

# THE NEW EQUILIBRIUM

ISSUE 02  
NOV 2020



E

X

BOYS  
IN  
POLISH

*Srieto*

JESS YOUNG

*A special thank you to  
the brilliant creatives  
behind the second  
issue, particularly the  
Boys in Polish team  
and cover boys for  
their stories.*

EDITION 2

IDENTITY

2020

BY

THE NEW  
EQUILIBRIUM

EDITORS

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:

**Serena Prieto**

GUEST EDITOR:

**Jess Young**

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT:

**Eirwen Burgess**

SENSITIVITY READER:

**Alixander Thompson**

ASSOCIATE EDITOR ENTERTAINMENT:

**Whitney Jones**

ASSOCIATE EDITOR NEWS:

**Zoha Naser**

ASSOCIATE EDITOR ARTS:

**Megha Dahdrai**

ASSOCIATE EDITOR VIEWPOINT:

**Chloe Sanyu**

ASSOCIATE EDITOR SUSTAINABILITY:

**Emma Rantakangas**

ASSOCIATE EDITOR COMMUNITY:

**Zahra Awan**

ASSOCIATE EDITOR VIDEO:

**Elly Anderson**

ARTISTS

**Clare Sansome**

**Eoin Shaw**

ON THE COVER:

Michael Brooks, Jono Canning, Donnie Sunshine, Anthony Lim, Suren Seneviratne, Akeil Onwuke-Adamson, David Larbi, Ryan Lovell & Marcel Mckenzie

**SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE MEDIA**

Visit [thenewequilibrium.co.uk](https://thenewequilibrium.co.uk)  
A publication from The New Equilibrium.

For advertising enquires contact: [hello@thenewequilibrium.co.uk](mailto:hello@thenewequilibrium.co.uk)

BY SERENA PRIETO

# Editor's LETTER

What's the first thought that comes to mind when you hear the term 'toxic masculinity'? For a long time, it resonated with me as the 'bad' traits associated with masculinity, namely aggressiveness, laddish behaviour, defensiveness and even violence. While I didn't think of men as the enemy, I envisioned the white, middle-class man as the embodiment of power, the patriarchal figure who governs our country, intent on self-promotion and exclusion of those who do not conform to their own hyper-masculine traits.

Looking back, I realise this was misguided, based on a limited understanding of what it means to be masculine. In this issue we re-examine identity. On page 36, Whitney Jones' Diversity Report reminds us that men are an integral part of the fight towards equality, being part of a diverse society where everyone has a place. Zoha Naser sets out the place of men in feminism, discussing how the fight for equality is a fight for all. In her thought-provoking book 'We Should All Be Feminists' Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie explains how the stereotypical masculinity we have constructed in society does a disservice to men, being defined in such a narrow way that it demands of them from a young age to be without fear, weakness or vulnerability. She argues that gender stereotypes "prescribe how we should be, rather than how we are" and that no identity benefits from these prescribed gender norms.

Our cover feature, Boys in Polish celebrates people who know who they are, using nail art as a way to subvert gender norms and challenge toxic masculinity. On page 30, Zahra Awan interviews two people on their connection to Palestine, discussing how 'home' influences identity.

Also in this issue Emma Rantakangas, our Associate Editor for Sustainability, writes a personal piece on dementia and how the coronavirus lockdown has affected her grandparents, both of whom have this devastating disease. Reflecting on their experiences reminded me just how fragile our identity is; when your memories deteriorate, it becomes harder to know and express who you are.

And so we must live unapologetically as our authentic selves and support those around us to do the same. We deserve to be seen and loved for who we are.

SPrieto

Serena Prieto, Editor-in-Chief

“

*We have to smash and dismantle the way we have constructed masculinity.*

*I think it's toxic. What if we taught boys to be ashamed of not being able to communicate, or to be in touch with their emotions?*

*What is vulnerability was something to be proud of?*

- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

P. 12

# The Identity—



Photography—Jess Young

P. 6

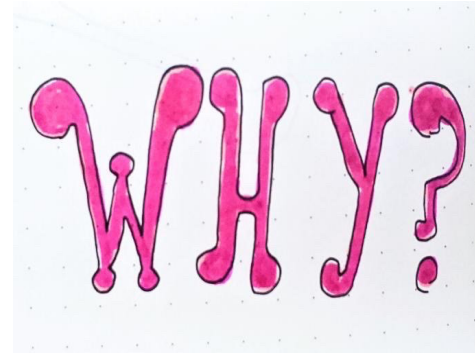
Letter from Guest Editor —  
*Jess Young*

P. 10

About the cover boys  
*Boys In Polish*

## Issue

P.28



Masculinity?  
*Eoin Shaw*

P. 30



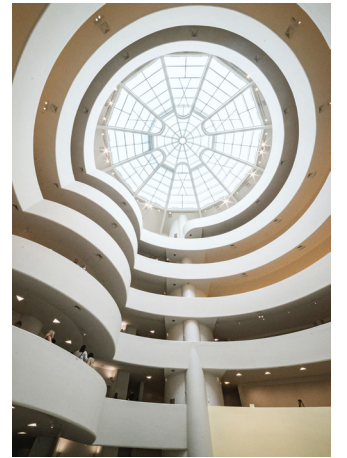
No Place Like Home  
*Zabra Awan*

P. 24



In Bloom to a Better Man  
*Clare Sansome*

P. 36



The Diversity Report  
*Whitney Jones*

## NO. II

P. 40



I'm Still Here  
*Emma Rantakangas*



# Boys In Polish

*Jess Young as Guest Editor*

## *B o y s*

*In Polish* started as a visual concept inspired by classmates during my art foundation. As a nail artist, I had rarely seen boys wearing nail polish and thought it was refreshing to see. I wanted to share this sight with the world, as I felt like it was my purpose as a nail artist to do something extraordinary and insightful with my aptitude. This idea for me felt like I cracked the code I have been trying to find for all these years. I decided to carry out shoots with a few of my male friends at that time during that summer, wearing nail polish and allowing them to self-direct, as I wanted to see how self-expression varied between my friends. After putting a few pictures up on my personal Instagram those years back, the love and support I received motivated me to carry on and grow the concept into a platform. I chose to launch it into its own Instagram page and brand because I realised the importance of what I was doing as I shot and conversed with more boys. I noticed that the concept went a lot deeper than just an image. The whole manicure experience itself was very nurturing and fulfilling for the boys, as doing their nails allowed them to open up about some vulnerabilities they don't usually talk about. It was like therapy for them, just like how girls go to a salon as a form of self-care, and also, self-care is not gendered! That's when it clicked in my head. I feel like I was guided down this path to confront toxic masculinity, and Boys in Polish was the perfect way of exploring and reconstructing masculinity for the better. My passion for the project has only grown the more that I delve into it.

Coming Soon  
**TIME** Video



YOUTUBE

THE NEW EQUILIBRIUM



IGTV

@THENEWEQUILIBRIUM





# COVER boys

"BOYS IN POLISH a platform for boys and men of all masculinities to come together and share their thoughts and personal stories on manhood through nail art. At the end of the manicure experience, each boy is photographed with his chosen nail art, clothing and location. The concept is about embracing individuality, different masculinities and giving each boy an opportunity to tell his story."

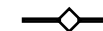
## FOUNDER Jess Young

Jess Young is a London based nail artist, model, creative, musician/DJ, and founder of Boys In Polish, with a mission to use her creative aptitudes to make the world a better place. Having started her nail art journey from a young age of ten years old, Jess is now working freelance, specialising in gel nail art.

Jess' other creative passions include modelling, and

growing her platform Boys In Polish, which is a community that encourages men to confront toxic masculinity through nail art experiences.

Aside her nail art career, Jess is also focusing on evolving her DJing and music career, describing her genre as 'a fusion of timeless, chilled out soul, funk, house and R&B'. She also writes and produces her own music under the R&B/soul genre.



## JONO CANNING VIDEOGRAPHER

Jono is a London-based videographer and graphic designer. He also has a passion for music, which he aspires to explore further through DJing.

@jonos\_\_

## DONNIE SUNSHINE DJ, DIRECTOR

DJ, director, photographer; Donnie (pictured middle row, furthest left) is described as 'never without a smile on his face'. Listen to his mixes on Spotify.

@donnie\_sunshine

## SUREN SENEVIRATNE MUSICIAN

As well as producing music, Suren DJs, models and plays extras in films. His most recent album Magnestism donated 100% of profits to BLM.

