

GLOBAL LGBTQ+

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STORIES



MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Featuring a special article on:

Colonialism v Queerness: exploring India's treatment of LGBTQ+ individuals

Reconciling my queer identity with my Asian heritage • Homophobia in Football •
Is it Sex or Sexual Orientation? • LGBTQIA+ and the Olympics • Commercialisation
of Pride • Section 28 • Exploring the Hyper-Pop phenomenon

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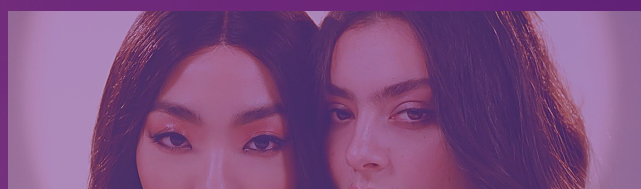
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WHAT YOU
WANT,
EXISTS. DO
NOT SETTLE
UNTIL YOU
GET IT.

- Jay Shetty



Colonialism v Queerness

By Serena Lola, magazine Co-Chief Editor

RECONCILING MY QUEER IDENTITY WITH MY ASIAN HERITAGE

India's treatment of LGBTQ+ people

Being LGBTQUA+ and Asian (specifically Indian in this case) seems virtually impossible, as it is a culture driven by family and reputation, where anything that could possibly tarnish the 'perfect' family name is seen as evil. The stigma surrounding being queer within the Asian community is huge and I was curious to know why and so my journey into the world wide web began. Whilst on my endeavours, surprisingly I found that homosexuality was actually quite common and widely accepted in India throughout history and there is a considerable amount of historical literary evidence to support this.

One of the most interesting texts has to be The Kama Sutra by Vātsyāyana , it is an ancient Indian text from around the 2nd or 3rd century entirely about sexuality, eroticism and emotional fulfilment in life with entire chapters dedicated to homosexuality and people of the third sex. It talks of lesbians known as Swarinis who were often married and raised children together and gay men, known as Klibas. The Klibas (homosexual men) could be effeminate or masculine and were known for being frivolous relationships, but some were also known to marry. The book even goes on to mention the 8 kinds of marriage under the Vedic system and homosexual marriage between men or women was one of them, being classified under gandharva or Celestial variety meaning "a union of love and cohabitation, without the need for parental approval" Sounds beautiful, right?

Furthermore, the Khajuraho temple of Madhya Pradesh is known for its homosexual imagery within the sculptures that depict sexual fluidity of both men and women, showcasing the intimacy between people of the same sex. There are also various devotional traditions where male disciples would effeminise themselves when worshipping certain gods and traditions of hijras and aravanis (intersex/transgender people), who for centuries put themselves into formal communities of the 'third gender.' They often held high positions in society as they were considered to have religious authority, thus were sought out for blessings and other religious ceremonies. However, today the Hijras are victims of abuse and discrimination with violent hate crimes being commonplace for them. So what happened? Why did sexual fluidity and queerness become an evil in Asian communities? Why is it that homosexuality was only legalised in India in 2018?



Colonialism. The British were shocked at the traditions and practices of people such as the hijra and thus many laws and acts were passed such as The criminal Tribes Act (1871) which criminalised hijras and Section 377 of the Indian Penal code which criminalised all sexual acts that went against "the order of nature" The prejudice and discrimination of queerness became internalised over time as education taught people to be repulsed by their own culture and traditions. Tragically, the effects of colonialism ran so deep that it has fed through into modern India and Indian communities across the world. This leaves many individuals within these communities having massive psychological burdens due to having to hide who they are in fear of rejection, being disowned, kicked out or even worse with things such as conversion therapies still being hugely prevalent (contd...)



(Contd...) Sexualities and gender identities are extremely under-discussed in general but particularly within the Asian community with it even being a major taboo in relation to heterosexuality, with any conversation of such matters being thwarted and covered in shame. Thus, without being open and having conversations about sexuality and identities how can we even begin to move more towards acceptance? The collectivist nature of the Asian community means people are more bound to the social and cultural norms they were brought up with, along with traditions such as arranged marriages solidifying heteronormativity.

It is only by breaking down those norms through conversation and education that change can be made as ultimately a lot of the issues comes down to a lack of knowledge and exposure. There needs to be more representation of LGBTUA+ within the media in order to begin that process of breaking down and challenging the norms, so that people can see that being queer is not something that needs to be fixed- it is natural and just who people are. Families need to not discourage, and silence talks of sexuality but embrace them and listen and learn. Moreover, establishments such as the Indian government need to create institutional changes as LGBTUA+ rights in India are scarce with same sex marriage and unions still being unrecognised. This can only happen if people continue to fight for these rights and open up conversations about these issues. Now, these conversations are beginning to happen but there is still so much further to go with many people still living in fear and distress. There are however also many people across the world who are both openly queer and Asian showing that these two factors can co-exist, myself being one of them and I refuse to let my culture change that and I hope that in the future Asian communities can be more accepting of everyone.

