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We Need To Talk

A global, student-run newspaper

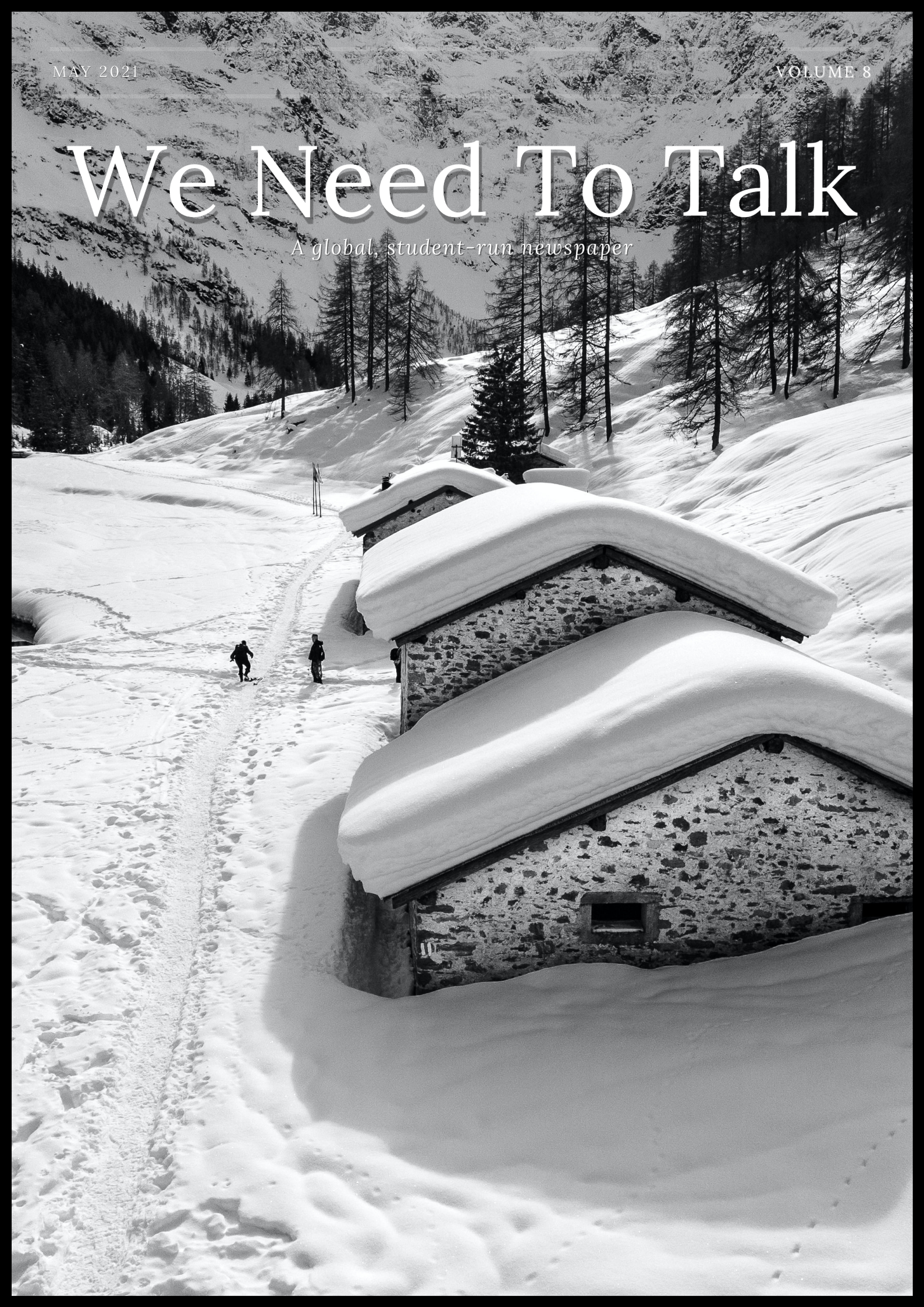




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Current Events

edited by Barsha Parajuli

2021 Sees Sweeping Number of Anti-trans Bills Across US States

by Ketevan Gallagher

This year, President Biden signed an executive order repealing the ban of transgender people in the military, and Democrats, who have generally expressed more support for the LGBTQ+ community, control the White House, the House of Representatives, and the Senate. Regardless, 2021 has seen the highest amounts of anti-transgender legislation filed in US history.

This year, over 30 states have introduced one or more bills that aim to cut back the rights of transgender people, especially trans youth. With over 85 bills introduced, these bills attack the rights of transgender people in many different ways, from allowing healthcare and insurance companies to discriminate against trans patients or forcing state employees, such as teachers, to out trans youth to their parents. However, over half of these bills would prohibit trans kids from participating in school or youth sports.

HB 1570, otherwise known as Arkansas' Save Adolescents From Experimentation (SAFE)

Act, passed on April 6th, and will come into effect in July 2021 if it is not contested in court.

The law would prohibit Arkansas doctors from treating transgender patients under 18 with any kind of gender-affirming care, which includes HRT, sex reassignment surgery, and puberty blockers. HRT, known as Hormone Replacement therapy, is usually testosterone or estrogen, and they cause permanent changes unlike puberty blockers, which pause puberty for trans teens. The law also prohibits trans youth that are already taking puberty blockers or HRT from being prescribed more.

Young trans kids need supportive environments: a 2020 survey conducted by the Trevor Project found that out of the transgender and nonbinary kids surveyed that had attempted suicide in the past year, 26% percent did not have access to binders, shapewear, and other gender-affirming clothing, compared to the 14% who did. Even

with Arkansas being the first state to introduce a bill like this, the law creates precedent for future scenarios. This law uses trans youth as a political pawn for Republicans to further their anti-lgbtq+ agenda, and puts doctors in a position where they have to decide between providing potentially life-saving treatment or keeping their medical degree.



