

LILAC PRESENTS:

AN ANTHOLOGY ON

DYSPHORIA,

IDENTITY,

AND

RELATIONSHIPS

OH MY!

BY AND FOR

YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURHOOD

QUEER/TRANS/NB INDIVIDUALS



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HISTORY

VANGUARD & GLIDE MEMORIAL & COMPTON CAFETERIA

Three years before Stonewall, gay and trans youth gathered in protest in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco. The Tenderloin district was predominately low-income, and housing and employment discrimination against transgender individuals (especially trans women) was rampant. To be able to stay afloat, many transgender women worked as prostitutes; a fact that was not helped by police using Tenderloin as a loose containment zone for transgender individuals. In order to make San Francisco a more tourist-friendly and welcoming, high-tech city, neighbourhoods were destroyed, including those surrounding Tenderloin, leaving Tenderloin as one of the only places with affordable housing. In response to this urban renewal, Tenderloin residents, in conjunction with Glide Memorial United Methodist Church, launched a grassroots campaign in 1965, demanding economic justice. Glide Memorial United Methodist Church also established the Council on Religion and the Homosexual (CRH), which brought up the problem of antigay discrimination to religious organizations. Following this in 1966, Vanguard, one of the first queer youth organizations in the United States, was formed with help from activist ministers from Glide Memorial. The first transsexual peer support group created in 1967, 'Conversion Our Goal', actually held its meetings in Glide Memorial.

In 1966, transgender members of Vanguard rioted in Compton's Cafeteria due to police crackdowns on transgender customers. On the first night of the riot, police attempted to arrest a trans woman, who, in retaliation, threw her coffee into a police officer's face. The next night, many more individuals and members of the LGBTQ community in Tenderloin joined in a picket of the cafeteria.

Through all of this, the plight of young gay and trans individuals was finally brought to news headlines and the civil rights agenda, and marked a turning point in trans activism.

Source: Stryker, Susan. Transgender History. Berkley: Seal, 2008. Print.



SURVEY: HOW DOES
DYSPHORIA FEEL TO YOU?

Julia Serano, 'Whipping Girl':
"For me, the hardest part about being trans has not been the discrimination or the ridicule that I have faced for defying societal and gender norms, but rather the internal pain I experienced when my subconscious and conscious sexes were at odds with one another. I think this is best captured by the psychological term "cognitive dissonance," which describes the mental tension and stress that occur in a person's mind when they find themselves holding two contradictory thoughts or

views simultaneously - in this case, subconsciously seeing myself as female while consciously dealing with the fact that I was male. This gender dissonance can manifest itself in a number of ways. Sometimes it felt like stress or anxiousness, which led to marathon battles with insomnia. Other times, it surfaced as jealousy or anger at other people who seemed to enjoy taking their gender for granted. But most of all, it felt like sadness to me - a sort of gender sadness - a chronic and persistent grief over the fact that I felt so wrong in my body."

When I think about sex I would have with people,
I always imagine having a penis.
That makes sex (with a penis-having person
vaginally) feel weird and surprising.



Mostly, for me, it shows up as being incredibly uncomfortable with how society perceives me, not so much my body in and of itself.

absolutely harrowing.

It is a constant reminder of how disconnected I feel from my body, and on bad days it prevents me from leaving my room. Not only am I terrified of not being read as my gender, my body is a constant reminder of it.

☆ you are full of ☆
☆ Stardust! ☆



SURVEY: HOW DOES DYSPHORIA FEEL TO YOU? (CONT.)

Dysphoria feels like the worst sort of lying.

Sometimes, when I'm dreaming, I'll be doing something I would never do in real life, but I literally can't stop myself because of the rules of the dream. I still feel completely responsible; it still feels like my own failing, but there's nothing I can do to prevent it.

Dysphoria feels like that. I feel like I'm lying to people, and people are lying to me, but that I literally cannot stop either. I am not these things you assume of me. I am not a girl; I am not a butch lesbian; I am not a boy. And it's--difficult. Because if I were a girl, if I were a butch lesbian, if I were a boy, I might dress the same, I might look the same. But I am what I am, and it's not TRUE.

Dysphoria feels like I'm lying to myself and the world around me, because these assumptions exist and I feel like they're my fault. I can fix pieces. I got top surgery recently, and that helped; my body is mine again for the first time in years. I pack. But I want facial hair, and I don't want my voice to drop, and I usually like my hips, and most of all I want people to stop assuming I'm a boy or a girl (as if I can't be both, as if I can't be something else, as if I can't switch, as if you could tell by looking).

