past few decades. Anti-discrimination laws protect me from losing my job for being Black, and the gradual social progress seen in modern society makes it far less likely for me to be publicly called the n-word for being a mild inconvenience to someone else. However, these standards disappear in the online world of blank profiles and grainy photos. The guaranteed anonymity of many digital spaces, and the lack of accountability this entails, emboldens users to abandon basic courtesy and social etiquette for an explicit expression of racist rhetoric.

Despite the year being 2018, this behaviour is an unpleasant throwback to the racial aggression characteristic of modern history. Naked Racism may seem shocking to those outside the gay community, but to those of us within it, it comes as no surprise. The fact that it exists is problematic enough, but the culture that allows its presence is indicative of a much larger systemic issue marginalising people of colour.

This system of marginalisation also presents itself in what I like to call Closeted Racism, the inverse of Naked Racism. On one side of the spectrum, Naked Racism is characterised by

the dehumanisation of people of colour through exclusion. On the other, Closeted Racism is characterised by the dehumanisation of people of colour through fetishisation.

CLOSETED RACISM

It's tempting to claim that it's better to be loved in the dark than to not be loved at all, but Closeted Racism is a complex issue that needs to be further unpacked.

Closeted Racism reduces men of colour to a collection of racial stereotypes that inform desire in a way that idealises non-white men instead of excluding them. When taken at face value, this type of attraction is seemingly harmless – if men of colour are now the object of fascination instead of repulsion, there is no longer a need to discuss racism. This optimistic reading misses the objectification of men of colour in this equation as well. Both Naked and Closeted Racism define men of colour by their respective racial stereotypes; one uses them to justify evasion, while the other uses them to fuel a fetish.

Fetishes are a normal and healthy expression of human sexuality when practiced consensually with other adults without infringing upon the health and safety of others. There's nothing wrong with fetishising my feet or my ears or my body hair – none of these things are exclusive to any particular group of people, and have arguably never been the basis of significant, widespread discrimination. However, the fetishisation of my Blackness is problematic because it has been, and continues to be, the basis of significant, widespread discrimination and marginalisation. Sexualising me for the colour of my skin reduces me to a collection of stereotypes that have been assigned to everyone that has my skin tone with a complete disregard for the nuances and distinctions that make us unique individuals.

A predominantly pervasive stereotype is that of the hypermasculine, aggressive Black man. This particular trope has been historically used to vilify Black men and support the racist belief that we are unruly, savage brutes, incapable of being civilised or of behaving with dignity and respect. In a sexual setting, this stereotype assumes that all Black men are rough, dominant tops (the partner that anally penetrates in the cisnormative, homosexual male sexual model) that manhandle their bottoms and indulge in wild, rugged intercourse. Although this type of sex isn't inherently problematic, the existence of this racist stereotype fails to give Black men the space to nurture and embrace their own individual sexuality. The expectation for all Black men to behave in this restrictive, one-dimensional manner is a classic example of Closeted Racism. Instead of treating Black men like individuals with their own unique tastes and preferences, Closeted Racism feeds a culture wherein only one way exists for queer Black men to participate in the queer community, and any sort of divergence is punishable by exclusion and segregation.

I've heard it argued that stereotypes aren't necessarily a bad thing – that there are "good" stereotypes which give Black men an upper hand in the pursuit of everything from casual sex to long-term relationships. I'm going to tell you now that there is no such thing as a good stereotype, because all stereotypes are damaging and their very existence perpetuates racial biases that benefit no one.