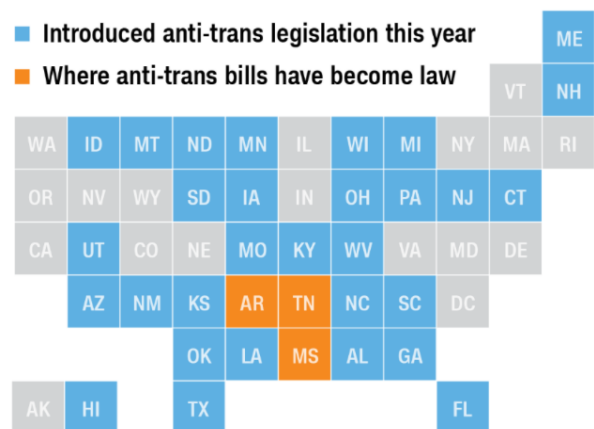
Source: ABC news

Another law which similarly and dangerously disregards the wellbeing of trans youth is HB 391, a bill recently signed into law by Alabama’s governor, Kay Ivey. The law bans transgender girls from participating on the school sports team that matches their gender. There has been no scientific evidence that trans women have an unfair advantage in sports, nor have there been reports of trans women dominating in sports. Even more, studies have found no consistent link between testosterone and higher athletic performance. All this law does is alienate trans kids from their peers - and trans kids already face higher amounts of bullying in schools.

In the Tennessee house on April 19th HB 1233 (SB 1367) was passed, and it is another example of blatant transphobia. The bill would force transgender students to use the bathroom that does not align with their gender identity, and schools could face legal

consequences if a student believes that they shared a locker room or bathroom with a trans student.

All of these bills are simply attempts to validate transphobes and further stigmatise trans identities. Fortunately, there are ways that you can help. The ACLU has a list of legislation that affects lgbtq+ rights across the country and even if you don’t live in a state where one of these bills could become a law, I encourage you to call or email governors or state legislators. Check out the Call to Action section for this link, along with the link to a site that has scripts for contacting legislators, and instructions on how to contact legislators in states where some of the most transphobic bills have been introduced.



Source: CNN. Data is current as of April 9th

Second COVID Wave in India

by Tara Vidyababu

The second wave of COVID-19 has caused tremendous damage in India. In June of 2020, India had reported 10,000 COVID-19 cases and began adding around 35,000 more cases every day after that. Then, in February 2021, cases in India were rising by 22,000 daily. However, this only worsened after the second COVID-19 wave intensified causing nearly a daily average of 89,000 cases daily.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "India is reporting [the] highest number of daily cases in the world, almost 50% of new cases reported in the world." Specifically, "the Indian state Maharashtra is still leading the tally with over four million cases, followed by Kerala, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu which each have over one million cases."

A virologist, one who "oversees the diagnosis, management and prevention of infection," by the name of Shahid Jameel says, "double mutation in key areas of the virus's spike protein may make the virus more infectious

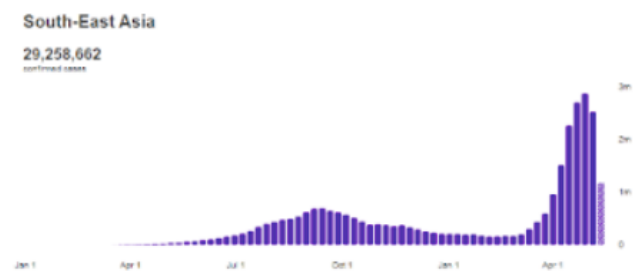


and allow it to escape the immune system." Meaning, because of a certain mutation in the COVID-19 virus, the infection is able to

be more easily spread. Therefore, Dr Jameel believes that a double mutation, or a new strain of COVID-19 could be the reason for the recent surge of cases in India.

Additionally, because India had not begun investigating mutations in the COVID-19 strain sooner, less information was known on the virus in India. Genome sequencing is essential in a pandemic as it allows scientists to monitor changes in the virus.

"If you can catch a more infectious variant early on in a region, you can quickly put in public health measures to stop it from spreading wider in the community," he explains.



Source: <https://covid19.who.int/>

However, by the time in February when India began to utilize "a group of labs to speed up [genome] sequencing" The second wave had already begun to emerge. Thus, making genome sequencing, testing for mutations, a difficult task.

Over two weeks ago, multiple mutations of COVID-19 were found in India. "Genomic data indicated that B.1.1.7, first identified in the United Kingdom, was dominant in Delhi and the state of Punjab, and a new variant dubbed B.1.618 was present in West Bengal. B.1.617 was dominant in Maharashtra."

WHO reports that India holds the fourth highest number of deaths in the world. Dr. Osman Dar from the Global Health Programme believes, “What may well work in India’s situation is targeted measures around specific social behaviours and risks – for example night-time curfews and limiting alcohol sales to reduce social interactions and consumption in public or social settings indoors, such as nightclubs or bars.” These are restrictions India can implement in order to strive for lesser deaths from COVID-19.



WHO’s Global Update mentions, “On World Immunization Week, WHO, UNICEF & GAVI highlights the urgent need for a renewed global commitment to improve vaccination access and uptake. The immunization services have started to recover from disruptions caused by COVID-19, millions of children remain vulnerable to deadly diseases.” Moreover, Henrietta Fore, the UNICEF Executive Director states, “Even before the pandemic, there were worrying signs that we were beginning to lose ground in the fight against preventable child illness, with 20 million children already missing out on critical vaccinations. The pandemic has made a bad situation worse, causing millions more children to go unimmunized. Now that vaccines are at the forefront of everyone’s minds, we must sustain this energy to help every child catch up on their measles, polio and other vaccines. We have no time to waste. Lost ground means lost lives.”

Amazon Union Vote Appealed

by Deetya Adhikari



Demand for online delivery has increased as quarantine suddenly struck society, and popular online retailer Amazon is no stranger to that fact. According to an employee tally at one delivery center, Amazon has been processing from 10% to 40% more packages than normal for this time of year. The company's website had 639,330,722 visits for the week of March 9, according to data from Comscore, up 32% from the year earlier. This has put employees and workers there under immense strain as they try to process orders as quickly as possible.