I'm telling the truth as best I can, but whenever I think about it I feel like a liar.

Outside the coffee shop at 6am
in a haze of smoke
Unshaven from last night's
adventures
In her face was supreme
confidence



A NOTE: TRANS DOES NOT IMPLY DYSPHORIC!

SURVEY: HOW HAS DYSPHORIA OR BEING TRANS/QUEER/NB IMPACTED YOUR RELATIONSHIPS (ROMANTIC/SEXUAL/FRIENDSHIPS)?

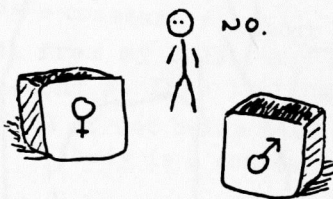
with sex it depends-- sometimes i can ignore it. more often than not, it makes me feel very physically ill. otherwise, wearing baggy clothes helps very much.

It can be difficult with relationships, because I'm never sure at what point to tell someone that I'm trans. Sometimes they already know, sometimes they've guessed, but if I know that they don't know, it's a constant nagging thought.

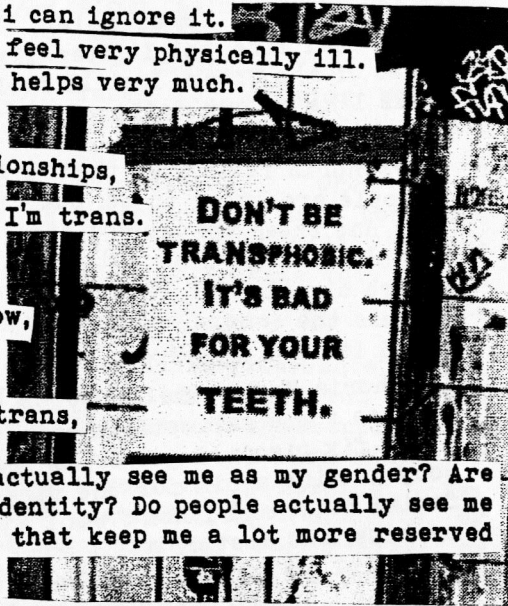
With hook-ups who know that I'm trans, I sometimes worry about their underlying intentions; do they actually see me as my gender? Are they fetishizing my body or my identity? Do people actually see me for who I am? And concerns like that keep me a lot more reserved than I'd like to be.

It's harder to form meaningful relationships with people who don't believe me about my gender. What that means, more often than not, is that my closest relationships are all with other trans/* /nb people. Often, this is utterly accidental. People who believe me about my gender aren't always out as trans/* /nb yet, but my closest elementary school friends have almost all come out as trans/* /nb, and the same is true of most of my good friends in college. This isn't a rule. I have dear friendships with some cis people, and I've dated and had sex with some as well. I don't think it's a way thing have to be--I just think that, when something isn't common knowledge, those affected by it are likeliest to learn about it, to know about it, and to believe it exists. And of course, there are people whom I've had sex with who refused to have sex on terms that made me feel safe because they wouldn't believe me about my gender. But if it hadn't been that, it probably would have been something else.

all of my friends are accepting. but when i'm meeting a new person i always have a moment where i'm concerned about my physical safety once i let them know that i'm not c



The dysphoria makes me feel weird during sex, but other than that it does not change anything.