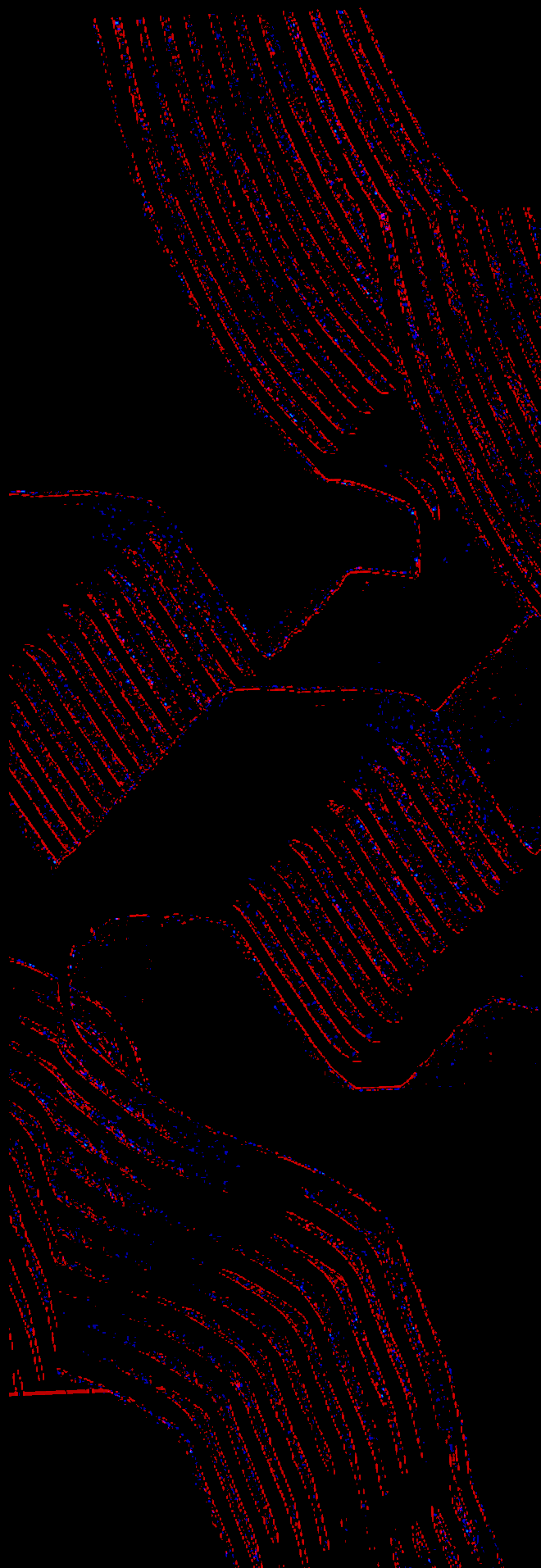
Let's take the "BCC", for example. For those of you unaware of this abbreviation, BBC stands for "Big Black Cock", the obviously false stereotyping that all Black men have baseball bats swinging between their legs. I only recently learned of this, and trust me, I was just as surprised as you are now when I realised that the guy I was chatting with was asking for a photo of my junk

instead of a screenshot of my favourite article from a certain British media outlet (shout out to Urban Dictionary for clearing that one up for me when he kept sending me question marks). Apart from being extremely objectifying and crudely presumptuous, this stereotype has historically contributed to the characterisation of Black men as immoral predators with a proclivity for sexual violence. The obscene largeness of their sexual organs was common in racist caricatures, created to dehumanise Black men and liken them to apes and gorillas.

In a modern context, this stereotype has evolved into a form of Closeted Racism that places the value of a Black man squarely between his legs. The fetishisation of Black men assumes that unless we have the twelve-inch flesh pipe to justify our use, we are simply unworthy of being pursued. This blatant objectification reduces Black men to nothing more than instruments of sexual gratification whose characters and personalities are extraneous and unimportant.

Both Naked and Closeted Racism feature a flagrant disregard for the humanity of queer Black men and other men of colour. Both systems rely on harmful stereotypes to reduce Black men to objects, to be either crudely fetishised or callously discarded. This is unacceptable. 2018 needs to be the year where no one has to apologise for being themselves. The queer community needs to do better. We aren't just a whole bunch of young, white, muscular men - we're Black, we're femme, we're fat, we're old, we're everything in between and so much more. Our culture needs to evolve into one where racism, either Naked or Closeted, is unacceptable. We need to lower the pedestal we use to raise a select few and celebrate the ground that we all stand on.