Even before the pandemic, accounts of Amazon's horrible treatment of its employees were often leaked. People said that the company treated them as if they were robots instead of humans; not allowing more than 18

minutes per day for essentials such as bathroom breaks, in their 12+ hour shifts. Now that demand has risen exponentially, the fervent exploitation of employees has only been exacerbated. At this point, workers have had enough of the appalling treatment they receive from Amazon and in early April, some employees tried forming a worker union in an attempt to alleviate the torment and exploitation they face at work. April 9, Bessemer, Alabama: Amazon shut down the labor union efforts by obtaining a majority of the 3,215 total ballots cast by employees. They intimidated and coerced their employees into voting against the labor union by assailing them with anti-union threats, such as threatening pay-cuts for those who vote for the union. Under-handed tactics such as these are what large companies have been using as a means to

silence the voices of their workers for decades.

A few weeks later, in early May, the Amazon union vote has been appealed by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU), as they litigate the outcome of the election. According to a statement issued from the RWDSU, Amazon “prevented a free and uncoerced exercise of choice by the employees” through its retaliations and unrelenting tactics used against union advocates. Currently, the outcome of the appeal is not certain, but whether the RWDSU is successful in its endeavor or not, the ongoing situation with the Amazon union vote will help to elucidate the matter of injustice in the workplace regarding freedom.

Now that light has been shone on this issue through recent events, a new act has been passed through the House of Representatives: the Protecting the Right to Organize Act (PRO Act), which intends to do as it says: protect the right of laborers to start labor unions. It is anticipated to tackle the growing inequality and injustice that laborers have faced since the first industrial revolution by addressing shortcomings in current US laws concerning labor unions. As shown time and time again, companies are willing to mistreat and exploit employees on a large scale to profit off of them and make copious amounts of money. Corporations have suppressed the voices of employees for far too long, and it is now time for laborers to rise up and stand for their rights.

Opinion

edited by Vishakha Singh,
Sanjana Mittal

What the LGBTQ+ is in Indian Schools by Maitreyee Malla

With the availability of media giving us insights from and about people across the globe, awareness about LGBTQ+ is getting better every day, but are our institutions doing anything to aid the children that are coming out every day? Are institutions even doing anything to at least try and understand and educate children about gender and sexuality?

I am from India and unfortunately, schools here are far from educating kids, let alone protecting them. Ever since my childhood, I have only seen representations of cis/het couples in textbooks and educational videos. Indian society, in general, is anti-relationship as they value family honour and do not trust people's choices in their romantic partners. Same sex relationships are given little to no importance and are seen as a rather foreign concept. They are considered to be against Indian values and customs.

Most of the teachers and the administrators have no knowledge of who the LGBTQ+ are in the first place, so, these ideas aren't paid

heed to at all. In turn, children find it hard to fit in as they don't even realise who they are, as society portrays them as misfits. The people of the LGBTQ+ community who face a lot the repercussions of a cis/het normative society (in India) are the intersex/transgender people. Intersex people are often disowned at birth and transgender people are shunned to the streets most of the time. Even with acceptance there, many institutions marginalize the students.



A lot of people trans/intersex people are still very mistreated and sometimes even trans/intersex communities disregard those who live a comparatively normal life and

don't abide to the rules of their community. The use of slurs and name calling is very common against them and people who don't fit the norms of a cis/het society.

Other sections of the LGBTQ+ aren't even considered or heard of, like asexuality and non-binary identification. Most schools only set rules that favor the male-female gender norm, any other gender/sexuality identification is brushed aside and labeled as a mental disorder or as completely nonexistent.

But even with mainstream media being highly misinformative and anti-LGBTQ, politicians are slowly trying to learn and speak up about the LGBTQ+ and what it means for society. Recently, a High Court Judge of Tamil Nadu actually set an appointment with a psychologist to try and understand same-sex relationships as he felt that he was misinformed of the subject.

Schools should make education about the LGBTQ+ and such topics vital so as to help children know who they are, make them feel safe and accepted, to help cis/het students empathize better, to decrease homophobic bullying and the use of slurs. Protection and ally programs should be encouraged and children should be given more liberty of expressing themselves. We as students are always taught that same-sex relationships are unnatural, and that we have to fit into society's gender norms, but with the world at our fingertips and social media being a platform for everyone to showcase themselves freely, we are questioning things more.

More children and adults alike are getting better at understanding themselves better and are becoming more confident about their

gender identities and people are becoming better at understanding and accepting those who are coming out around them.



Being White Passing in America

by Andrew Daly

Imagine looking at the current events as though you are looking through a glass dome. Imagine trying to speak and everyone looks at you as if you are talking in someone else's voice. To simultaneously speak for both sides and yet be voiceless; this is what it feels like to be a white-passing Black person.

I'm Andrew Daly, and without knowing my ancestry, one would assume I am a white kid with a darker complexion. Think "tanned Italian". I don't blame people for assuming the way they do; my name is white as can be, and my hometown even whiter. Around 75% of the time, my race is something I don't even consider. It is a privilege granted by my pseudo-whiteness.

It's the other 25% of the time where the stinging numbness of reality hits me. It makes me grit my teeth and lower my gaze. It hits me in those times when classmates who claim to be "woke" question if I am lying about being Black; those times when classmates I know aren't "woke" forget that I'm Black and make a racist joke when I'm in the room. Even the small things, like when I have to check a box for my ethnicity in an online survey and am forced to choose whether I am Black or white, sting as hard as anything.

I'm not here to complain about my life. It's just strange to live with two cultural backgrounds because you feel like you don't really belong to either one. People carry their own perceptions of what a black man looks like, what a white man looks like, and what a mixed man looks like. I look like none of them, so I am treated as none of them.



Source: The Beachcomber

There's also this funny idea that mixed-race identity is a fairly new concept. In truth, African-Americans have up to 24 percent European ancestry on average. There was so much generational intermixing that by slavery's end in 1861, there were descendants of slaves who looked 100% European. So there really isn't any reason why race should be looked at as something to divide us. What we have to come to realize as a society is that race is a spectrum. We really are one people with more in common than we realize. When we group people by color or ancestry, we are damaging people who identify with more than one group and people who identify with no group at all. I won't promote colorblindness; everyone should be aware of each other's differences and embrace them. A few years back there

was a childish middle school joke where people would say “Don’t assume my gender!”; I’d like to encourage people not to assume race. When we walk around with a preconceived notion of any part of a person’s identity, we are unknowingly allowing ourselves to fall into the trap of prejudice. When we judge a book by it’s cover, we make assumptions which can harm already disenfranchised groups. Race may be a social construct, but it is still part of a person’s identity. The problem begins when someone is looked at as their skin color rather than being looked at as an individual person. Understanding our differences and avoiding harmful assumptions can make our society a more welcoming place. I believe I speak for all mixed-race individuals when I say that we want the opportunity to define ourselves. Putting us in a position where we have to choose between parts of our identity is something that isn’t fair to us or to our society as a whole.