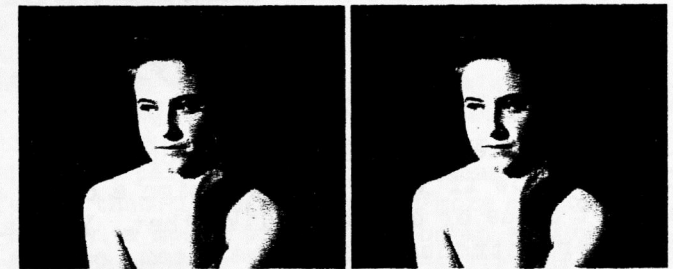


Gender is complicated. It should first be repeated that trans is an umbrella term. It encompasses a huge spectrum of identities. Not every person who identifies as trans experiences dysphoria, and not every person who experiences dysphoria has the same feelings and reactions to it. It should also be noted that not experiencing dysphoria as a person who identifies as trans does not make you any less trans, and should not detract from your identity. Implying that someone is 'more trans' than another individual because they experience their body differently and have different emotions creates a completely unjust power dynamic. In doing this, trans people with different experiences than the by-the-book definition are excluded, which creates transphobia within the trans community. Saying that dysphoria is an integral part of being trans or is what causes someone to be trans medicalizes someone's identity. In the updated Diagnostic and Statistics Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V), the diagnosis of gender identity disorder (GID) was changed to 'gender dysphoria', suggesting that one cannot be trans or cannot seek hormones or surgery unless one experiences dysphoria. There are a lot of problems with the DSM; saying that being trans is still a mental disorder, regardless of what name it is under, is quite frankly disgusting.

Having certain criteria to determine who is "trans enough" or who is normal or abnormal in the trans community is wrong, and for cis individuals who aren't in the medical community to attempt to define what being trans means is even worse.

So, while it's important to realize the struggle that people can go through if they experience dysphoria, don't assume that everyone experiences it, and, most of all, don't invalidate someone's identity because they don't experience it.

Sources: American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders: DSM-5. Washington, D.C: American Psychiatric Association.



NORMAL ABNORMAL



OBERLIN TRANS STORIES

About the Project:

Oberlin Trans Stories was created by Wren Leader (they/them/theirs) in the summer of 2015. It's a space for trans, nonbinary, and questioning Oberlin students and recent alums to share stories and offer support. The longterm goal is to format the entries into a zine, but for now, they can be found at:

<http://oberlintransstories.wordpress.com>

From Wren:

The inspirations for this project have been:

- people coming out to me as trans or questioning and asking for support/resources/information that I'm not equipped to give them as someone who's questioning myself,
- trans people telling me that it's really important to them to support others in the process of questioning/coming out, but that it's also a thing really burns them out, and,
- feeling isolated in my own process of questioning.

For me, questioning has involved trying to find a narrative that makes sense to me around my experience of gender. I still don't feel like I have much to work with. This is an attempt to create more narratives so we can find ourselves in each other's stories and help each other navigate this space.

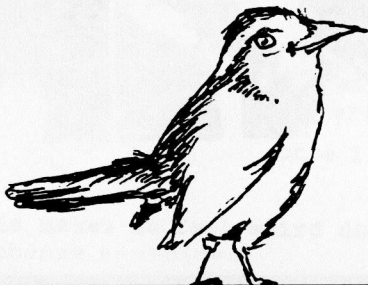
You can submit stories here (with or without a name attached) to:

<http://tinyurl.com/zmw7ep>

I'm also interested in having submissions that aren't text, so let me know if you want to design a cover or layout or submit an art piece or anything like that. You can email submissions to oberlintransstories@gmail.com, or get in touch with me personally at kleader@oberlin.edu. I'm also super open to collaboration and/or handing the project over to other people (it will only be relevant for two more years if it's just me.) If you think this project is a good idea, please tell a friend!

Thanks!

Wren



OBERLIN TRANS STORIES: #4

1) Please share as much as you'd like about your process of questioning and coming out.

i had my first conscious *oh shit maybe i'm not a cis person* moment right when i had my first politicized *oh shit maybe i'm not white* moment at school during my first year. i was walking around, and suddenly - suddenly - i hated the overall shorts i had in my drawers, any of my clothes that i associated with femininity. this was pretty random too, it was all clothes that had specific connotations of femininity for me - overallshorts were not okay, maxi skirt was whatever. i pushed my gender thoughts away, though, since it was the last month of school and oberlin, like any institution, insists that i prioritize finals over my super personal identity crises hahahahaa. i spent that summer in my mom's home country, where the gender norms are different, where i was also meditating about my mixed racial identity, and had an even more intense and acute awareness of "gender". but, who was i to claim to be not cis? i only experienced body dysphoria twice in my life... i liked to present femme... so then what even was gender? the ways that people treat me based on how they perceive me? and how i respond to that. i came back to fall semester second year offering she/her and they/them both as pronouns ((but was i even allowed to step into this sacred realm of folks who didn't identify with the gender binary? was i legit? i know all these resources tell me that i am the authority on my gender but what if i'm overstepping a boundary and co-opting an experience that i am not really a part of?)) <- those were my serious doubts. gradually though, with an affirming roommate, affirming friends, seeing other non-binary people who were like me... with a really warm affirmation of someone at the mrc that my experience is legit. being invited to be a part of non-binary discussion groups, to even facilitate a few of them. i became more and more comfortable in this label of non-binary. a month or two in i began exclusively introducing myself with they/them because non-affirming folks would default to she/her if i still offered it as an option and i really was non-binary!! can't you see? they/them was still an itchy sweater with a too-short torso but if it was a way to be seen as non-binary. pronouns suck anyway. fast-forward a semester and a half, it's the summer and i'm in my mom's (and, in a lot of ways, my) home country. i still turn into a sack of anxiety when i leave the house but what gives, y'know? i see an article posted on facebook - a list of things to do to figure out whether you are non-binary or not, that covered so much of the groundwork i had to awkwardly climb over with few directions a summer ago, often looping back on my old paths. one question - "imagine for a second that you have no expectations from friends or family. what would you do? what would your gender look like?" - and i knew i'd be wearing a red steampunk ballgown, bright