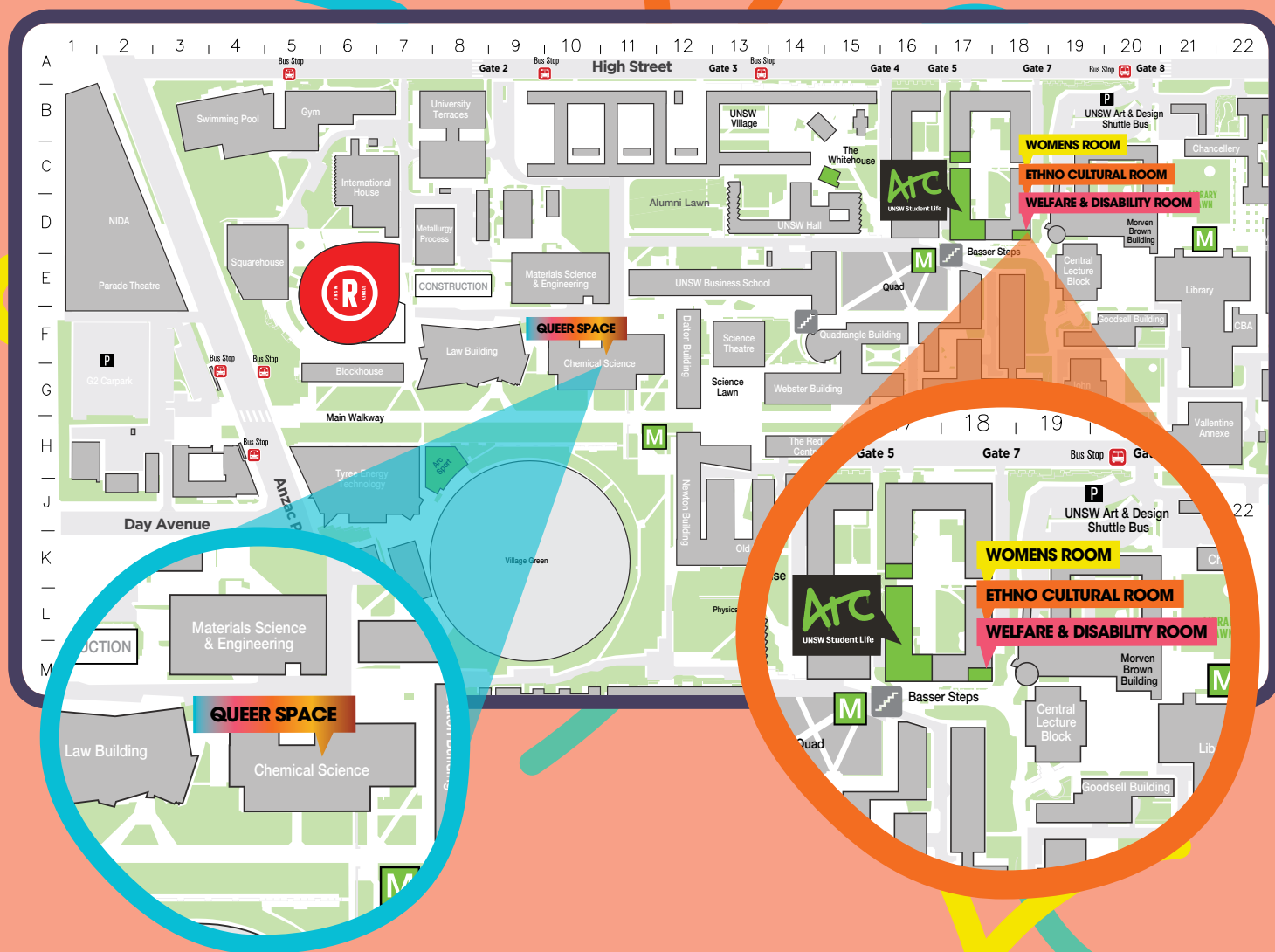
by Lungol Wekina





You're Welcome.

Women's Room
Ethno Cultural Room
Welfare & Disability Room



EQUITY ROOMS

Need somewhere to chill out on campus, a quiet place to study, a place to connect with like-minded people? Maybe just a microwave or fridge for your lunch?

The SRC has you covered. We have equity rooms – safe spaces for you to hang out, nap, or get some readings done.

- **Welfare and Disability Room** A place for autonomous collectives, and also for any student to chill out in the meantime.
- **International & Ethno-cultural Room** A chill place for ethnically and culturally diverse students and international students.
- **Women's Room** The women's room is an autonomous space for women and women identifying students.
- **Queer Space** An autonomous place to relax and connect with other LGBTIA/Queer students. Meetings and other activities are run by the Queer Collective on a weekly basis.

Head to the website to find out where the rooms are located and how you can use them.

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