History

edited by Bruktawit Fisseha

The murder of Marielle Franco

by Marina Soares Moreira

Marielle Franco (Marielle Francisco da Silva) was a sociologist and politician who defended feminism, human rights and criticized federal intervention and the military police. She was born in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) on July 27, 1979. She joined the community pre-university entrance exam and graduated in sociology at PUC (Pontifical Catholic University) and received a master's degree in public administration from UFF (Federal Fluminense University).

The activist was a councilor in PSOL (Partido Socialismo e Liberdade), elected in 2017 and provided services in civil organizations such as CEASM (Center for Solidarity Actions of Maré) and the Brazil Foundation; She was also coordinator of the Commission for the Defense of Human Rights and Citizenship at ALERJ (Legislative Assembly of Rio de Janeiro). She was viewed internationally by NGOs (International Amnesty, for example), by draft laws and topics in favor of the rights of the LGBTQ + community, people from the favela (shanty towns) and black people.

March 14, 2018 was the day of her murder. She left her daughter, Luyara Santos, her wife, Mônica Benício, her mother, Marinete da Silva and her sister, Anielle Franco. She was returning from a lecture on feminism, awareness of black culture and representation at Estácio (neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro). The driver of her car, Anderson Pedro Gomes, also died.



Marielle Franco's last pronouncement before being executed in Rio de Janeiro: "I will not be interrupted! I do not endure interruption by the councilors of this house! I will not take it from a citizen who comes here and does not know how to listen to the position of an elected woman!"

If she were alive now, she would be the only black woman among 51 councilors in Rio de Janeiro. "How many more are going to need to die for this war to end?" Marielle Franco published on Twitter, on March 13, 2018, the day before she was murdered, about Matheus Melo (a young man killed by the military police while leaving the church).

Political allies (such as Marcelo Freixo of PSOL) and journalists continue to charge and pressure investigators for answers. The British newspaper "The Guardian" praised Marielle's visibility and relevance as a spokesperson for the underprivileged population. "Le Monde", a French newspaper, highlights Marielle's walk against police brutality, racism and homophobia. The Arab network "Al Jazeera" asks "quem matou Marielle?" (who killed Marielle?) and "quem mandou matar Marielle?"

(who had Marielle killed?) they are, then, national marks in justice for black people, mainly women. "The New York Times" called the crime a 'blatant political murder'.

Marielle was extremely critical of police brutality against minorities (black people, people from the favela (shanty towns) and LGBTQ +). Today, she has an institute (Instituto Marielle Franco), founded by the family, to keep her memorable history among us. "When a fighting woman dies, we all die a little with her"; "Cycle of a racist society: the more a young black and poor man is killed for existing, the more a black and poor mother suffers from loneliness"; "Resistance roses are born on the asphalt. We receive roses, but we will be with a clenched fist talking about our existence against the mandates and misdemeanors that affect our lives". Marielle is the hero that opened doors for other black women from shanty towns to express themselves, she ran so they could walk, Marielle present, today and always!



The History of John Lewis

by Afomia Ashebir Mekonnen



Early on, John was set on making change, on being an avid voice in the undying outcry of African Americans against segregation, and gained experience in public speaking by preaching in local churches.

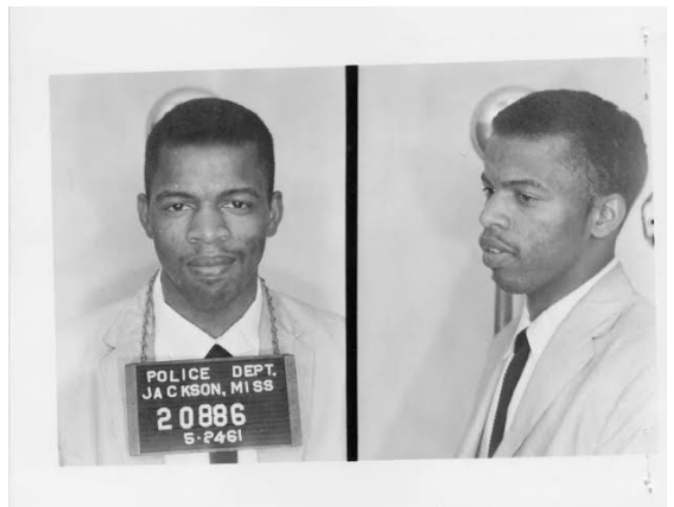
In 1957, John left Alabama to attend the American Baptist theological seminary in Nashville and later enrolled in Frisk University. There, he got his first taste of action, where he organized sit-ins and demonstrations for the Nashville Student Movement that fought against the segregation of lunch counters.

At these very sit ins is where John would experience his first arrest.

“If not us, then who, if not now, then when”
-Congressman John Robert Lewis.

John Lewis was a man, who like many others, was inspired by the words of Martin Luther King, oftentimes listening to his words as they broadcasted on a radio gospel program led by King himself. He was stirred by King’s passionate words, his ability to speak on racial injustice and his continuous efforts in fighting against it through peaceful protest. This and the Montgomery Bus Boycott lit a fire in Lewis that would continue to burn and set alight events that would change the history of civil rights movements and African Americans as the world knew it.

Born February 14, 1940 near Troy, Alabama to parents Willie Mae and Eddie Lewis, who were sharecroppers, John Robert Lewis grew up with 9 brothers and sisters.



Days after their non-violent sit-ins, the participants were arrested for misconduct. They refused to pay the fine ,and instead chose to serve their sentence in the county workhouse. Lewis’ and many others' actions gathered media attention and made way for Nashville to be the first major Southern state to desegregate public facilities.