OBERLIN TRANS STORIES: #4 (CONT.)

red lipstick with long curled black and glossy hair, using "he/him/his." i think about it. there is so much more clarity, so much more weight off of my chest than the happy butterflies i got when i heard my friends use they/them for me. just like those few tumblr cool kidz who wore dresses and pastels and flowers and lipstick and used he/him. i am not masculine - i firmly believe patriarchal masculinity is an incredibly toxic and destructive thing and almost threw my can of soda at the boy who told me i must be part boy if i was non-binary - but he/him makes people actually stop and think because they won't immediately get it and that's what i need. and voila, i was leaving the house WITHOUT anxiety, with my high-waisted shorts and bright red lipstick and curves, repeating like a mantra in my head, "he/him/his, he/him/his." i am not a dude, in any way. this label lifted this little roof over my head where i had room to specify genderqueer // non-binary (which still didn't fit amazingly) to be agender femme.

i still have no idea how to sign emails to people who i haven't met before because an integral part of my pronouns is how they interact with my presentation. but that's okay. i'm just not done.

2) How has your experience been since coming to Oberlin? In what ways has it been welcoming? In what ways has it been harmful and alienating?

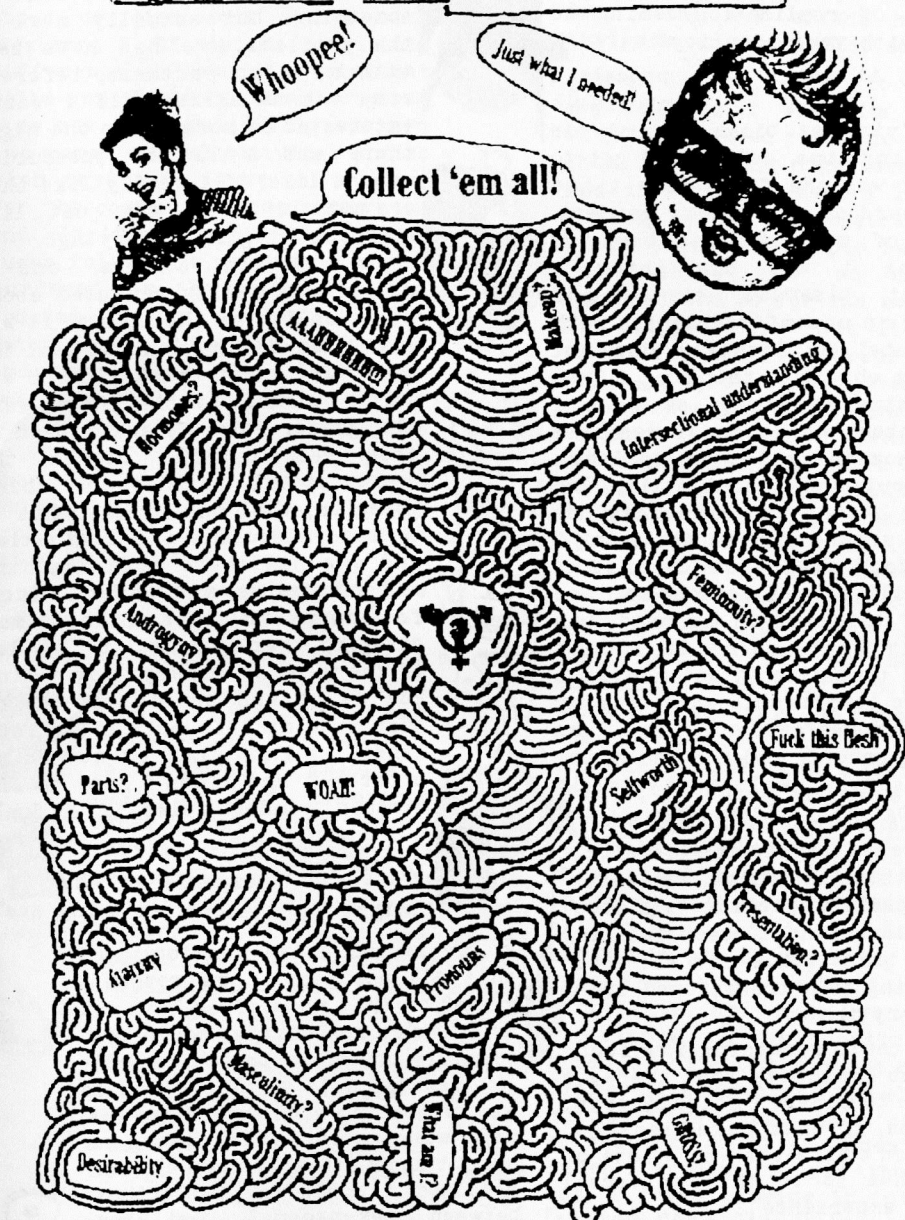
seeing other non-binary folks actually exist at oberlin was cool - i knew some about non-binariness from reading online before i came to school, but didn't know anyone who was out to me as non-binary. seeing so many different folks identify as non-binary also shattered this idea that non-binariness // genderqueerness was only for afab folks who binded and wore collared shirts, and that it could even exist for amab people (hey transmisogyny hey).