FOREWORD FROM THE PLAN TEAM

Serena Lola & Narkiz Ayoğdan - Chief Editors

PLAN is the pioneering LGBTQ+ careers society at the University of Warwick. At the start of the year, we wanted to develop an outlet whereby we can platform queer experiences that encompass stories from around the world, and as such, PLANORAMA was born.

Headed by the fantastic Serena Lola and Narkiz Ayoğdan, the PLANORAMA magazine has grown to recruit a fantastic team of contributors (many of which have contributed to this issue), they have overseen the incorporation of new articles and contributed to the design and marketing of the magazine. Without their direction, the magazine truly would not be in a position to release this issue.

The articles in this magazine cover a variety of topics. From exploring the intersections of colonialism and homophobia = to the more lifestyle pieces covering 'Hyper-Pop', this edition truly encompasses the essence of what PLANORAMA was meant for. The LGBTQ+ experience is varied, both past and present. Going forward, this magazine hopes to uncover some of these experiences, delving deep into the sections of the community which historically have not been paid much attention to in the Western media. This is why the magazine's name is an amalgamation of 'PLAN' and 'panorama', as like a panorama does, it provides a wider, all-encompassing perspective of the world at large, rather than offering the experiences of a small section of the community. It is this holistic approach which inspires our approach to journalism and is a theme which is woven through the fabric of the PLANORAMA team.

In the current political climate, not much progress has been doing as of late for the progression of LGBTQ+ rights. This seems to be a global trend. As such, there is a lot to explore and investigate. From the reversal of trans rights indicated by the UK Human Rights WatchDog to the systemic oppression of LGBTQ+ individuals in China, this magazine will allow individuals with a deep interest to platform their stories and provide some background to others who may not have heard about it. That being said, not all LGBTQ+ stories are doom and gloom, and as such we will be delving deep into queer culture and celebrating the developments (political, legal, societal), and going into how you, the reader, can get involved.

We want to continue to expand the scope, size and reach of the magazine. Over the coming months, into the new election season, we will be looking for a strong team to take up the reigns of the magazine and continue our work. If you are interested, please see the penultimate page of this magazine!

- PLAN team



- Serena Lola



- Narkiz Ayoğdan

Homophobia in football

By Zach Roberts, PLANORAMA Editor

A TOXIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MASCULINITY AND SEXUALITY

When I was 9 years old, my aunt took me to my first football game, and every time someone around us swore I was immediately reminded that those words were bad, and I should never use them because they could hurt people's feelings. However, when a player was told to 'get up you poof' or that 'he runs like a queer' or a 'fairy,' looking back although I didn't understand the sentiment behind that language, I realise now that the same consideration towards how people's feelings might be affected wasn't made. Admittedly a lot has changed in the 10 years since, but this subtle acceptance of football's homophobic vernacular shows how deep-rooted it remains within its culture.

According to Stonewall, 72% of football fans will have heard homophobic language used at a game, and while most (58%) feel that it should be called out, only a quarter would feel comfortable to do so, and sadly that is hardly a shocking revelation as it is almost impossibly hard to challenge something that is so widely normalised.

The worst insult to a man with fragile masculinity is to question them on it, and a primary use for homophobia in football culture is, ironically, to defend and reassert the masculinity of these fragile men. Think about it this way: As a player you have to be comfortable with the inevitable physical contact with other men, as well as the atmosphere of post-match changing rooms. Meanwhile large groups of tight-knit men will often spend large amounts of time with each other supporting their respective teams, embracing in moments of jubilation, and consoling one another when events do not go their way.



Arguably, football can be an incredibly intimate environment, but to quash any insinuation of homoeroticism, masculinity must be re-established and all too often this translates into homophobia, using it to separate their intimate experiences from any kind of sexual suggestion: 'we couldn't possibly be gay because look at how we ridicule it'. The fact that sexual

orientation must be brought into it is completely unnecessary. Sport as an athlete or supporter is not a sexual matter and the irrational fear that it might be viewed as such is where the vitriolic side of homophobia in football stems from.

Homophobia in football doesn't just affect fans, but players too. It's been 30 years since Justin Fashanu became the first male British footballer to come out while still playing professionally, and his life ended in tragedy as he took his own life in 1998 and his own brother went on record in 2012 to say that he did not believe Justin was truly gay and it was just an attention seeking stunt.