@mypandashallfly

## MICHAEL BROOKS MAKEUP ARTIST

A Toronto native living in London, Michael is a pro makeup artist for Smashbox Cosmetics. He has his own YouTube Channel where he posts tutorials and reviews.

@the\_brooksbrother

## ANTHONY LIM ARTIST

A film photographer and poet, Anthony has a bright future in his artistic pursuits. Follow his accounts to see his work:

@chunjiie  
@jun666jie

## RYAN LOVELL ARTIST

Fashion model, photographer and musician. When speaking to Jess about identity, Ryan reminds us to remain authentic, rather than conform to societal expectations.

@itsryanlovell

## MARCEL MCKENZIE MUSIC PRODUCER

Marcel is a Music Producer and Sound Designer from Walthamstow. He works on creative and commercial projects as well as writing music for artists.

@boofti\_

## DAVID LARBI MUSICIAN

A musician and dancer from West London, David's debut EP Heartbreak season encapsulates his embrace of vulnerability and openly expressing his emotions.

@davidlarbi\_

## AKEIL ONWUKWE- ADAMSON FOUNDER: QUEERBRUK

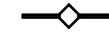
Founder of Queer Bruk, Akeil's aim is to offer the LGBTQ+ community 'solace and relief through dance and music'.

@akeiloa  
@queerbruk



PHOTOGRAPHY: Jess Young

COVER

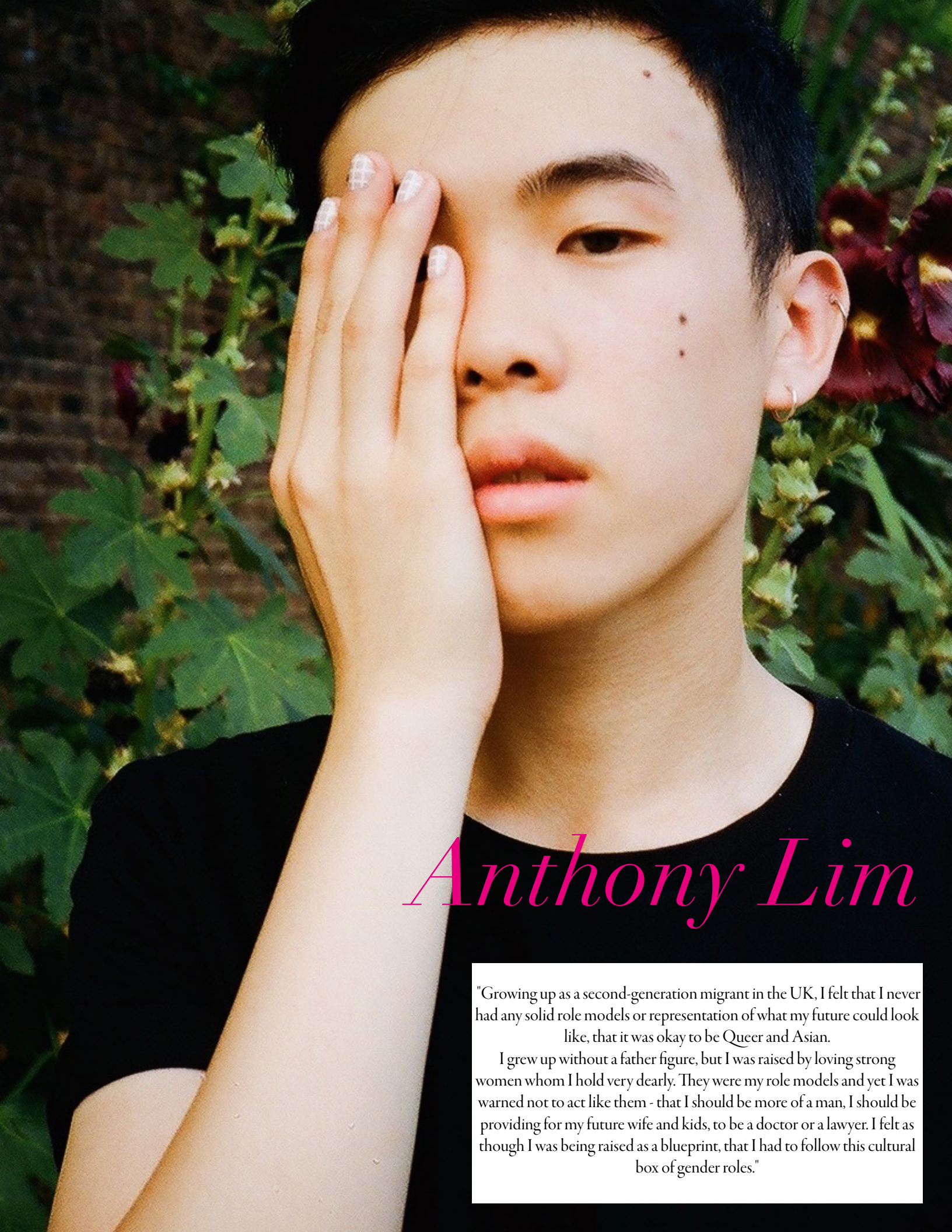


# IDENTITY

*Boys In Polish*; a ground-breaking platform pioneered by Jess Young for boys and men of all masculinities to embrace individuality and different expressions of masculinity through nail art.

Established in 2018, the influence of *Boys* has been profound. In her own words, Jess described the impact sparked by this movement: "Men painting their nails went from being a taboo to now becoming a statement telling the world that you don't support patriarchy, but a new kind of masculinity that is better for this world. It's empowering. We have come a long way, and I have so much love for the community who have made it what it now is."

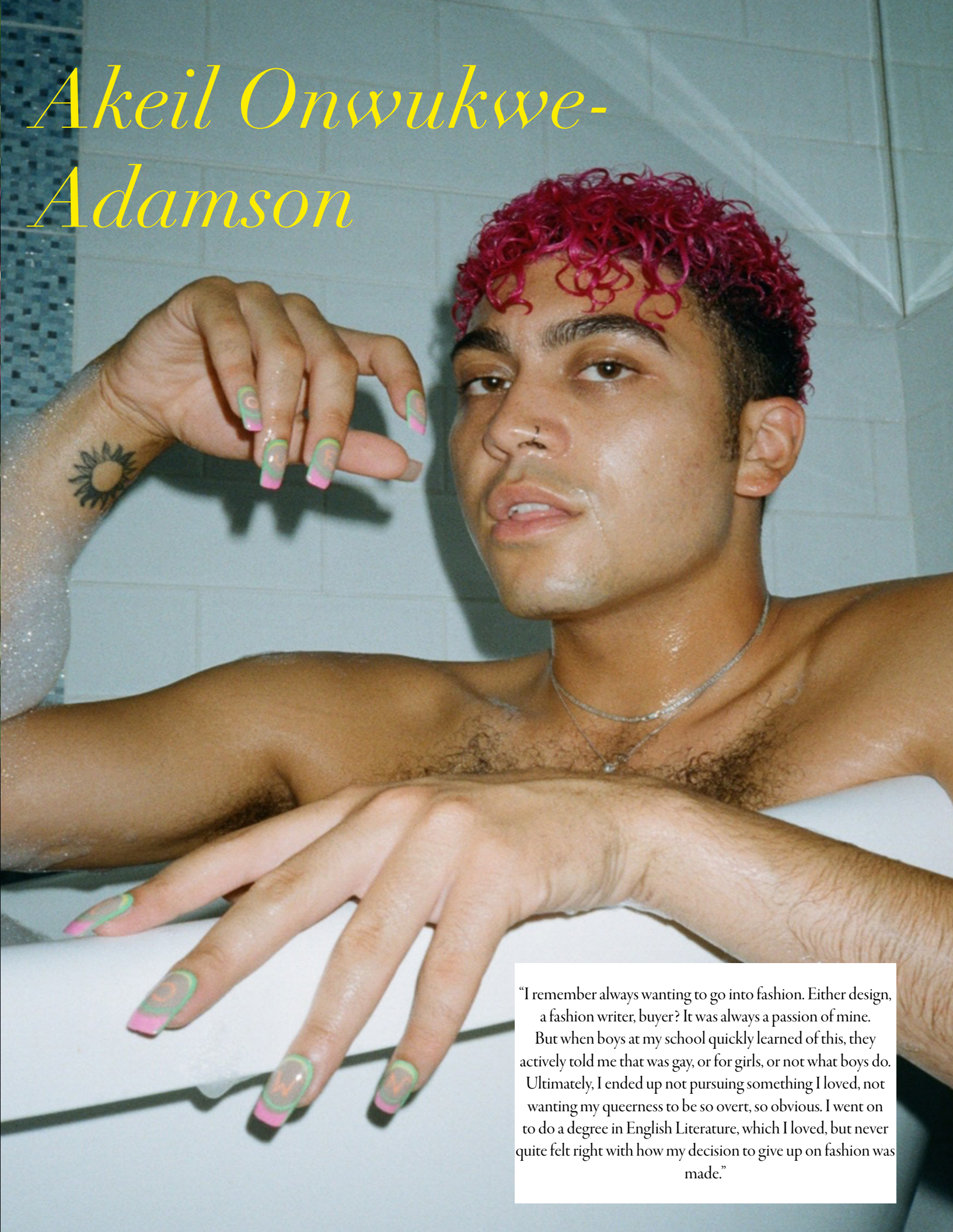
In our identity issue, we wanted to hear from some of the people who have helped make *Boys* the platform it is today. Answering the question "*how has toxic masculinity impacted your identity?*" here are their stories.