oberlin has not been harmful and alienating with regards to my gender for 95% of the time. but also, the non-binary discussion groups i went to were often dominated by white folks. which meant that we never really got to go in-depth with questions like, "how do your racial and/or cultural identities affect your gender identity?" and, i know that oberlin makes room for afab folks to question their gender, especially if they are more trans masculine, but much less room for amab folks to question and explore their gender. i haven't experienced that directly, given my identities, but i know that for some people that's been the case - probably based on hostility for people who previously identified as cis men exploring their femininity.

4) Are there any resources (books, zines, websites, etc) that have been particularly helpful to you in your questioning and/or coming out?

<http://everydayfeminism.com/2015/07/am-i-non-binary/>

I'M NOT A GIRL
Tired of all that heavy reading?
Relax!
It's time for the
Angsty Queer Fun Times Activity Section.
Featuring the Labyrinth of Dysphoric Despair!



[shout out to TME0 for this masterpiece]

INTERVIEWS KILEY
(THEY/THEM OR SHE/HER)

coming out to potential partners?
as any identity

o: how do you identify?

i: i identify as genderqueer/androgynous, i use he or they pronouns, i'm also pan-romantic and on the ace spectrum

o: to follow-up, what was your process of realization/coming to terms with your identity?

i: well it was a long process i guess? i was comfortable identifying as bisexual and cis for a long time, but when i got to berlin was the first time i had ever heard of non-binary genders.

lot of my life has been me thinking i was one thing - straight, bisexual, cis - and feeling an uncomfortableness with that label or identity but not knowing why, just thinking i was performing it wrong. so when i heard about nb gender i was like that's something i want to learn more about. and i think still a lot of the trans/nb community is focused around like medicalizing? and i don't really want hormones for a multitude of reasons so i was kind of thinking in my head "can i really be trans/nb if i don't want to transition"? but now i'm a lot more comfortable accepting my body/hormones/gender as an ongoing process and not something i necessarily need to physically or biologically alter