Thankfully progress is beginning to be made, and while football is still lagging when it comes to LGBTQ+ acceptance compared to society in general, gradually footballers confident enough to go public with their sexuality. German footballer Thomas Hitzlsperger and American Robbie Rogers both came out after leaving England, and Englishman Thomas Beattie came out after retiring. While their bravery must be commended, the fact that none of these players felt comfortable coming out while still playing in England tells us how far there still is to go in order to create a safe and comfortable environment. Additionally in 2020, two Premier League footballers penned anonymous open letters, one stating they yearned for greater help and support from footballing authorities to come out on their own terms, whilst the other was adamant that the current climate meant that they could/would not come out while still playing professionally.

Compare this to the women's game, where many players are openly gay, with lots of them in public relationships, some of which even with teammates or fellow footballers. Additionally, Canadian player, Quinn, became the first transgender, non-binary athlete to compete in an Olympic games this summer, and they also went on to win a gold medal with the Canadian women's team. (contd...)

(contd...) This openness and acceptance is a stark contrast to men's football and whittles down to the attitudes and cultures on both sides of the sport. Unfortunately, men's competitive team sports have been breeding a culture of toxic, fragile masculinity for decades if not centuries, and the women's game hasn't had to deal with that and is thus far more capable to be not only accepting but embracing of sexuality and gender alike.

The fact that next year's World Cup will be held in Qatar, a country where homosexuality is still illegal, symbolizes the lack of proper, meaningful action that is currently being taken to combat homophobia in the sport. Pride flags, rainbow laces and other gestures of support only do so much. They cannot educate people on tolerance and acceptance, nor embracing the LGBTQ+ community and certainly properly cannot tackle the stigmas.

The problem with homophobia in football is not one of sexuality, rather of masculinity. Years and years of toxic culture has been validated and normalized, and it will take as long if not longer to eradicate unless action is taken to tackle the problem at the root and cannot be done instantaneously. This is not to say that the situation is not improving, yet there is certainly plenty of work that can, and must, be done.



Is It Sex Or Sexual Orientation?

By Narkiz Ayogdan, magazine Co-Chief Editor

A DISCUSSION OF THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT'S TREATMENT OF LGBTQ+ IDENTITIES

Sex, gender and sexual orientation; our understanding of these words are often entangled and frequently reinforced by each other. Men and women face societal expectations to conform to a heteronormative notions of masculinity and femininity. These societal standards lay the foundations for how people view sex, gender and sexual orientation. Whilst many Western nations have begun to detangle these words by dismantling their rigid social conjectures, much of the rest of the world continues to struggle with these concepts plagued by the corrupting impacts of confusion or active ignorance. This challenge is well documented in the Iranian government's coercion of gay people to transition to the opposite gender in order for their sexual orientation to match heterosexuality.

Since 1986 transsexuality has been perceived as a medical condition, a sickness, that must be corrected with gender affirming surgery. The discussion around transsexuality changed when Maryam Khatoun Molkara pleaded with the then 'supreme leader' about her experiences as a transwomen; being a woman stuck in a man's body strongly resonated with the Supreme Leader. This narrow understanding of transsexuality meant that transsexual people would have to transition in order to abide by the heteronormative societal standards. This meant that: a transwoman would have to get surgery to correct their sex, properly express their femininity and have the full capacity to be attracted to men.

Government recognition of transsexuality failed to follow a discussion on comprehending gender yet further reinforced a compact ideology of sex, gender and sexual orientation. Consequently, homosexuality became the symptom of a greater disease of transsexuality.

Those questioning their sexual identity are left to suffer in silence or are encouraged to seek help only under government provision. The Iranian government's continuing ban of many websites, with homosexuality strictly illegal, robs these people of any helpful information on the subject. Hence, the only tangible option left to people is medical advice. The reports of Iranian citizens and healthcare workers are littered with stories of doctors telling those seeking assistance that their sexual orientation is the symptom of a 'transsexuality' sickness that must be cured.

These citizens face immense pressure from their government, their doctors and often their closest social circle with the additional knowledge of possible imprisonment and death if their sexual orientation were publicised. Although the numbers remain hidden, it is estimated that around 4000 people have had surgery since 1986 and the annual number of surgeries keeps climbing with more than 200 reported in 2010.

in Iran the torture continues for newly transitioned people due to an absence of government support for their transition into society. Transphobia and ostracization of transitioned citizens by their closest friends and family is the norm; with this rejection sometimes entailing verbal or physical abuse and public humiliation. Citizens are free to assault trans people with little to no consequences from the police or the judicial system. Employers may refuse to hire trans employees and are allowed to fire an employee for being trans.

Trans people are denied any safe and legal opportunities for financial stability thus many find themselves forced into sex work.