## *Anthony Lim*

"Growing up as a second-generation migrant in the UK, I felt that I never had any solid role models or representation of what my future could look like, that it was okay to be Queer and Asian.

I grew up without a father figure, but I was raised by loving strong women whom I hold very dearly. They were my role models and yet I was warned not to act like them - that I should be more of a man, I should be providing for my future wife and kids, to be a doctor or a lawyer. I felt as though I was being raised as a blueprint, that I had to follow this cultural box of gender roles."



## *Akeil Onwukwe-Adamson*

"I remember always wanting to go into fashion. Either design, a fashion writer, buyer? It was always a passion of mine. But when boys at my school quickly learned of this, they actively told me that was gay, or for girls, or not what boys do. Ultimately, I ended up not pursuing something I loved, not wanting my queerness to be so overt, so obvious. I went on to do a degree in English Literature, which I loved, but never quite felt right with how my decision to give up on fashion was made."

# Marcel McKenzie

"I was in Lisbon on a night out with friends, dancing and having fun. The song that was playing had some swear words in it and I was singing along, I caught eye contact with a guy for a split second and he must've thought I was calling him the word.

I'm still dancing and having fun when he asks me "Where are you from", thinking nothing of it, I reply "London" and keep dancing. He then squares up to me and repeats the question as if to start a fight.

Still a bit confused as to why this guy is starting on me, I repeat "London". To keep the vibe fun. Then my friend steps in and separate

s us and we move to another part of the dance floor. I was one of a few black guys in the club and the guy that squared up to me was also black.

There is this unspoken, subconscious, micro aggressive hostility between black men that I experience as if "we" need to prove we are the biggest and strongest at all times."

# Jono Canning

"Instead of retracing the negative tropes that we have all experienced from gender stereotypes, in particular ones that stem from traditional cultural masculine norms, I instead want to focus on the positive reception I have received on the occasions that I have had my nails done by Jess.

For me, these reactions are made even more poignant when you consider that during the majority of my secondary school experience, slurs surrounding sexual orientation, gender identity and race were normalised and considered for the lack of a better term "banter."

To receive compliments on something that not only defies these norms, but are also delivered by individuals who have grown up in the same environment as me, shows that we as a society are taking steps in the right direction."



# Michael Brooks

"Over the course of my life, masculinity and its meaning has challenged me more often than not. Being a queer man of colour and choosing to express myself with makeup creates a complicated intersection that's difficult to place in 'traditional' ideas of masculinity. I guess the idea that masculinity is challenged by my very existence describes its toxic qualities."



# Ryan Lovell

"One prominent encounter I have had with toxic masculinity was me bumping into an old friend. At the time I was dating this guy, and had shared months building a friendship with him. We had actually spoken earlier that day, and on my way home, coincidentally bumped into him at our local supermarket."

He was with two other males that I didn't know, and usually someone who was always ready to embrace me - publicly acted as if he barely knew me. His face froze up and he couldn't even muster the courage for a verbal greeting. He nodded, and we parted ways. That was a red flag for me, a mental note to never date men who weren't openly comfortable with how they're viewed in society.

Michael Kimmel's *Homosocial Enactment* springs to mind; 'Men function in relation to the gaze of their male peers and authority'. For me toxic masculinity for him was preserving his 'manhood' through fear of rejection or being humiliated by them. Embracing other men in public doesn't take away from your manhood, neither does it make you effeminate. That should never be something we should have fallen out over."



# *Donnie Sunshine*

"Growing up black, gay and working class, I don't think there was a time where toxic masculinity didn't affect me. It was so ingrained in the culture around me that for a while I aspired to uphold the same toxic traits, cause that's what I was led to believe was how a black man behaved. It wasn't until I got older and came into my own skin that I realised how much toxic masculinity had affected me. From the way I dressed, behaved, or even activities I participated in, I would consider the reactions of the men/boys around before I did anything. It was the biggest crutch of my young adulthood."



# SUBSCRIBE

SUBSCRIBE

SUBSCRIBE

SUBSCRIBE

SUBSCRIBE

SUBSCRIBE

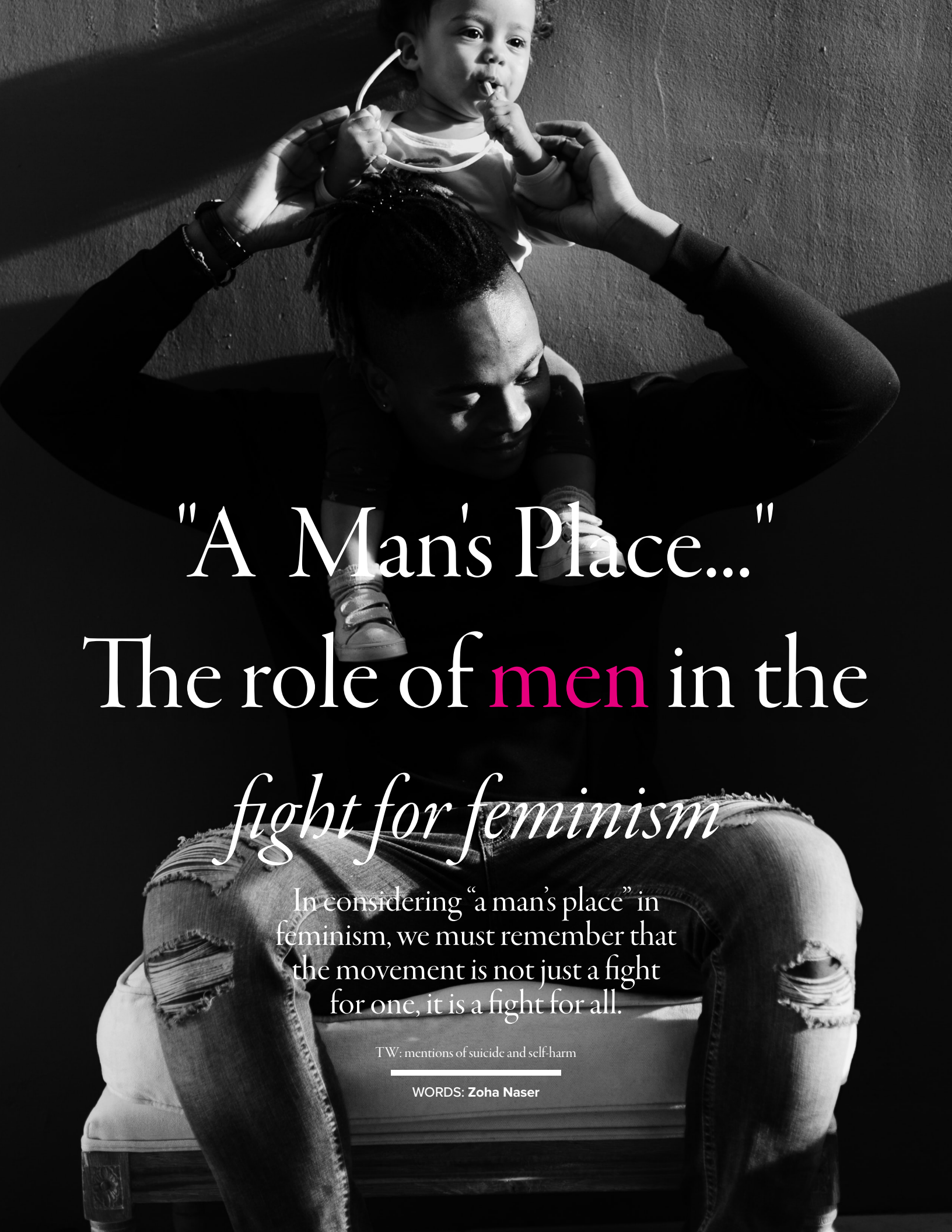
SUBSCRIBE



**1 YEAR | 6 DIGITAL ISSUES | £6**

SEE OUR SUBSCRIPTION PLANS AT:  
[WWW.THENEWEQUILIBRIUM.CO.UK/SUBSCRIBE](http://WWW.THENEWEQUILIBRIUM.CO.UK/SUBSCRIBE)





"A Man's Place..."