INTERVIEW

k: yeah lots haha. when i was w a male partner (all of my male partners have been cis men and so i think carry a lot of internalized messages about bi women or bi people), they would get really hooked on the idea that we had to like have a threesome or something. but actually most of the problems i've had have been with my afab partners, before i came out as asexual, if i wasn't interested in hooking up one night there was a lot of insecurity around like, if i really like them or not, or if i was just like straight girl trying to experiment in college. and i myself was really confused about my sexuality at the time so it was just a lot of "why don't we feel the same way" and i think since i was still passing as cis there were also gender roles attached, even in afab relationships there's the stereotypical butch/femme thing going on, that one partner has to be more masculine and dominating and one has to be more feminine and submissive. and while i didn't feel happy or right in the femme category that's where i fell a lot of the time. so anyways now coming out as nb and ace it's basically just made my life make a lot more sense ... i know that i'm not weird or broken and i don't have to fit certain gender roles if i don't want to

o: in your experience, what stigma is attached to being ace?

k: (tw sexual abuse mention) just that all ace people are robots i guess? or that none of us have sex? or if we're not virgins we've been sexually abused in the past. while sex repulsion is a totally valid way of dealing with sexual trauma, many aces are not abused? being ace doesn't automatically mean i'm sex-repulsed, i would say i fluctuate between sex-neutral and sex-positive. and esp in queer spaces, asexuality is often erased even in such a progressive sexual space

o: why do you think asexuality is erased in progressive queer spaces?

k: well i think for a lot of queer history, asexuality wasn't known about or discussed? and so the (Western) historical visible difference between cis straight folks and the LGBTQ community was same sex (i.e. exclusively cis men and women) sexual activity? and so when trying to carve out a space for the community that celebrated and glorified the difference that queer folks were marginalized and murdered for, the narrative often focused on how non heteronormative sex was different and better than like cis straight sex. and when ace people of any gender or romantic preference enter queer spaces i think there's the idea that if you're hetero romantic and cis but ace, you don't experience the same oppression as other queer / trans ppl.

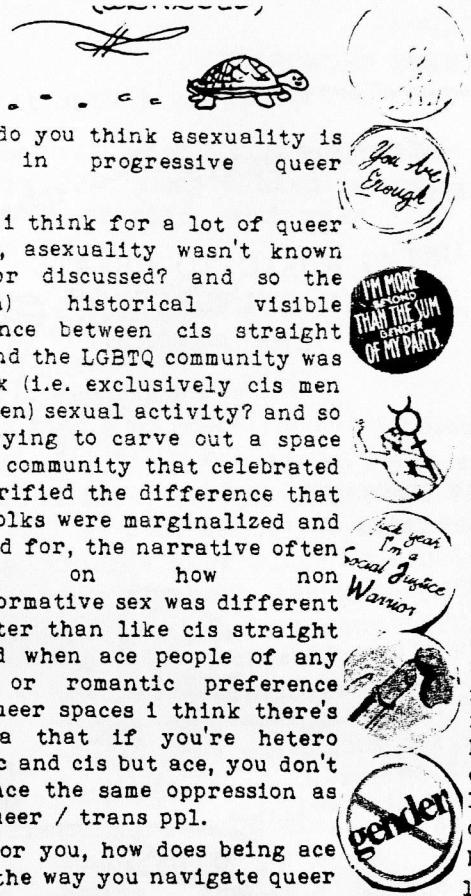
o: and for you, how does being ace inform the way you navigate queer spaces?

k: i think it's just made me more aware of how some part of the queer community are still perpetuating some shitty internalized messages about misogyny and transphobia and other sexual ideas. for the most part i'm still pretty quiet about asexuality, just cause i feel, idk, unwelcome? like if i was to begin talking about being ace people wouldn't be interested or think i'm derailing the convo, when really i'm just trying to promote awareness and stuff. and i went to this ace panel/discussion and also felt alienated there because everyone else was cis and hetero romantic, so sometimes when navigating either queer space (LGBTQ or ace spaces, since they don't often overlap) i often find myself happy and validated in one part of my identity but often compromising another if that makes sense.

o: i'm nodding vigorous! compromising part of you identity for the sake of validating another part is really difficult thing to deal with. god bless your friend though! community is so important i have one more question for you does being ace affect how you navigate consent, and if so, how?