From then John became a member of the Freedom Riders in 1961. Freedom Riders were

a group of civil rights activists organized by the Congress of Racial Inequality who participated in bus trips in the American South protesting against segregated bus terminals and “white-only” restrooms after the Supreme Court declared that all segregation in interstate bus depots and busses illegal. The Freedom Riders were one of the most influential civil rights activist groups and gathered much attention from the police, oftentimes being involved in arrests and beatings, despite their protests being peaceful, and Lewis was caught in the middle on multiple occasions.

Following his involvement in the Freedom Riders, in 1963, John was voted the chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a radical new voice aimed at giving the youth a chance to involve and make change in the civil rights movements, moving them up the ranks and allowing them to take part in leadership roles.

He soon became one of the “Big Six” leaders of the civil rights movement, alongside Martin Luther King, James Farmer, A. Philip Randolph, Roy Wilkins and Whitney Young, and organized one of the most historical marches, the March on Washington, a peaceful protest, gathering around 250,000 people, where Martin Luther King gave his iconic “I Have A Dream” speech.

The March focused on the civil and economic rights, joblessness and the voting rights, or the lack thereof, of African Americans.

Although King was the headliner, Lewis, only 23 at the time, spoke at the scene as well ,saying “As it stands now, the voting section of this bill will not help the thousands of black people who want to vote. It will not

help the citizens of Mississippi, of Alabama and Georgia, who are qualified to vote, but lack a sixth-grade education. “One man, one vote” is the African cry. It is ours too. It must be ours!” finishing with a riveting “We must say Wake up America! Wake up! For we cannot stop, and we will not and cannot be patient.”

After the march on Washington the Civil Rights Act became law but it didn’t open many doors for African Americans to vote in the South. In light of this the SNCC led a voting registration campaign in Selma, Alabama, who had a history in resisting the rights of black voters. After receiving unflinching resistance from law enforcement, Martin Luther King Jr and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) decided to make the resistance of Selma to black voting rights a national concern.

During one of their demonstrations, on February 18, a protester by the name of Jimmy Lee Jackson was shot and killed by a state trooper, this would lead to a protest march from Selma to Montgomery which would come to be known as Bloody Sunday, an event that John Lewis said to have altered the path of his life forever.

On Sunday, March 7, six hundred protesters assembled in Selma, led by John Lewis, crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge over Alabama river on the way to Montgomery. On the way across, their path was blocked by state troopers and marchers were told to disperse and make their way back and when they refused, were faced by a full-on advance.

Marchers were teargassed, ran over by horses, spat on and were attacked by billy clubs and bullwhips. More than 50 marchers

were hospitalized and Lewis was beaten so severely that he suffered a fractured skull.

This brutal and blatant attack was recorded and televised on ABC news and racked up nearly 50 million views. The events being broadcasted and actions of the state troopers were compared to that of Nazi storm troopers pressing on the direness and inescapable turn of events being witnessed.

The events in Selma caused outrage across the country. Actions were taken. Sit-ins, blockades and demonstrations were organized. But change came, late as it was, on August 6, 1965 the Voting Rights Act was passed by President Johnson.

Lewis did not stop there, even after leaving the SNCC in 1966, he continued being an active contributor to the civil rights movement. He joined and became associate director of the Field Foundation and continued to do one of his greatest works as the third executive director of the Voters Education Project (VEP).

During his time in VEP Lewis not only focused on the liberation and aiding in financial support of African Americans but also to the less fortunate and minorities in the country. He was known for transforming the VEP to an activist organization contributing largely to its growth and success.

In 1967, Lewis met Lillian Miles Lewis, a librarian at Atlanta University, who would later become his wife, at a New Year's Eve party. They married in 1968 and in his autobiography "Walking with The Wind" Lewis talks about the impact his wife had and her guidance in his involvement in politics. They adopted one son, John-Miles Lewis.

John Lewis stayed on with the VEP until 1977 where he resigned to run for U.S congress. During his first campaign, Lewis was not successful, but went on to win a place on the Atlanta City Council in 1981, four years later. In the following years Lewis continued to give back to the community but was oddly quiet and uneventful during his stay in the council.

In 1986, he ran for congress again, this time winning 52 to 48 percent against State Senator Julian Bond for Georgia's 5th congressional district. He was the second African American congressman to represent the state of Georgia after the reconstruction.

A pillar in the civil rights movement, Lewis remained in congress from 1987 until his passing on June 17, 2020 after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2019. During his time, Lewis remained an unsilenced and unformidable force, referred to as the "Conscience of the United States Congress", by former President of The United States, Barack Obama during a ceremony where Lewis was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2011. His work mainly focused on voting rights and the spread of availability and more access to polls to the public, mainly the POC community.

John Robert Lewis was a courageous and intrepid man, the last survivor of the Big Six, and without his work on the civil rights movement, America would not be the country it is today. He risked his life, with no regard for his well being, on multiple occasions, being arrested a staggering 45 times in the name of the desegregation and rights of his people. He lived on the front lines of the civil rights movements, refusing to give up his value's and continuing as a non-violent protest despite his multiple

physical altercations with police force.

After his passing Lewis was buried next to his wife, Lillian Miles Lewis, who passed away on December 31, 2012, at Southview Cemetery.

Fondly called “The boy from Troy” by Martin Luther King Jr, Lewis grew from a preacher at local churches to having met his heroes, to having been the hero of thousands of African Americans today and he will be fondly remembered for years to come as, not only an activist, but as a leader and as an inspiration that would light, in others, the same flames that kindled within him till the day he passed.

“[Lewis] loved this country so much that he risked his life and his blood so that it might live up to its promise” -Barack Obama

“He bled to ‘make America great’” -Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed.



A History of Martin Luther King Jr.

by Paleesa Kapoor



Martin Luther King Jr. was born on January, 15 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia, United States. He was initially known as Micheal King Jr. and was the second child of Michael King Sr. and Alberta Williams King. King had an older sister named Willie Christine and a younger brother, Alfred Daniel Williams King, which made him the middle-child. King was from a middle-class family. He grew up in Atlanta, Georgia. His family resided on Auburn Avenue which was recognized as the “Black Wall Street”, which included America’s largest and most successful black businesses and black churches years prior to the civil rights movement. Although King was fortunate to live in a secure and loving area and have parents who desperately tried to protect him from racism, he often still encountered situations experiencing prejudices. When Martin was a child, his

white peers refused to play with him because they were now attending segregated schools.