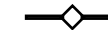
The role of **men** in the

*fight for feminism*

In considering "a man's place" in feminism, we must remember that the movement is not just a fight for one, it is a fight for all.

TW: mentions of suicide and self-harm

WORDS: Zoha Naser



The image of 'The Feminist' is one that has been hotly contested for years. In the early days of modern feminism, the movement was deemed one of a radical minority of cis-gender women seeking to establish female superiority and rip apart the very fabric of society. At this turning point in history, it was deemed impossible for men to be feminists, and anti-feminist activists closely associated the movement with 'man-hating'. Decades later, shadows of this stereotype still linger, and there are still those who believe that men have no space in feminism, some of those who believe this being self-proclaimed feminists themselves. However, in considering where men fit into the image of this fight, it is important to remember the fundamentals of feminism, to strip back the layers and return to the basics of the ideology: feminism rallies in the face of adversity regardless of gender, and is a battle we can all get behind.

There are various definitions of feminism, all dealing with different specifics of the movement, however they are all united by a key notion: equality between the sexes. Be it in the political, social, economic or personal sphere, complete equality between the sexes is the end goal of feminism. There has been a lot of misunderstanding about these aims, and the strive for equality is often associated by opponents for feminism as an attempt to attack men and to establish women as dominant in society. It is for this reason that it's important to remember the fundamental beliefs of feminism. After all, no coherent ideology that advocates for equality between individuals can then establish the dominance of one over the other.

Confusion also arises in the feminist aim to tackle the patriarchy, the social system which favours male dominance over women. The fight to dismantle this structure is what is most often associated with the supposed 'anti-maleness' of feminism. However, it's important to note that many feminists see the patriarchy as an oppressive force that impacts the sexes equally.

Patriarchal notions of identity and society promote misogynistic tropes that harm all. Men are expected to be tough, 'manly', and to not show emotion; those who break away from these characteristics are told to stop 'acting like a girl'. The danger in this

*'No coherent ideology that advocates for equality between individuals can then establish the dominance of one over the other.'*

is the way it causes men to internalise their feelings and emotions rather than address them in a healthy manner. It leads to people feeling out of place or afraid to be themselves for fear of challenging the status quo, having a severe impact on mental health.

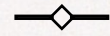
We have already seen the effects of this in society: the Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) estimates that roughly 125 people in the UK take their lives every week, and that 75% of all UK suicides are male. Furthermore, a study by the World Health Organisation found that in 2016, roughly 40% of countries around the world had more than 15 suicide deaths per 100,000 men; only

1.5% of countries had the same rate but for women. Male suicide and mental health have long been taboo topics, for the reason mentioned above – societal norms pushed the view that men could not be vulnerable and talk about their mental health because it was not characteristic of a 'man'. Toxic masculinity, as it is known, has meant that men are caged to these specific notions of what a man should be. Dismantling these unhealthy notions of gender are key in the fight against the patriarchy, and thus are important to feminists across the board.

Tackling gender conventions is additionally important in making feminism more accessible to all genders. Many feminists see gender as a construct of the patriarchy, and thus seek to expand the barriers of feminism to encompass those who do not identify as cisgender and to tackle gender roles that seek to put people into boxes. Unfortunately, there are groups of feminists who do believe that trans rights and feminism cannot exist under the same umbrella in the fight against bigotry. This raises an important point that returns to the initial conundrum of what a feminist really looks like.

In the early days of feminism, the movement was almost exclusively associated with cisgender middle-class white women. The extension of suffrage to women in the US in 1920 is widely celebrated but we forget that it was barred for Black women for another 45 years until the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

## VIEWPOINT



Prominent feminist thinker Betty Friedan laid much of the groundwork for the second wave of feminism in the United States during the mid-20th century. However, Friedan herself described lesbians within the feminism as the “lavender menace” who would undermine the movement.

For an ideology that promoted equality and acceptance, feminism was unfortunately not very accessible to all. There have always been Black feminists, trans feminists, gay feminists, Muslim feminists, but they were pushed to the sidelines of the mainstream movement and not provided with the same platform as their peers.

However, recent developments and the rise of intersectionality within feminism means that the image of the movement is rapidly changing. The majority of feminists support this idea that there are a range of issues to be tackled, including when it comes to the way men are suffering under patriarchy too. Recent activity within the movement has sought to raise awareness for male suicide and also to tackle the issue of domestic violence against men, as well as women. The majority of feminists are also proponents of trans rights and rally against bigotry towards the LGBTQ+ community.

So, when we consider the image of ‘The Feminist’ today, it is important to note how far we have come.

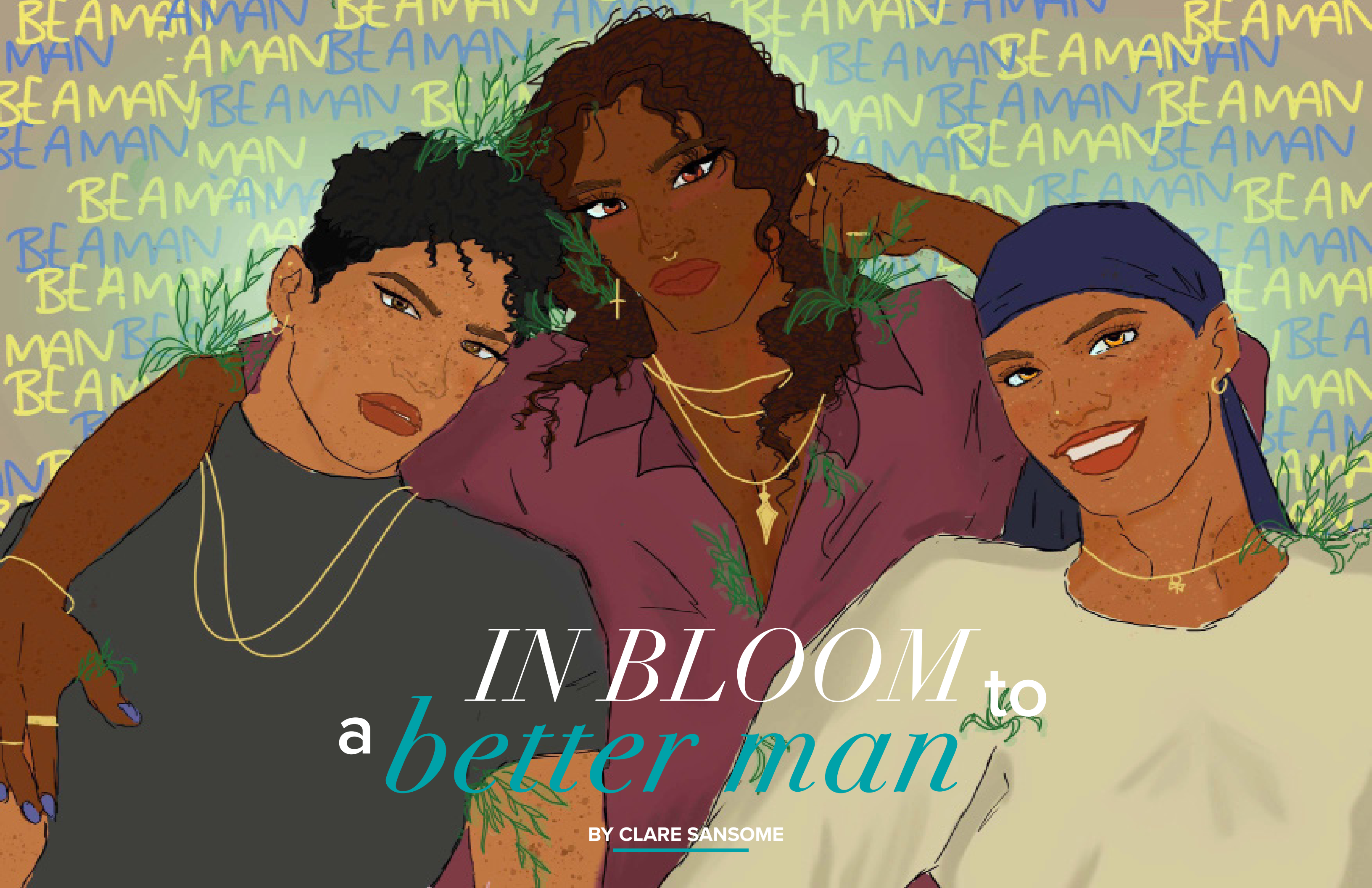
Feminism is no longer the exclusive club for cisgender white women that it was in the past, but is now a diverse