From there many face extreme forms of physical and sexual violence within sex work that is once again ignored by the police, the judicial system and the government. The blatant transphobia of the Iranian society emphasizes the culture of strictly adhering to the rigid ideologies of sex, gender and sexual orientation whilst alienating the 'sick' that can never be cured off their differences. A general understanding of these three words is crucial. In Iran sex, gender and sexual orientation are not distinct characteristics and instead are a tangled concept each category contribute to; preventing independent approaches or consideration.

Sex is assigned at birth according to reproductive functions. Gender defines the identity of sexes by attributing certain characteristics that are socially and culturally recognized to 'belong' to the said sex; the same gender may be portrayed completely differently across cultural norms. Sexual orientation conveys romantic or/and sexual attraction to a chosen or variety of genders. These concepts are all independent of each other, some emphasize biology and some emphasize society.

All things considered, the ignorance surrounding these words are the tip of the iceberg of ignorance and hatred surrounding the entire LGBTQ community in Iran. Distinguishing between these concepts disarms the government's argument of promoting transitioning. However, recognizing the flawed ideology behind this practice in Iran is of little influence considering the entire process is motivated by ignorant hate of the LGBTQ community. The alleged cure of transitioning produces more detrimental physical and mental suffering than to begin with. The system is designed to oppress the community; yet their systematic expression of homophobia emphasizes the compactness of these concepts and begs the question is the government targeting sex, gender or sexual orientation?





LGBTQIA+ and the Olympics

By Thalia Sheriff-Horner

A DISPLAY OF PROGRESS?

or a chilling reminder of how far we are yet to go...

The Tokyo Olympics saw at least 180 openly out athletes competing in Tokyo – three times more than the 2016 Rio Olympics. This improvement in representation is cause for celebration, but a culture within sports that still relies heavily upon stereotypes of gender and sexuality is preventing many LGBTQIA+ athletes from competing, or coming out.

While it may be true that the Olympic Games is accepting LGBTQIA+ competitors, this hasn't always been the case – with the Games being hosted in countries where homosexuality is not accepted and, instead, condoned. The 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics are a prime example of this, with Vladimir Putin introducing gay propaganda law that claimed “non-traditional sexual relations” were a danger to children, the family and society. This homophobic rhetoric has continued to cause damage to the community, with the years following Sochi bringing discrimination and violence against those who fail to abide by “traditional values”. This political homophobia was still present at Tokyo, with Tom Daley (Team GB Diver) and Laurel Hubbard (Team NZ Weightlifter) being targeted by Russian broadcasters. Referred to as “psychopaths”, “perversion”, and “abominations” by Russia-1, the channel attempted to spread social hostility towards LGBTQIA+ athletes during the Games, targeting sexual and gender minorities for political gain. While the IOC condemned these comments, stating that “discrimination has absolutely no place at the Olympic Games”, this expressed concern does very little to end the denigrating LGBTQIA+ athletes.

The Olympics, while successful in accommodating more LGBTQIA+ identifying participants, still needs to take steps to include athletes who are intersex.

In 2018, women with high testosterone levels were required by World Athletics to take medication to reduce their testosterone. This essentially banned intersex athletes, like Caster Semenya, from competing, unless they took medication or surgically altered themselves.

The rules are a violation of human rights – a stark contrast to the image depicted of the ‘Rainbow Olympics’ that “embedded diversity and inclusion” into the model of the Olympic Games. Margaret Wambui (Team Kenya 800m), also barred from competing because of naturally elevated testosterone levels, suggests that World Athletics introduce a third category to international sport competitions to include intersex people, bringing requirements in line with its efforts to “celebrate the diversity of its athletes”. For many, the statement of the IOC is incredibly contradictory, considering the discriminatory exclusion of intersex athletes from competing. Caster Semenya’s ECtHR case aimed at reversing the regulation is a welcomed challenge to these archaic and prohibitive rules that restrict certain members of the community from exercising their talents and hard-work.

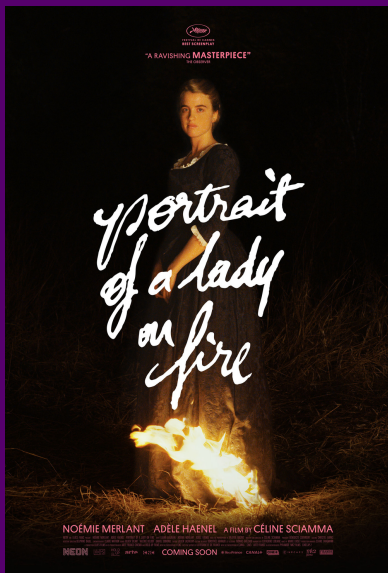
The restriction of the LGBTQIA+ community has still been present at the Games, with 10 competing countries still punishing those identifying as LGBTQIA+ by death. While this may spark outrage and protests by those truly committed to ending discrimination and brutal violence. The existence of legislation and regulations that continue to repress the community demands permanent reform by all of those within the international community to ensure the freedom of all athletes to perform – not just at the Olympics, but in amateur sports also.