Martin Luther King Jr. began attending public school when he was five. He attended his high school years at Booker T. Washington and was considered academically advanced. King skipped grades nine and eleven and astonishingly attended Morehouse College at fifteen.

Before commencing college, he spent the summer in Connecticut. This was the first time he was away from his parents and experienced racial relations away from the segregated south. He was astonished how the races in the north were mixed. He noted how blacks and whites were able to go to the same church and were able to eat anywhere. The experience invoked King’s first emotions

towards segregation.

In college, King gained a sociology degree in 1948. King was an excellent student in all his classes. He earned a scholarship at graduate school. When King was 25, he had already completed and earned his Ph.D. and his degree. Initially, King was interested in law or medicine, but his choice changed in his senior year as he wanted to enter the ministry.

King's family was deeply religious as they were actively involved in church and worship. However, he was uncomfortable and hesitant in conveying deep emotions towards religion. This discomfort was persistent throughout his adolescence contributing to his initial decision of not entering the ministry. He rebelled against his father's faith and wishes by drinking and playing pool while he was in college. Additionally, he became associated with a white woman. In King's junior year in college, he took a Bible class which assisted him to regain his faith and allowed him to realize that he could have a career in the ministry. During his final year in college, he became influenced by his college President Benjamin E. Mays who changed King's spiritual beliefs. Mays encouraged King to become an advocate for racial injustice. King became pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church of Montgomery, Alabama in 1954. King was always interested in civil rights, but his passion truly became intense when he understood and believed his Protestant faith. He became president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1957, and his Christian faith helped him to create the ideals for this organization.

Martin Luther King Jr. had suffered the humility of unequal civil rights. King was

exposed to the inequalities of race due to institutional segregation. He fought against racism, not because he directly victimized, but because he genuinely detested it and considered it to offend God's will. As a child, he was bewildered why others were not practicing the golden rule, "treating everyone equal and with respect." Throughout the years, King experienced situations with inequity associated with public use facilities, transportation, and voting. He was determined to make a change in a rational manner without engaging in violence. He embraced Mahatma Gandhi's principle that change can be made with a peaceful revolution.

Martin Luther King Jr. had also assisted Rosa Parks, who was an individual that refused to give up her seat for a white. Parks was arrested and was fined as she had violated the Montgomery city code. The night she was arrested, the local head of the National Association, E.D. Nixon discussed the situation with King and other advocates and decided to initiate the Montgomery Bus Boycott. He led this as it was thought he held a strong credibility in the black community. The Boycott lasted for 381 days which included walking to work, harassment, violence, intimidation. However, King's and Nixon's homes were attacked in regards to this.

Martin Luther King Jr. was a Baptist minister and a civil-right activist. He had a large impact on race relations in the United States. In January 1957, King and numerous other civil activists found the Southern Christian. This was an organization that would promote civil rights reform in a non-violent matter. It was the best place for African Americans to enhance their voice. Throughout his career, his activism and inspirational speeches

played a vital role in eradicating the African-American Segregation in America.

Additionally, he was important to creating the Civil Rights Acts in 1964 and Voting Rights Act 1965. In 1964, Martin won the Nobel Peace Prize. Along with several others, Martin Luther King Jr.

In 1959, King visited Mahatma Gandhi's birthplace in India. This trip allowed him to increase his commitment for civil rights. Martin Luther King Jr. became associated with Bayard Rustin, an African American civil rights activist who studied Gandhi's norms. Rustin became King's mentor and assisted him in activism.

In spring of 1963, King arranged a demonstration in Birmingham, Alabama. The city police showed up and attacked the demonstrators with their dogs and fire hoses. King and various other supporters were arrested. Shortly after, he was arrested he received a letter from a local Jewish and Christian religious leader that criticized him. As King was isolated in his prison cell, he wrote his response letter. In his famous letter, Letter from Birmingham Jail, he stated he explained his non-violent protest theory. A major quote from the letter; "Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community, which has constantly refused to negotiate, is forced to confront the issue." This entire event drew attention from all over the world.

On August 28, 1963 King delivered his famous "I Have A Dream" speech. He emphasized his belief on civil rights. This caused a rising concern and produced an increased opinion on racism. There were individuals in communities which had not experienced racial tensions who disagreed

with his opinion.

"I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." – Martin Luther King, Jr. "I Have A Dream" speech, August 28, 1963

On March 7, 1965, a civil right march took place. As the demonstrators tried to pass Edmund Pettus Bridge, the police created a violent scene as they attacked with nightsticks and tear gas. King was not involved in this incident, but the attack was shown on television. This horrifying day concluded with severely injured individuals and seventeen in the hospital. This is known as "Bloody Sunday." The second march could not take place due to a restraining order. However, there was a third march and King took part in it. On March 9, 1965, approximately 1,500 marchers both white and black confronted barricades and state troopers. This time they took a different approach, King encouraged the supporters to kneel and then turn around. Alabama governor George Wallace tried to prevent future marches, but President Lyndon B. Johnson supported King. The U.S army and the Alabama Guard were ordered to protect the protesters. Soon the President agreed to sign the Voting Rights Act.

King also tried to speak out to assist in the Vietnam War in 1955. He made a link between discrimination and He believed that American had little involvement with the situation was absurd and it was discriminatory to the poor. King broadened his number of supporters by speaking out about this issue.

From late 1965 to 1967, Martin Luther King Jr. continued with his civil rights act. He spread awareness in several American cities and received criticism and public challenges. By 1968, King had grown tired of his actions and started to become discouraged at the slow progress of civil rights and increasing criticism. On April 3, he gave his final speech, where he expressed that although he wasn't able to create a dramatic change in civil rights, eventually they would reach the "promised land." The next day, April 3, 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. was killed by a sniper's bullet. The assassination provoked riots and demonstrations in over 100 cities. In 1969, the shooter, James Earl Ray pleaded guilty and was sent to jail for a lifetime.

Martin Luther King Jr. had a major impact on race relations in American. Still, he is the most widely known African American leader of this time. His actions have been honored with a national day, institutions named after him, a memorial located in Independence Mall in Washington, D.C. He is known as a leader who was deeply involved in achieving social justice in a non-violent matter.