k: yeah it does really, i wouldn't say it's easier when i'm dealing with a committed romantic partner than like, a one night stand, but it's different. i feel a lot more anxiety when i'm just straight up hooking up with people because i know there are no feelings attached and so for the most part i've stopped doing that (it's weird to be like hey i'm asexual but i'm still going to have this one-time sexual experience with you.) i just found that's not what i'm interested in. i think i started hooking up w people bc of just college hook up culture, and i felt like i needed to fit in and if i didn't hook up i was some weird prude who was like waiting for

love lol. but also i don't want to come across as preachy or moralizing to my potential partner. as far as committed romantic partnerships go, that's a fun one. i still haven't gotten the hang of it cause i just came out as ace the beginning of this semester, so i only have had that convo once. they asked me on a date and i panicked and was like what do i tell them, when do i tell them this? like how do you bring up the fact that sure, you'll have sex with them but haha you don't experience sexual attraction often, if at all? that's not normal dinner date convo, and it's also not normal like "let's talk consent before sex" convo you know? so i haven't really figured that one out. i tried working it into the "so you don't like being touched here, cool, i won't touch u there. btw i probably won't orgasm tonight lol here's why" but i still find it awkward and confusing.



You Are Enough

I'M MORE THAN THE SUM OF MY PARTS

Let's get a Social Justice Warrior

gender

GENDER revolution

AND ROG NY



11

HARKNESS SHOWSPACE

[courtesy of THEO]

Do you like:

**STRONG BEATS, FAST JAMS,
RAD TUNES,**

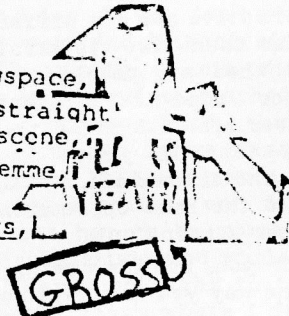
the idea of **USING MUSIC TO CREATE
AND SUSTAIN CULTURES OF
RESISTANCE?**



Tired of shows being ruled by gross
smarmy-ass drunk meatheaded white alt
bros takin' up all the space and
getting up in yr business?

Check out a Hark show!

Harkness is a safe(r), sub-free showspace,
we exist to destroy cis, male, straight
and white domination of the music scene
to prioritize space for POC, femme,
trans, queer, disabled and
low-income musicians and showgoers,
and to broadcast the myriad



of talent that comes out of marginalized communities.
If you wanna book a show,

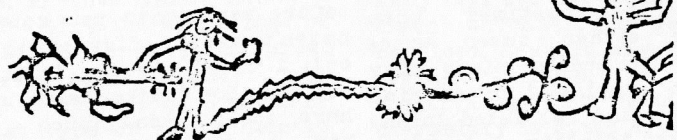


come to a meeting or ever have any
questions about anything, reach out:
Harknessshows@gmail.com
or check out

Harkness Showspace on Facebook

Let tear this junk down and build something better!

(we got BIG plans)



Check it out!! TransAtOberlin (Tis a G R E A T resource)

Alex Bernui '17 and Augie Blackman '17 created this website in
January 2014. They wanted to compile information about trans
issues at Oberlin, and make this information accessible to
future Obies.

New!
<http://transatoberlin.wordpress.com>

If you would like to add or
update information on the
trans at Oberlin website, or
are interested in being
involved, please email
transatoberlin@gmail.com.

The SIC!

"The Sexual Information Center (SIC) is located in Wilder
203. We sell at cost safer sex supplies and gender affirming
products, provide free rides to local sexual health
resources, do workshops, teach SexCo I and II, and provide
free and confidential peer counseling."

(<http://www.oberlin.edu/stuorg/sic/>)

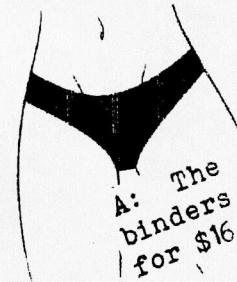
**Q: What other resources does
the SIC have for trans
people?**

A: The SIC holds trans
allyship workshops. There
are currently 5 non-cis
staffers, and there are
"non-cis hours" (non-cis
people are prioritized)
where two of those five
people are working. Free
rides are offered to people
who are seeking doctors &c;
while this is generally used
by people seeking services
at Planned Parenthood or
Preterm, trans people can
also use it for medical
services.



**Q: What sorts of supplies
does the SIC offer for trans
people?**

A: The SIC offers G02B
binders for \$33, and gaffs
for \$16.



Some hotlines:

<http://www.wikihow.com>

Trans Lifeline: (877) 565-8860

"Trans Lifeline is a 501(c)3 non-profit dedicated to the well-being of transgender
people. We run a hotline staffed by transgender people for transgender people."