PLANORAMA LIFESTYLE



Movie Recommendations of the Month

GIA depicts a passionate yet vulnerable young woman exploited for her beauty and consumed by the self-interested world around her. The competing comparison of her addiction to the women she loves conveys depth to the character whilst opening a discussion into addiction. Her sexuality is neither the premise of the plot nor a limitation to the complexity of her character yet integral to her story nonetheless.



Portrait of a Lady on Fire explores sexuality in relation to femininity, womanhood and societal expectations. A painter and the subject of her portrait gradually fall in love as the art challenges the perception of the artist- equally challenging the perception and expectations from women in society. The scenery, music and a few books are used not as props but rather to accentuate the variety of ideas conveyed by the plot. More than being a beautiful love story, the movie makes a great commentary on the complexity of lesbianism.

Call Me by Your Name is a twist to the usual coming of age movies as 17 year old Elio explores his feelings and sexuality. The movie has been criticized, rightfully so, for glamorizing quite a large and harmful age gap of 7 years. Although it is a way too common experience for many young gay men to be preyed on by older, more experienced gay men, the actor choice and the conversations surrounding this reality do little to emphasize the damaging aspects of it. However, the movie does do a good job of providing two different, at times contracting, experiences of being queer and exploring ones queerness. If watched with a critical perspective this movie is brilliant for conveying the impact of first experiences and the feelings invoked by them.

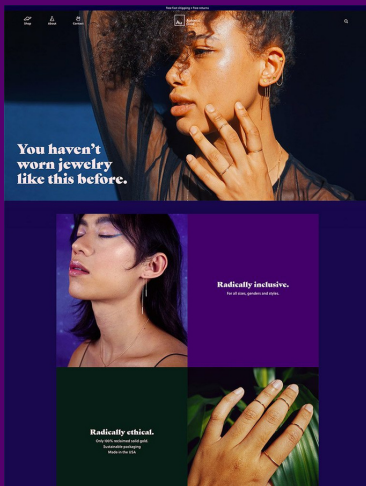




PLANORAMA LIFESTYLE

Fashion Review: Our Favourite Local Queer Designers

Automic Gold



This queer, trans-owned jewelry line was started in 2017 by wives AI (they/them) and Kiera (she/her). The baubels are intended for all genders, not because the styles are "unisex" but because, according to the website, "Automic Jewellery was specifically designed to mix and wrap the feminine, masculine, in between and outside to make fine jewelry that is beyond gender". Each solid gold earring, necklace, bracelet, and ring is simple and delicate- ideal for wearing every single day.

Dyke Sport



Gergia graduated from the university of Westminster with a BA in fashion design. Her Sydney-based brand, Dyke Sport, debuted at this year's London Fashion Week. Moreover, she was included in Teen Vogue's Generation Next Designers. Her luxurious sportswear label "reclaims a traditionally derogatory term- celebrating the beauty and fierceness of lesbian culture".



The Commercialisation of Pride

By Kian Cushman, PLAN President

AND THE GLOBAL MOVEMENT TO RECLAIM IT...

At this point, the basic story and progress of LGBTUA+ rights is relatively well known. Whether it's the progressive tale of the Stonewall Riots, led by black trans activists, such as Marsha P. Johnson, or the regressive media villainisation in the wake of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the Pride movement has been underpinned by the empowerment of a community, once shunned and criminalised. However, can the same be said about the Pride movement in its current form today? In this short article, I will explore the current state of the movement, highlighting how Pride events have become exploited as a profit-making endeavour, and how its current form is a complete betrayal to its original purpose. While this is a huge topic to cover, in this piece I will mainly focus on U.K. Pride events, more specifically, the Manchester Pride "charity".

Late Summer of 2021, has seen the return of Pride events, having been postponed and cancelled in the wake of the COVID pandemic. I had the pleasure of attending Manchester Pride in late August, supporting local queer businesses, and getting involved in the 'Reclaim Pride' march. In the weeks leading up to Manchester Pride, the charity came under (well deserved) fire following its decision to cut funding of a joint project with LGBT Foundation that distributed free condoms out in the Greater Manchester area to combat HIV infections. While this happened, the CEO of the charity, Mark Fletcher, gained a £20,000 increase, bringing his salary to nearly £100,000. This scheme has existed since 1994, and the Manchester Pride charity has supported it for the last 27 years, so the question that must be asked is: what changed? Both the George House Trust and the Safer-Sex Pack Project have done fantastic work in the community left devastated in the wake of the HIV epidemic, the effects of which, at least socially and politically, are still felt today. However, while these may be some of the most recent betrayals in how the "Pride movement" has become increasingly monetised, the essence of what Pride is, has changed entirely also. Nowadays, if you want to fully experience the Pride events and entertainment, you must pay.