movement that encompasses a range of identities. Feminism is working to distance itself from the stereotype of misandry associated with it, and is showing itself to be an ideology that embraces the struggles and plights of all. In remembering what feminism is about, and the way it seeks to fight bigotry in all its forms, we have to remember, anyone can be a feminist.

*“Feminist politics aims to end domination, to free us to be who we are – to live lives where we love justice, where we can live in peace. Feminism is for everybody” – bell hooks.*







*IN BLOOM* to  
a *better man*

BY CLARE SANSOME



Clare Sansome, digital artist, gives *TNE* a glimpse into her artistic process and the figures who inspire her work. Clare has given us exclusive insight into her most recent collection; *In Bloom to a Better Man*, created for this issue.

*On discovering digital art:*

"I've always been an 'artist', I was always the kid with a pen in my hand and ink on every inch surrounding me. The seemingly endless stacks of notebooks I have filled with pen markings through the years. So the art has always been there inside me, but I started working digitally when I was 16 because I started a digital media course at college and that was my first real access to equipment like a graphics tablet and photoshop which I never could afford at home. There were 2 years of my life at college where there was not a single day (no exaggeration) that I did not use them, so that's what led me to where I am now."

*On her inspirations:*

"Without sounding sloppy, it really just is what I feel. I guess I'm very stimulated by the world around me and I try to pull beauty from anywhere. Art itself by other content creators are also huge at driving me to create art, I see, hear or read something and suddenly I want to create something. My friends and people inspire me incredibly too. I would also say that visually, I'm very inspired by colour and contrast."

*On her audience:*

"It really depends on what I am trying to achieve with the piece, because I have collections that are often based around a theme which is often on a social topic and then the drawings will reflect that, but sometimes I like to just create something cool to look at."

*On the meaning behind 'In Bloom to a Better Man'*

"There is beauty within fluidity and that's the problem with toxic masculinity. It creates rigid and crushing expectations of what it is "to be a man." These pieces are about growing past these outdated and suffocating ideals and allowing any man to grow and bloom into the person that they chose to be, whoever that is. To be bold. To be strong. To be beautiful."

*On her future aspirations:*

"A lot of my work is based on commissions, almost always including portraits because I capture people and turn them into my stylised characters. There is nothing better to me than capturing the best essences of people and making them smile so I guess my aspirations short term are to continue bettering and refining my style and making content wherever I can and continuing to receive commissions, but a long term dream of mine is to be a part of a graphic novel or animation."



What the hell even is masculinity?  
What is being masculine?  
Is it just being male?

What about when a woman is called masculine?  
Why can masculine be a complement to the opposite gender and not feminine?

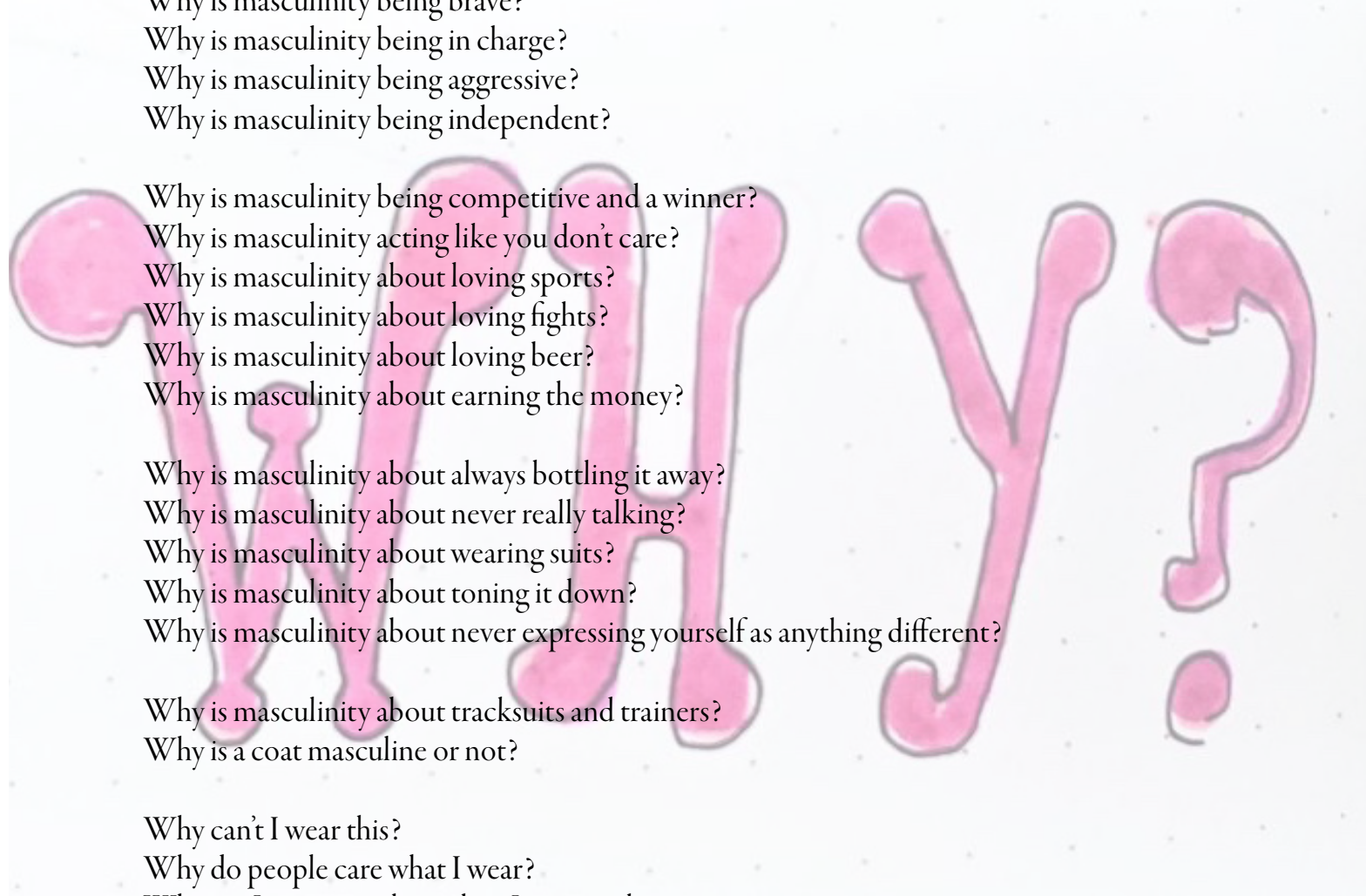
Why are the attributes of masculinity so positive?  
Why is masculinity being strong?  
Why is masculinity being brave?  
Why is masculinity being in charge?  
Why is masculinity being aggressive?  
Why is masculinity being independent?

Why is masculinity being competitive and a winner?  
Why is masculinity acting like you don't care?  
Why is masculinity about loving sports?  
Why is masculinity about loving fights?  
Why is masculinity about loving beer?  
Why is masculinity about earning the money?

Why is masculinity about always bottling it away?  
Why is masculinity about never really talking?  
Why is masculinity about wearing suits?  
Why is masculinity about toning it down?  
Why is masculinity about never expressing yourself as anything different?

Why is masculinity about tracksuits and trainers?  
Why is a coat masculine or not?