Trevor Lifeline: 1-866-488-7386

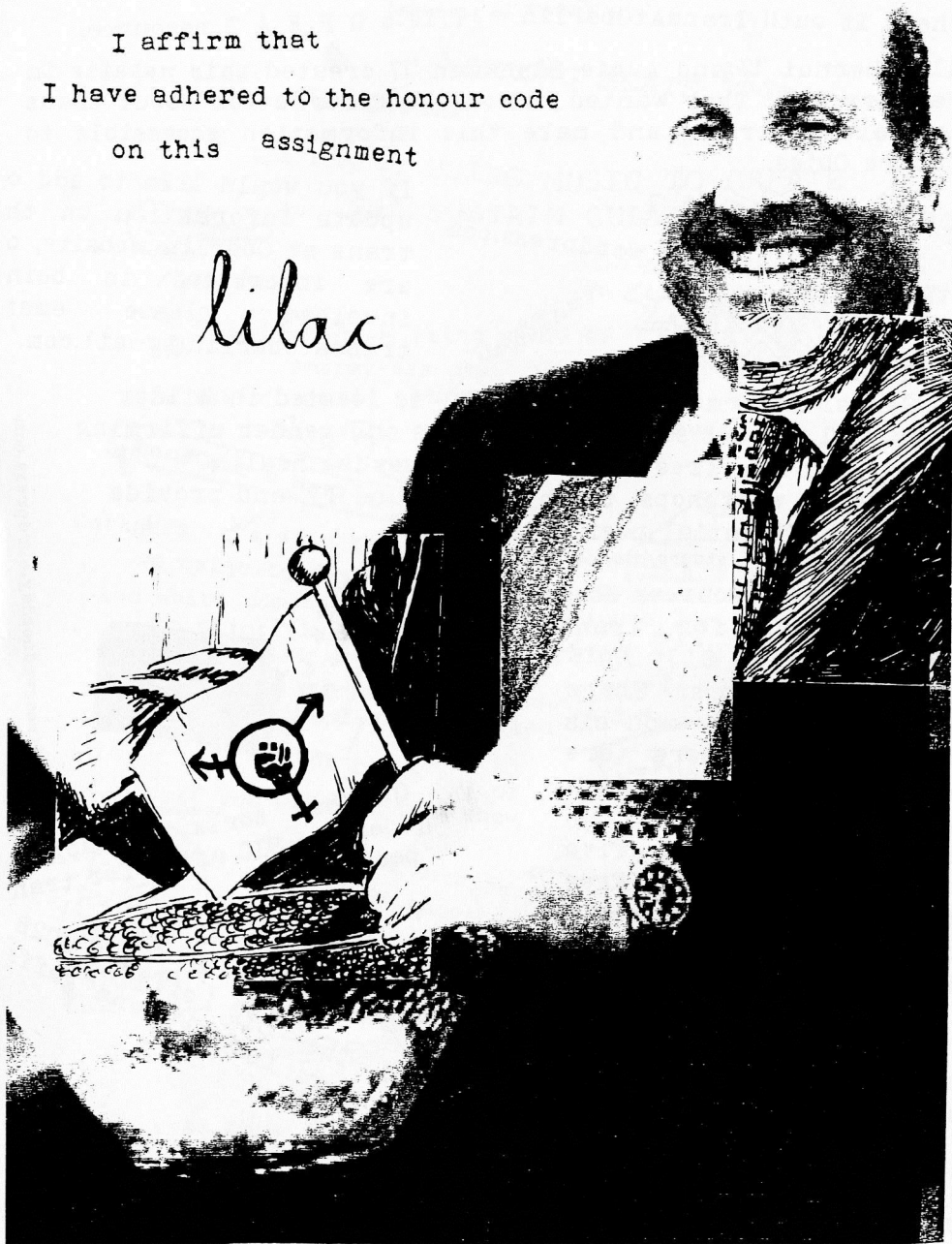
"A national 24-hour, toll free confidential suicide hotline for gay and questioning
youth."

GLBT Hotline: 1-888-843-4564

"The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) National Hotline provides
telephone, online private one-to-one chat and email peer-support, as well as
factual information and local resources for cities and towns across the United
States." (Note: not a 24-hour hotline)

I affirm that
I have adhered to the honour code
on this assignment

libac



Questions? Comments? Concerns?
Send them anonymously to:
<http://goo.gl/forms/1Ek743iWsi>