Spotlight

edited by Rachel Lewis

Generation Ratify

by Abey Bekalu



Generation Ratify (stylized as GenERAtion ratify) is a youth-led movement founded in July of 2019 by a group of teenage girls in Virginia who aimed to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment and advance gender equality in the United States of America. According to the official website, the leaders of the movement say that their mission is “to build a coalition of young people across the country leading an intersectional feminist revolution that empowers and advocates for the full equality of young women, non-conforming, non-binary, femme, and Queer folk.” But what is the Equal Rights Amendment? And why does it need to be ratified?

The Equal Rights Amendment, or ERA, is a proposed amendment to the United States Constitution designed to guarantee equal rights for all American citizens regardless of gender. It seeks to end the legal distinctions between genders in matters of divorce, property, employment and other matters. But many skeptics ask: aren't women already protected by the Constitution?

If you share this sentiment, you're not the only one. 80 percent of people in the United States think that men and women are guaranteed equal rights in the U.S. Constitution. They're mistaken. The original drafters of the U.S. Constitution were all white, landholding (and many slave-holding) men. Women were never part of “the people” they envisioned in the Constitution. Many years later the Supreme Court interpreted the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to protect women to an extent, but a special category was created for gender

that offers far less protection than other protected categories like race, religion or national origin.

This is what the ERA aims to improve. It is a very simple amendment putting protection for women and other marginalized genders directly into the United States Constitution. The entire text of the proposed amendment is:

Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

One final question that might be asked is, why wasn't the ERA ratified back in the 1970s and 1980s? Well, when the ERA passed in 1972, the legislation included a seven-year deadline. Upon reaching the original deadline without achieving the requisite number of state ratifications, advocates for the ERA convinced Congress to extend the deadline until 1982. However, anti-ERA groups and activists ramped up their opposition during that time, successfully mobilizing factions against the ERA and stalling the momentum the movement had enjoyed throughout the country. The 1982 deadline passed with the ERA falling three states short of the 38 needed for ratification.

In November, Virginia became the 38th and final state needed to ratify the ERA in 2020.

Now that all requirements outlined in Article V of the Constitution, Congress must eliminate the original deadline of 1982. On January 21, 2021, U.S. Senators Ben Cardin (D-Md.) and Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), and Congresswoman Jackie Speier (D-Calif.) and Congressman Tom Reed (R-N.Y.) Announced the bipartisan legislation, which reads:

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That notwithstanding any time limit contained in House Joint Resolution 208, 92nd Congress, as agreed to in the Senate on March 22, 1972, the article of amendment proposed to the States in that joint resolution shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution whenever ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States.

One of the current goals of Generation Ratify is to mobilize and organize around this legislation, which will, when passed, eliminate one of the procedural barriers standing in the way of achieving gender equality in the U.S Constitution.

Generation Ratify has been involved in the 2020 election, working with campaigns to create voter contact opportunities such as phone-banks, text-banks, and voter registration efforts, for our organizers and chapter network. They worked with these campaigns to create conversations incorporating gender equality, to ensure that it is, along with the ERA an election issue. Furthermore, they had organized a rally with over 300 people to welcome in legislators as

they came back to session, and their Youth for the Ratification of the ERA petition with them.

lives of marginalized genders in the name of the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and also hosted a series of webinars called A Seat at the Table, which aimed to educate young people on career paths related to social justice advocacy and activism.

On October 12th, 2020, Generation Ratify organizers across the country led several direct actions happening across the country to get people to the polls to vote for pro-gender equality candidates and ballot initiatives. In their official website, they described the situation and what they did as:

“The GOP has failed us. Mitch McConnell has failed us. Lindsey Graham has failed us. Senate Republican leadership has failed us. Women and people beyond the gender binary remain disenfranchised, at the hands of complacent, Republican politicians in the Senate. The ERA is a bipartisan issue. Gender equality is a bipartisan issue. Yet, all Democrats in the Senate have co-sponsored S.J. Res. 6, the resolution to remove the deadline on the Ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. Republican leadership is stopping it from progressing. What hangs in the balance is not just a vacant Supreme Court Seat - it is the dignity, free will, & rights of the American woman, the LGBTQ+ community, & anyone who possesses a uterus. The Republicans know exactly what they are doing. And we called them out for it, got to the polls, and voted with our conscience.”

They have done many more actions in order to ensure gender equality, including the launch of a 7-week digital organization program called the Elect Equal Rights Cohort from June to August of last year, mobilized to help prevent the Senate from confirming anyone to the bench who did not value the

Jakomba Jabbie

by Tara Vidyababu



According to the Women in Law and Development in Africa, over 2.5 billion women and girls around the world are affected by discriminatory laws. These discriminatory laws can range anywhere from restrictions on marriage, citizenship, and applying for jobs. Even today, men and women are held to different standards, which often hold women and girls back.

Jakomba Jabbie is a 16 year old gender equality activist who is an advocate for girls' education. Jabbie has a strong passion for helping girls excel in fields where they are being underrepresented. "Education is important, especially to a girl. It allows you to develop confidence in yourself, showcase your talents, and speak for your rights. If we're not educated, we will not know our rights and responsibilities," Jabbie said.

Jabbie herself is interested in robotics and wants to be an aerospace engineer. To create a safe space for girls to learn, Jabbie formed a robotics club at her school. Jabbie did this because she wanted to "show the girls that we can also participate in the area of technology, to talk to them and to make it a space for all of us." Jabbie wants to give girls an environment to be comfortable and be able to grow in. "I know a lot of girls are interested in science and technology.

Our robotics club is not only for girls, but it's encouraging more girls to join all kinds of science fields. Some girls think it's too difficult, and they lose interest. But many girls have the talent, but their families and communities are not allowing them to show the world what they can do," Jabbie said.

Jabbie went on to speak at a UN Women event titled, "Equality in Law for Women and Girls by 2030." Here, she spoke about her own experiences of how laws affect women's and girls' lives. "Gender equality laws are important in supporting girls' education as they ensure that girls attain the highest level of education and study subjects of their choice," Jabbie said. "For example, a law which makes child marriage illegal would stop parents and communities from giving their girl children away in marriage... gender equality laws guarantee that girls who become pregnant while in school continue their education upon giving birth. This is because they prevent the practice of pregnant schoolgirls being expelled from school." Meaning, because of certain gender equality laws not being implemented upon women and girls, they are being put at a disadvantage.