This year, Manchester Pride charged a whopping, £84.50 for 'Weekend Rainbow Passes'. While the organisation allows for discounted tickets, based on a means-tested, first-come-first-serve approach, it is simply not enough. While the parade is one of the only free events left, this year it was cancelled due to COVID concerns, despite the festival and club nights being given the go-ahead. It is becoming increasingly clear that Pride is now a privilege. You must be able to pay for your tickets, your accommodation, and your transport, which totalled up, can take costs in the hundreds of pounds per person. The simple fact is, as a community we are statistically more likely to endure financial insecurity. Manchester Pride have positioned themselves as gatekeepers to their pride events, allowing only those privileged with money to be able to enjoy a celebration that was once accessible to all.

It could be asked to what extent can it be argued that this is on Manchester Pride themselves? For me, the answer here is, completely. While Manchester Pride can be said to have simply responded to customer demand by providing things like the festival experience, to do so at the cost of potentially excluding some in the community is a betrayal to its roots. There is nothing wrong with having the festival, the exclusive Canal St 'street party' access, however, these extortionate costs associated with attending Pride and making the most of the experience borders on outright exploitation. In the context of the fact that it only donated 3% of its revenue to LGBT+ charities and the cutting of ties with crucial HIV-preventing initiatives, it is becoming increasingly clear that the focus now is not about empowering a community. Instead, Manchester Pride seems to wear the façade of doing this, whilst also exploiting the community of its money, while giving very little back to the organisations that need it most.

Manchester Pride is a fantastic experience, and I truly would encourage everyone to go. There are fantastic local queer venues and artists that are in dire need of custom and support following the effects of the pandemic. All the events the organisation hosted this year were fantastic, however, there are structural problems which must be addressed. Going forward, Manchester Pride has agreed to allow a 'transparent' review of its finances. However, this is not a localised issue. The same exploitation and commodification of Pride has taken hold of many Pride celebrations across the world. The 'reclaim pride' movement has sought to fight against this, by protesting the organisations and holding them accountable to the community. For me, Pride has and always will be about empowering the community and taking a stand against injustice. It is inevitable that the focus will shift, especially in the face of injustices against the black community and to trans individuals. However, the focus should never be about the money, and while Manchester Pride is just one example, it is already clear that it is time to reclaim pride.

SECTION 28

By Zach Roberts, PLANORAMA Editor

THE HISTORY; THE LEGACY; AND WHY IT IS STILL RELEVANT TODAY.

The stigma that persists from Section 28, as demonstrated, still has massive impacts in our academic environments. LGBTQ+ students are still twice as likely to be bullied in school or suffer from anxiety and/or depression than their peers, and while efforts are being made to challenge these obstacles, new challenges are presenting themselves that cannot be ignored either.

One major challenge is the ways in which the focus of queer discourse is changing. The culture war seen in the 1980s that targeted gay men has now turned its attention away from sexuality and more towards a gender-orientated debate. Both trans rights and the increasingly spectral understanding of gender identity have risen in prominence over the last decade or so, and with that history is in danger of repeating itself. In September of 2020, all secondary schools were required to begin comprehensive teaching on sexual orientation and gender identity, and while this may appear positive at first glance, the focus of this teaching is on relationships and sex-education, not on the complexities of gender identity. Additionally, teachers and schools maintain most of the autonomy when it comes to deciding how to approach teaching these topics, and there is widespread fear that most of this new curriculum will focus predominantly, if not exclusively, on LGB topics with no room made for the T, Q, I, A, + etc.

Many people, at school ages, will not have fully comprehended their sexual or gender identity, and that is why it is so important for the whole of the LGBTQ+ community to be visible from a young age when questioning and learning about the related topics. The value of visibility and the contribution it makes to queer people feeling both accepted by others, and comfortable with themselves is huge, as well as extremely underappreciated, and while schools and Government are clearly trying to make an effort to reverse the effects of Section 28, the biggest lesson to learn, is that we're not even halfway there yet.

Section 28 has increasingly contributed to a discriminatory environment in schools where LGBTQ+ students and teachers alike do not have access to either the relevant education or support, or both. Being part of the community may be more socially acceptable in today's world, but the lack of proper education within schools leaves many children with assumptions, stigmas or fears about either how they will be perceived, or how to appropriately approach these issues. The statistics collected by Stonewall and The Gay Times illustrate the effect of years of no or inadequate education on LGBTQ+ tolerance or relationships:

- “ (48%) of pupils have had little to zero positive messaging about LGBTQ+ people in the past year
- Only a third (29%) of UK teachers are 'completely comfortable' talking about LGBTQ+ topics in the classroom
- Only a third (31%) of LGBTQ+ primary and secondary staff say their colleagues and school board are a barrier to doing LGBTQ+ inclusion with their pupils
- 43% of school staff are unsure if colleagues would be comfortable coming out as LGBTQ+ at their school
- 4 out of 10 LGBTQ+ students have never been taught about LGBTQ+ issues in school
”

S.28 DEVESTATED A GENERATION OF LGBTQ+ PEOPLE AND THE LONG LASTING IMPACTS ARE STILL FELT TODAY



'Don't touch my hair!'