Why can't I wear this?  
Why do people care what I wear?  
Why am I not masculine when I wear pink?  
What if the 'manliest man' was dressed all in pink, when does he stop being manly?  
Why do people care? Why do men stare when I look 'feminine' and then stare with disgust when they realise I'm a guy? What is masculine hair and what is feminine? Why do people care so much if I look like a guy or a girl? Why does it hurt when you are misgendered? Why is it one or the other? Why are we all so obsessed with gender and sex? Why can't we just live our lives without thinking about it? Why should it really matter? Why do we all care so much? Why? Like seriously, why?





---

# No place like home

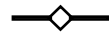
---

*"There is no place like Palestine, and it will forever be what my heart calls Home. Despite all what is happening politically, I have a huge sense of belonging. When your country is wounded, you want to stay and fight, not fly."*

---

Words **ZAHRA AWAN**

I was always told to keep the Palestinians in my prayers. I would pray alongside the hundreds of people in the surrounding Crawley areas, all of us would crowd into a mosque shoulder to shoulder with children running between the legs of anyone they would see. We were too familiar with what used to be the pretentious and long list of duas (prayers) and then the endless wishes, but Palestine was always wept over. I never understood the true reason for these numerous tears, but I wish to understand now. I knew there was a war; there are always wars. Yet no war – Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran or Syria - has stuck as deep as Palestine for me. Quarantine sparked a reignition of awareness regarding the Palestinian issue, and I hope that this article can shed light on what Palestinians are going have been, and still are, going through; I know that I am not the only one who wants to and should learn more.



The article could be pages long, but it is not here to teach you and impose opinions on you, rather spur you on to research this current and dire issue with our world. I compiled research, read multiple reminiscent posts and heart-breaking stories, and watched old videos. Now, I can clearly see that this is a political war lead by hypocrites; they are not part of the religions they attempt to associate with. I found that my assumption that this was a religious war between Muslims and Jews was wrong, yet it helped me fall in love with a country I could call home.

Politics is something everyone could ignore. We can easily disassociate, make excuses: "not our generation," "it doesn't affect me". However, this is ignorant. I don't study a political degree, I study English, meaning I still have a lot to learn of the lives of politically repressed individuals (including ourselves). Hence, this article doesn't cover everything because I do not know everything. There are still many wars, conflicts issues, injustices, unfairness, and movements that are all politically vital to societies success that, unfortunately, I do not have enough time to discuss with you now. I only ask you to spend a couple of minutes to read the experiences I am offering to you. The interviewees range in religion, generation and lived experience, and so can provide us with a diverse and representative experience.

#### **Interviewee 1:**

*Age:* 20

*Where were you born?*  
Amman, Jordan.

*Where would you call Home?*

"I grew up in Qatar until I graduated from

school at 16 from the International School of Choueifat (ISC Doha). I then moved to England for further education, now going into my 3rd year in Biochemistry at the University of Manchester. My extended family is all in Jordan as they moved there from Palestine a long time ago as a result of the ongoing conflict."

*What is the first memory you have of Palestine?*

"Unfortunately, I never had the

*“One of the greatest challenges is being yourself in a world that’s trying to make like everyone else.”*

opportunity to visit Palestine myself, so all my knowledge of the country came from my dad. Ever since my siblings and I were young, he would beautifully describe the country we're from and everything about it; from the really tasty olive trees that are grown to the incredible unity Palestinians had. What I was first told was that regardless of religious differences or cultural beliefs, unity was never a problem for our people."

*What would you say is the most beautiful area of the country?*

"I'm going to have to go with Jerusalem, the capital of Palestine. It's the heart of the country, and it's something I have set my mind to visiting one day."

*Why do you think people are starting to talk about Palestine now?*

"I think to this day the occupational

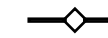
conflict that Palestine is undergoing isn't talked about enough. Still, I feel an increase in discussion is a result of our generation and all generations back enrooting in us the importance of discussion and spreading awareness. With the availability of social media, important issues can be more easily discussed, and people can simply access the complete history by simply searching it on the internet."

*Would you say that the war is religious or political?*

"War is not religious. War is fighting for regaining rightfully owned land. I'm certain that pointing it to the direction of a religious conflict would immediately infer an anti-Semitic movement, which is in no way the case. Palestine and Palestinians do not consider Jews as the enemy; we consider Zionists the enemy. Though arguments have been made of Israel's religious ties to the land which means their rightful ownership of it; with that logic, all three Abrahamic religions would have rightful ownership of the land as they have as many religious ties to it. So no, war is not a religious war regardless of what Israel may try to make it out to be."

*What memory/ lived experience shows the reality of Palestine?*

"Again, I've never had the opportunity to visit Palestine, therefore have no lived realities. However, the reality of Palestine from a non-personal perspective that I can provide is this: I know and have heard many stories of Palestinian friends and family who have lived in Palestine that struggle to maintain a job or are forced to work under the Israeli government to provide food for their family (which is not something anyone would enjoy). conflict?"



People often fear the random raiding of houses from members of the Israeli defence forces (IDF). They think they either have right to certain properties and just kick people out their houses or to simply arrest family members because they decided to fight back against the occupation. It's a horrible reality that many of my people have to live in because they refuse to leave the land that rightfully belongs to them.

*What do you want to say to the world; what do they need to hear?*

Educate yourselves on the conflict, delve deeper than any surface-level research and don't direct yourselves to biased media that would make you potentially misunderstand the situation. Come to understand why Palestinians had continually fought to regain ownership for their land and how Israeli's occupation had led to a form of ethnic cleansing when they occupied the land of the people. Free Palestine.

*What do you want as a solution to the conflict?*

Peace and regaining rightful ownership of the land of Palestine.

*Would you return?*

No doubt.

#### **Interviewee 2:**

*Age:*  
85

*Where were you born?*  
Nablus, Palestine.

*Where would you call Home?*

Nablus, Palestine. Nablus is a city in the West Bank with around 200,000

people in it. It is a great trade centre where people live on the industry of making treats like knafe (a cheese pastry dessert) and olive oil soap; people travel from all over Palestine to eat this knafe and go shopping in the vibrant markets. It is a city built on two mountains: Gerizim and Mount Ebal making its weather relatively mild but very cold in winter. It has unfortunately experienced many Israeli attacks and many children from Nablus were imprisoned, tortured, and killed during both intifadas; the first in 1987 and the second in 2000.

Nablus is known of its resistance to the Israeli occupation, and the Israeli army is very apprehensive of going deep into Nablus, especially into quarters like Qasaba where most of the resistance comes from.

*What is the first memory you have of Palestine (your lived memory or memory of a story told to you)?*

My best memory of the country is picking olives. The olive tree is the symbol of Palestine and picking olives in Palestine is a season. Universities and many secondary schools give their students credits for olive picking, taking the olives to be squeezed, and making olive oil. Palestine is well known by its olive oil (and Jaffa oranges) some say it is the best in the world! Israel, however, tries to outprice it on the market by increasing the price of Palestinian oil and reducing the Israeli price. This leaves the Palestinian oil unsold in supermarkets. (There is a product war between Israel and Palestine).

*Most beautiful area of the country?*

In my view, being Palestinian through and through for me means being from the river (Jordan) to the sea

(Mediterranean). My favourite place between Galilee and the Lebanese border is Nazareth. Of course, it has a huge religious significance as the place where Jesus grew up, but it is a beautiful, bustling place with a massive mix of religions.

Many of the original Palestinians who did not flee Palestine in 1948 live in Galilee. Israel tries to plant settlements in between Arab villages and cities in Galilee to limit the spread and grouping of Palestinian villages so they can steal as much land as possible.

Haifa I would say is the most politically neutral and friendly place. It has a mix of religions and people who get along as neighbours. You have the sea and the mountains in one beautiful, calm (yet lively), modern, and colourful place. It is definitely one to visit and cherish. I love going to Haifa port and walking down the German colony street downtown. You hear so many languages, and you can feel a freer atmosphere than the more tense but more special Jerusalem, for example. Jerusalem is unique. It is a place my niece would call Home as even though she has not lived there for a long time, she feels held by it. It is sadly too religious and political for me, marred by the presence of the Israeli soldiers and police everywhere—the separation wall, of course being the most depressing sight. When you ignore all that and walk through the market town, breathe in and smell the spices, the freshly bakes bread, hear the merchants calling you in and walk through the biblical gates, appreciate the stone, the age and history behind the buildings in the old city and the stories people hold of that brilliant area, you realise there is no place on earth like Jerusalem.