Jabbie plans to overturn these stereotypes and disadvantages being placed on women and be a voice for gender equality rights. Jabbie believes that education is of the utmost importance, and that women's and girls' lack of education is what is preventing them from reaching their full potential and engaging in certain jobs and careers. Young activists such as Jakoma Jabbie are one of many that push for gender equality laws in order to ensure a brighter future for women and girls around the globe.



Representation in Art

by Vishaka Singh

If you say incredulous things like:
“Your heritage isn’t your personality.”
“Anyone can relate to [insert generic cis straight white character here].”
“So what if they’re white? They’re very relatable!”
“Well, [insert a cis straight white character] is an ally, why are you crying about your community being overlooked?”
Or if the above statements make perfect and logical sense to you, I think this article might be for you...

Contrary to popular belief, one’s heritage, gender and sexuality is often the biggest part of their personality. In case you are wondering why I believe it might have something to do with it all *being* the biggest part of their identity.
Regardless of how inspirational a cis straight white character is, a Mexican Pansexual or an Indian Transgender will not relate to them the same way they would relate to a character with corresponding identities. For the queer community and people of

colour, relating to a character in terms of their own identity in any form of mainstream media is often an unaffordable luxury. This brings us to the topic of this article: Representation in art and media.
For a long time, young adults, teens, tweens and children of varying identities have indulged themselves in either harmful or no representation delivered by the all-white cast in global mainstream media. This often leads to a distorted sense of oneself or a dislike for one’s own culture.

An array of problems such as refusing to acknowledge one’s gender, denying one’s cultural background, indulging in normalized toxic behaviours can be avoided with a little representation through several mediums of art.

There has been great progress in terms of inclusiveness in various mediums such as television shows, novels, animation and live-action movies and children’s cartoon shows.

Rebecca Sugar, the creator of Steven Universe and identifying herself as non-

binary and bisexual, has been very outspoken about representation in cartoons. In her own words as reported by the E.W:
“By including LGBTQIA content and characters in G rated entertainment for kids, you tell kids when they’re young that they belong in this world. You can’t tell them that. There can’t only be a certain group of kids who are told someone will love you by all the entertainment that they see. It’s just so unfair.”



Sadie Miller (pansexual) and Shep (nonbinary)



A lesbian wedding on screen.

Steven Universe has plenty of positive lesbian representation with two of its protagonists; Pearl is shown to be a lesbian character and Garnet is shown to be a symbol of a healthy lesbian relationship. Aside from the protagonists, the side characters’ sexual identities are given equal importance. Sadie Miller is shown to be pansexual and her romantic partner, Shep, is shown to be non-binary.

Cartoon Network’s Adventure Time also has a healthy lesbian representation with Princess Bubblegum and Marceline. Their relationship was expanded upon as a main theme in the recent special Distant Lands, ‘Obsidian’.



Princess Bubblegum and Marceline, who fans adore as 'Bubblin'.

Furthermore, the show 'The Owl House' flaunts Disney's first bisexual lead.



Amity Blight (lesbian) and the lead, Luz Noceda (bisexual).

In novels and literature, Rick Riordan is particularly known for a diverse cast which although not perfect, is remarkable. Moreover, the event 'Rick Riordan Presents' takes a step towards diversity in the industry itself by showcasing authors of heritage writing stories of their mythologies. It not only allows readers to explore further into the world of mythology but also adds to the diversity of the industry itself rather than just book characters.

"But do children need to see all this? Is it appropriate for them?"
Think about it like this: if you don't have a problem with your child watching the wedding of two human-sized mice, you can allow your child to watch two women hold hands and utter the three magical words to each other in a cartoon show. A child doesn't know to hate a man for marrying another man, they are only taught to.

I believe that it's particularly important for children to be exposed to the spectrum of identities since they've only begun to see the

world ahead of them. Being aware of the differences around them would help to weed out any ignorance they would otherwise accumulate from their surroundings.

"Aren't characters supposed to be just good characters? Why does diversity even matter?"

Diversity matters because people deserve to have their existence recognised by those around them.

Of course, well-written characters are better than those whose only trait is their race/gender/sexuality. But in that case, let me ask you, why can we not have a well-written character that is anything other than cis straight white?



Diversity matters because a black kid deserves to see their identity when they look at Miles Morales and realize how similar they are to their hero. It matters because a Chinese girl deserves to look at Fa Mulan and know-how alike they are.

However, while there is successful representation, there is also corporate interference and the dreadful practice of 'queer baiting'. 'Voltron: The Legendary Defender' hinted at the gay relationship between characters Keith and Lance, which the fans endearingly called 'Klance', but never made official. The fandom was outraged when Allura, one of the

few female characters of colour, was killed off in the finale.

The popular show, 'Teen Wolf' has also been accused of bi-erasure and queerbaiting by hinting at the bisexuality of multiple characters and a gay relationship but never making it official.

The Marvel Cinematic Universe has been criticised for its predominantly cis straight white male cast as superheroes, although the diversity has improved since the addition of Black Panther and Captain Marvel as leading roles, Valkerie as a side character along with those planned for the future reveals.

Recently, the show 'Shadow and Bone', which flaunted a racially diverse cast with queer characters faced backlash for using the brownface on a white stunt double.



It is disheartening for many fans since it feels like a slap in their faces for expecting decent representation.

It is no doubt that queer and racial representation has made it to mass media megaphone from the shameful hushed whispers, but despite the 'woke' news and the awareness, the request for representation is often treated as a lame attempt at political correctness, still.



Call to Action

<https://www.aclu.org/legislation-affecting-lgbt-rights-across-country>

<https://www.transathlete.com/take-action>

Legislation affecting LGBTQ+ rights

[https://my.care.org/site/Donation2?](https://my.care.org/site/Donation2?df_id=29863&mfc_pref=T&29863.donation=form1)

[df_id=29863&mfc_pref=T&29863.donation=form1](https://my.care.org/site/Donation2?df_id=29863&mfc_pref=T&29863.donation=form1)

Donate to India's COVID emergency



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