By Francesca Godley, PLAN Treasurer

AFRO-TEXTURED IDENTITY WITHIN THE WORKPLACE

When Solange sang 'Don't touch my hair', she meant it. Whilst I was in primary school, my hair was the coolest thing in the eyes of my peers. They would touch, pull, brush and tug at my coils, fascinated that I didn't need a bobble to tie my braids or that I never got knits. Although I liked the attention, I almost felt I was being marvelled at – like a hunter marvels at his latest catch. Or, like I was in a zoo.

My hair was so alien to those I encountered that they just had to touch, and this made me feel they could see nothing more than my hair when I walked by. It is a shame others too experience these types of microaggressions – 1 in 4 adults are said to have had bad or very bad interactions due to their Afro-textured hair and identity. It is a further shame these experiences are also true within the workplace.

The term 'microaggression' was first coined by Harvard University Professor Chester M. Pierce, and is defined by Oxford Languages as 'a statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalised group such as a racial or ethnic minority'.

'But surely, me touching your hair is a sign of intrigue or fascination, rather than a discriminatory act?'

Such fascination was also held by the 1906 Bronx Zoo goers when peering at former slave Ota Benga. After being kidnapped from what was then the Congo Free State, he stood in the zoo's Monkey House, flashing his spiked teeth and 'savage' demeanour to all who passed. People felt entitled to gaze because they saw Ota as sub-human – although not necessarily the same sentiment felt by colleagues wanting to touch curly/kinky hair, there is an element of exoticness, or 'otherness', which justifies such pervasive acts. However, black hair is not something one must learn through touching. It is literally attached to someone – it is not a pet, nor a designer handbag. It is part of the person's culture, their appearance, their identity, and is not something to be viewed as an artifact.



Curly/kinky haired individuals have a very different experience of the workplace compared to their counterparts. In an effort to appease minds, some women relax or straighten their hair to appear more Eurocentric to wade off ignorant comments – 'How did you get your hair to do that?' 'Can I touch it?' 'Wasn't your hair different a couple of days ago?' Such strategies prove damaging especially for black hair, and are done at the expense of the colonial curiosity which drives such questions. We therefore see a paradox emerge – corporations advocate bringing your authentic self to work, but do nothing to educate staff members on the respect which must be harboured to ensure this happens. The workplace then becomes a place of anxiety, affecting performance, cohesion and self-identity.

Thankfully, efforts have been put in place to improve workplace reactions to black hair. Implemented as a response to the shortcomings of the Equalities Act 2010, the Halo Code has been adopted by several workplaces and schools to dismantle the discrimination felt by those with Afro-textured hair. The Code's objective is to champion all Afro-hairstyles, ensuring no black employee 'should have to change their natural or protective hairstyle in order to thrive at work' – Respect UK, 2021. Such initiatives can aid discriminatory perceptions of what constitutes a 'professional' hairstyle, but they also highlight the extra steps Afro-textured people must take in order to be accepted at work. Why must we strive for a Code which affirms our appearance? Surely this should be a given?

If I could talk to primary school-aged Francesca, I would tell her that those uneasy feelings which bubble in your head when a peer touches your hair are completely valid. Those are your curls, and they shouldn't be viewed by others as a cool accessory which can be tried on. I'd tell my future self that there is no need to shelter how you express your identity through your hair, and to embrace the 'mane of curls' which you have been given. Go rock them!

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The HYPER-POP Phenomenon

By Nixon Leow, PLAN Fresher Rep

HOW THE QUEER COMMUNITY IS ONCE AGAIN DEFINING A NEW GENRE IN MUSIC.

Throughout the vast scape of modern music history, the queer experience has always adopted and associated with certain genres of music. From the disco boom of the 1970s to the house-rave and dance pop of the 1990s, music has always been an outlet for queer people to celebrate their community. This familiar tidal wave is coming once again. It is coming in the form of an eclectic mix of synths, maximalist electronic production, in-your-face beats and vocals. It's big, it's bold, and it's called hyper-pop.

Hyper-pop, like most everything in the 2010s, emerged from the depths of internet communities as a scene for experimenters to apply their spin on electronic music. Melding influences of dream pop, emorap, reggaeton, dance and bubblegum pop, it brings together mostly trans, genderqueer and gay creatives and their creations are punchy, busy, energetic and futuristic.