**W**hy do you think people are only talking about Palestine now rather than previously?

"People talk about Palestinian and Israeli politics all the time, and it is nice to know we have supporters across the world. Nelson Mandela once said, "South Africa will not be free until the liberation of Palestine!". His grandson, comparing his grandfather's fight against the apartheid with the Palestinian struggle, called Israel an apartheid state. Jenny Tonge, a prominent Palestine supporter in the British parliament and Laila Moran, have both expressed views against Israel's horrific regime. With the help of the USA (and American taxes that fund a lot of Israel's crimes) Israel tries to put sanctions on those supporting Palestine and even call any Palestinian support antisemitic which is ridiculous as a country having its own rightful land has nothing to do with Judaism. It is a disgusting excuse to stop countries supporting Palestine, and many orthodox Jews openly support Palestine as they believe it is antisemitic and against their morals to support Zionism and the Israeli government."

*Do you think British media informs the public of the reality of the situation?*

"I do not think the British media gives enough information about what is going on in Palestine, but that is no surprise when looking at who controls and owns the British media. I do not think Britain wants to be reminded of the part it played in the occupation; the Balfour Declaration, selling arms to Israel and the continuous pro-Zionist politics it encourages that suffocates the Palestinians. "Freedom of press" is a joke; you should always look at who owns what in the political media game."

*Would you say that the war is a religious or political war?*

"I believe the war is utterly political. The occupation of Palestine came by extreme force backed by the political powers of the world after the Second World War and the Holocaust. When Israel is faced by the ugly act of occupation and accused of stealing land from the original Palestinian people it says the land is "Granted by God", and you are immediately accused of antisemitism. This doesn't make sense as Semites are people of ancient groups who spoke Semitic languages originating in the middle east; the main Semitic language is Arabic spoken by roughly 330 million Semites and Hebrew spoken by 5 million Semites. Zionism and Judaism are very different, and I think it is offensive and antisemitic to Jews to call them Zionists. Many of my Jewish friends support this opinion and strongly disagree with the Israeli government's land theft and how they push their ideologies."

*Do you have an unpleasant memory or story that you would be willing to share?*

"Unfortunately, every Palestinian will have at least one bad or scary memory. You are constantly under threat! You would have thought that forcing 800,000 people out of their homes and land in 1948 was enough. A bad memory for me would be the 6-day war in 1967, where Israel occupied the West Bank under Jordan, Gaza that was under Egypt, and the Golan Heights which Israel took from Syria (not Palestine). A massacre that had a recent anniversary (16/09/1982) was something you do not want to remember. It happened in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon called Sabra and Shatila. Israeli Minister of Defence Mr Sharon ordered the

massacre (along with some right-wing Lebanese militia) of 3,500 innocent civilians. The way these people were slain would make your blood boil. The massacre of Qibya in October 1953 by the IDF under Ariel Sharon, killing 69 people is also one you cannot forget. Documents showed that Sharon ordered his troops to cause maximal killing and property damage even though he told his troops to check that the houses, schools, and mosques were empty before blowing them up. Two-thirds of the deaths were women and children, 45 houses a school and mosque became rubble. It was traumatising. I think if you start by researching the Deir Yassin massacre in 1948, you'll end up with a long list of atrocities, which you won't want to remember."

*What do you want to say to the world? What do they need to hear?*

"I would like to tell the world to wake up and not turn a blind eye to Palestinians. None of the Security Council resolutions (242, 138, and 194) are being executed or implemented, and words from the UN after war crimes are committed by Israel, are meaningless. Palestinians need to be free; our land is being stolen and our people, our children are wrongfully arrested and killed all the time. The occupation is illegal and inhumane. This is Palestinian soil, and we are being treated like enemies and second-class citizens in our own land by the occupiers. Why should my niece be strip-searched every time she visits and leaves Israel (with her Israeli passport) because she looks like and is marked as a Palestinian or Arab? But no, it is a random "check" for 16 years to humiliate her and make her feel horribly degraded ever since she



in the interviews above; ensuring you receive an honest telling and have a more accurate understanding.

If you take one thing from this article, let it be that despite war and conflict, our ties to home and our identity is permanent. These interviews show that despite the pain caused by the Palestinian crisis, their memories are not tainted by this. Instead, they have chosen to remember the positivity and joy that their home in Palestine provided, like Olive picking or the beautiful smells of spices in Jerusalem. In other words, you can move away from your home, but it is still your home, and will remain so. Whilst these interviews cannot speak for everyone that has experienced extreme conflict, the idea that our home, our childhood and our relationships in these areas form a crucial part of our identity that stays with us, no matter where we may end up. It is a huge loss to be forced to flee your home, and it is understandable that people should wish to return.

Whilst solving issues of war, particularly the ongoing conflict between Palestine and Israel, is a difficult diplomatic challenge that we (the 'everyday' person) cannot resolve, what we can do is educate ourselves, choose to listen to stories or interviews like the ones above, and influence policy with our knowledge. This article can be the first step, perhaps, in achieving that.

Why should I be stopped at a checkpoint by a Romanian IDF soldier whilst trying to visit my family? Even when I'm holding the right passport, I am asked why I have a right to be here by a child who's taken my land and has no birth right here anyway. Why are my people being killed and their houses ripped apart almost for sport? Why is the world silent?"

*What do you want as a solution to the conflict?*

"No matter how many Arab world countries make treacherous 'peace' deals with Israel, if there is no Palestinian state, there is no peace. We will have to keep fighting for our right to breathe and exist. I just want peace."

*Would you return?*

"The right to return would be a utopia for me. There is no place like Palestine, and it will forever be what my heart calls Home. Despite all what is happening politically, I have a huge sense of belonging. When your country is wounded, you want to stay and fight, not fly."

These interviews provide us with a very personal and honest experience of what life is like in Palestine during this crisis. This point of view – the view of the individual in the midst of the conflict – is often neglected in the media. As stated above, it is easy to be misled by the media in countries rife with conflict, as the majority of the most prominent media outlets have commitments - loyalties even - to organisations that expect certain world issues (like the Palestinian crisis) to be presented with bias. This is why it is so important to learn about Palestine from people who have first-hand experience and personal knowledge about it, like those