In fact, trans musicians are amongst the top ranks of the hyper-pop. Starting from the late SOPHIE, who pioneered the world of the hyper-pop sound and has extended its reach to influence prominent voices in music such as Madonna, Vince Staples, and Charli XCX; to legendary trans non-binary producer Arca who have their production credits in the likes of Kanye West, Bjork and Sia. This is a unique point of hyper-pop when it comes to how it fits into the world of queer issues: it does not tokenize or 'otherize' trans musicians and creators, but in fact celebrates them, and it emerges as a platform for them to express their selves and thrive while doing it.

Indeed, every single creator in hyper-pop has a story to tell. With their lyrics often deeply rooted in the queer experience, and it shows. From angles like the burgeoning sexuality and gay identity that shines in Thatkid's work: 'baby boy put down your iphone

3/Because I think that there's a chance you wanna get with me', to gender fluidity and critique of hypermasculinity that is characteristic of non-binary artist Dorian Electra:

take your pick from the entirety of Flamboyant'. The reason why the hyper-pop community has been so deeply intertwined with the queer movement is because these creators are bringing marginalized voices to the forefront of the conversation and dealing with issues especially relevant to Gen-Z, whether queer centric or not. So much of hyper-pop is an extrapolation of the consumer and internet culture of the current intersectional generation; emphasized by Rina Sawayama's punk-rock inspired 'XS' or Kim Petras's the bubblegum track 'Coconuts' poking fun at the campy, often absurdist perspective of the internet.

However, our focus on hyper-pop goes beyond on how artists illustrate their stories through their lyrics, but it is the sonic patterns of hyper-pop that speaks the most. Its footprint often never shies away from its underground rave and house DNA, a recall to the dark, alternative club culture that originated on the fringes of the mainstream by and for the queer communities that had yet to see the light. As these production techniques grow increasingly accessible in the 2020s, hyper-pop artists are reclaiming their time spent locked away from accessing this element of queer culture, either due to their age or due to their circumstances at the time, and bringing it under their ownership. From indie artists like P4rkr, dltzk and Osquinn, representing the community of teenagers that base their creative process from the confines of their bedroom, to established names in the field like Slayyyter and 100 geecs. Through the veins of hyper-pop runs the ancestry of the 'outsider community', which, paradoxically, through this wide cast, is becoming increasingly diverse and inclusive. (contd...)

(contd...) What hyper-pop does for queer people, most importantly, is that it celebrates identities and alter egos that are commonly accepted in the mainstream; the fact that computer production of music is integral to hyper-pop allows creators to live their fantasy of overcoming the gender partition that has been entrenched in the world of music. It allows them to escape the vocal dysphoria that often takes away from the trans or genderqueer experience. For Dorian Electra, their androgynous vocals accompanies their assertion of their non-binary identity, and for Laura Les, one half of the superduo 100 Gecs, the shrill timbre of her distorted voice harnesses the energy of the trans community that so often craves to fit into the traditional, mainstream pop-star mold but is coldly rejected at the door by societal images of what a pop star should be. The focus becomes less on their gender and its associated constructs and confines, and more of showcasing their eccentric personas.

Indeed, as hyper-pop moves further into the 2020s, it is coming to represent the youth community at large, and, bursting onto the mainstream with a big swing. In Nov 2021, trans and hyper-pop icon Kim Petras took the stage on the MTV European VMAs in Hungary for a performance, moving across the stage in a country that recently established 'no-promo-homo' laws that limit the freedom of expression related to queer issues. It is with this spirit that the LGBTQIA+ community need to embrace hyper-pop as it is interlinked with the queer culture of today. It does not stop at being a musical genre, it is also a community of forward individuals who are coming to produce art for their sake, and just like the 1970s, 1990s and the 2010s, the hyper-pop wave is coming fully to its intersection with popular culture. It is the responsibility of the queer community of today to realize the symbiotic relationship it has with hyper-pop and depend on each other for its longevity.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

The PLANORAMA team are looking for editors and content writers to join the team!

As mentioned in the foreword, we are looking for contributors, editors and for the up-coming PLAN election, a new Chief Editor.

If you have a passion for exploring the queer experiences and stories and want to contribute to providing a platform to stories which have typically not been given much attention in Western media, this is the perfect opportunity for you.

While no experience is needed, we are looking for individuals with a burning passion to continue the growth of the magazine. If you are interested in any of the contributor/editorial roles, please email us at: warwicklgbtuanetwork@gmail.com

If you are looking to fill the shoes of the Chief Editor role, please keep an eye on our socials (or your emails if you're signed up for our newsletter) for the information on the upcoming elections.



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