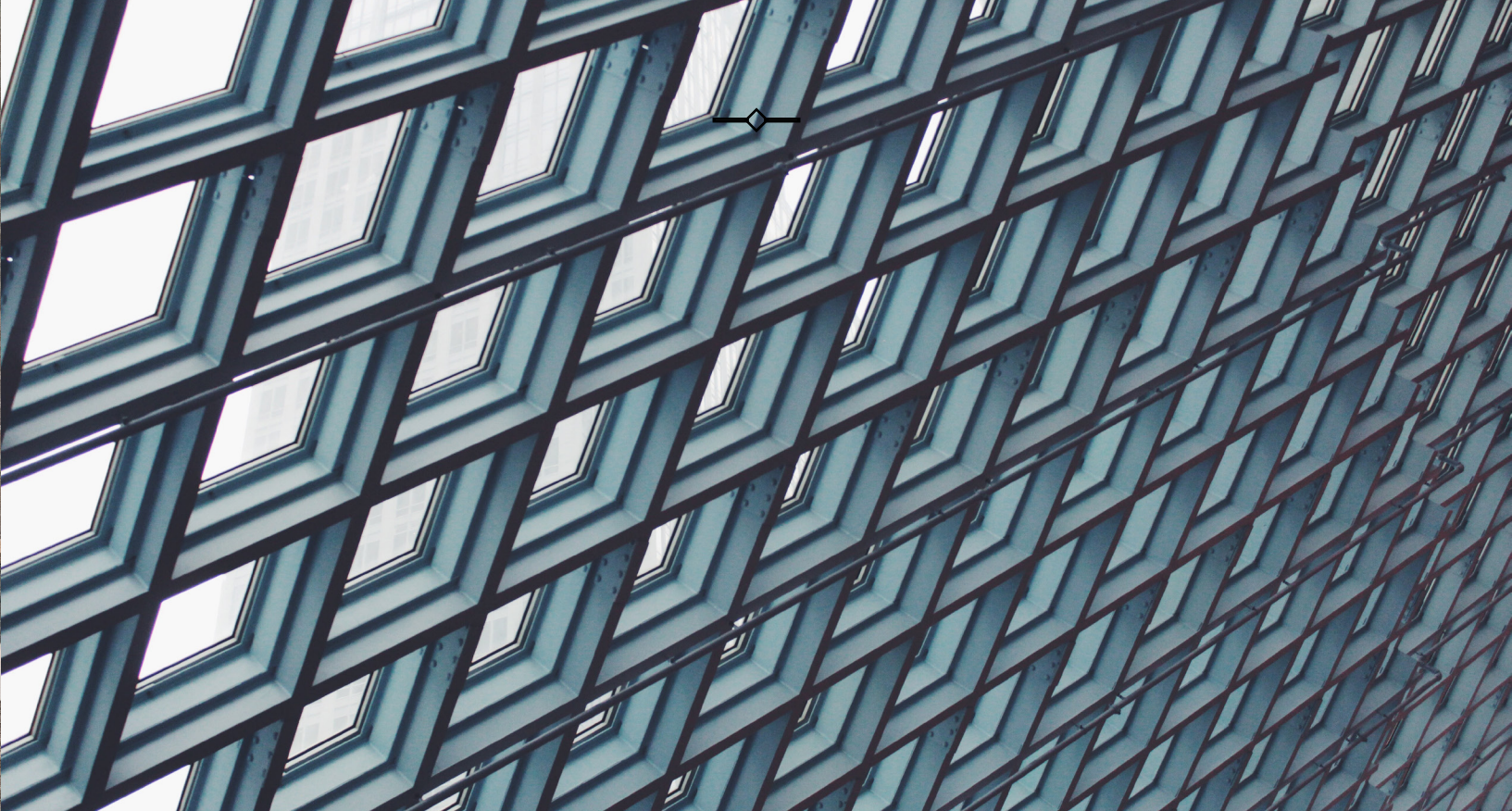
VIEWPOINT

VIEWPOINT

# DIVERSITY *REPORT*

News research highlights the worrying invisibility of women and people of colour in the mainstream media. But, what place do men have in breaking the glass ceiling in British newsrooms?

WHITNEY JONES, Associate Editor  
Entertainment



Over the last decade, diversity has become a buzzword when discussing workers in the newsroom.

*"When BAME expert guests appeared on primetime TV, they were only invited to talk about race-related topics."*

This year the conversation intensified with the devastating event of George Floyd's death and the global protests that followed. There was a short-term acknowledgement in which media houses pledged to be deeply committed to increasing diversity. But research has shown that the newsroom remains pale, male and posh.

Conducted in July 2020, Women in Journalism (WIJ) spent a week observing the racial and gender diversity of those in the media. They analysed reporters, presenters, expert guests and those quoted in the news. During the week, the analysis focused on eleven national newspaper front pages. Alongside this, they collected data from television and radio news programmes. These were observed at intervals such as breakfast, lunch, drivetime and 10 pm bulletins.

Last month, WIJ revealed from their survey that not one report by a black journalist made the front page of any UK Newspaper. Moreover, the study found that when Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) expert guests appeared on prime-time television and radio news programmes, they were only invited to discuss race-related topics. Over half discussed colonialism and the Black Lives Matter

movement.

Newspapers' newsrooms are struggling to represent the diverse society they serve. Women were also unseen in print media with one in four bylines attributed to them out of the 174 studied.

Adding on, it found that Black women are omitted as expert quotes in stories. As well as being absent from front-page bylines. Furthermore, only one quote from a black woman made the front page, out of 111 interviewees. This research confirms the hyper-invisibility of black women in mainstream media.



Broadcast coverage is reportedly better in its racial and gender diversity. TV presenters at prime-time are around 30% diverse. Then 12% of reporters are from BAME backgrounds. Yet, the experts used are more likely to be men than women.

Over the week, WIJ tallied 877 expert guests on prime-time TV news programmes of which only 30% were women. For radio, 816 expert guests appeared on over 130 radio newscasts. The study found that 68% of these were men.

This is only a snapshot of the journalism landscape and may not be an accurate representation. But, the report has exposed the failures of the press to diversify its newsrooms. If the media continues to not increase the diversity of its employees, it risks being a distortion of the truth and not the reflection that the audience needs.

Men, especially younger men, are key to changing the landscape of the newsroom. More progress occurs

when men are actively involved in gender diversity discussions. Yet, a study found that white men feel left out of diversity and inclusion. They feel threatened by these initiatives as they lose out on career opportunities. Specifically, for white men, their work ethic is rejected and attributed to white privilege.

*"For white men, their work ethic is rejected and attributed to white privilege"*

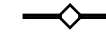
Dismissing this as white fragility and fragile masculinity is counterproductive. By refusing to acknowledge men's place in diversity and inclusion initiatives, the burden falls on women and people of colour to break barriers. BAME men have to do more to support their female

counterparts, but white men are in a better position to uplift everyone.

Engaging marginalised groups alongside white males frees them from the exhausting work of educating others on their world and experiences. Adding on, some men actively want to help, they just don't know how to. Millennial men's views better align with women's and people of colour than their older counterparts. Enlisting them into the D&I initiatives brings a different perspective. This better supports all colleagues in moving forward with diversity.

But, the media needs inclusive policies for all – including men. For example, flexible working, parental leave, promotions regardless of age (to stop discriminating women in their fertility peak) and more. By incorporating this, it removes the defensiveness of men as they are now included, creating a more fair newsroom.





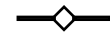
# *I'm still* HERE

---

*“Why do you look so confused? Are you okay? Do you remember me? I’m sorry I haven’t been able to see you for a few months, you know, because of coronavirus. Do you remember that? Mum? Are you okay? You’re shaking.”*

---

Words **EMMA RANTAKANGAS**



Having dementia is a distressing experience for everyone involved, which can be anxiety-provoking and bleak.

Dementia is a syndrome which causes a continuing decline of brain functioning. It goes beyond memory loss, sometimes causing deteriorations in mental sharpness, grasp of language, changes in personality, movement and mood.

Intertwined in our selfhood is our memories of experiences, an autobiography of who we were and how we became the person we are now. However, what does it mean when this starts to slip away?

When dementia enters into family life, there is a pervasive sense of shared loss. Family members suffer, watching helplessly as their loved ones slowly become further from the person they remember.

For families, they have to make the crucial decision as to whether they will take on the mantle of care for their loved ones at home or encourage them to move into a care home with experienced individuals who can provide 24-hour care.

The social isolation associated with lockdown has contributed to a noticeable cognitive decline in those who have dementia.

In particular, there are concerns about the worsening prognosis in people with dementia who have been placed into care, especially where family members are unable to visit due to the enforced restrictions. In the absence of face-to-face contact with family members, there exists a fear that their loved ones would decline

more rapidly due to the grounding effect that regular social contact and memory prompting would bring.

Those who have been fortunate enough to see their loved ones and look after them during the pandemic does not have it any easier. Someone who takes care of their loved one with dementia can experience anxiety, stress, depression and exhaustion. The mental pressure associated with caring can decrease quality of life whilst increasing risks for health complications such as depression. Those who haven't been able to look after their loved ones may feel worrisome that they're not receiving adequate care; they may even feel regret or guilt. What is incredibly important to remember is that no one is to blame in such a difficult situation.

Living with dementia is one thing, but living with dementia during the pandemic can bring increased anxiety and confusion. People living with dementia have limited access to accurate information and will retain less about the safeguarding measures surrounding the COVID-19 guidelines. The disorientation experienced could lead to difficulties such as remembering to wear a face-covering, which can expose the person with dementia to a higher chance of infection.

It is crucial for people with dementia that familiar family members are present for them during this restrictive and challenging period. People with dementia will respond to the familiarity of family carers who regularly visit, which will additionally lessen the state of fear and alarm experienced.

Some tips for anyone who may feel disconnected from their loved ones:

- 1) Find a source of well-formed and familiar memories to discuss.
- 2) Concentrate on maintaining a comforting tone in your voice.
- 3) Be present - try to visit as often as possible.
- 4) Remember to respect their age. Avoid stigmatising statements such as "They are just like children!"
- 5) Find out and use the names they would like to be called.
- 6) Don't assume they're confused all the time.
- 7) Treat them as usual.

Poor health, reduced mobility and cognitive impairment increase a person's chances of being lonely. Lonely individuals, regardless of age, increases the risk of poor health outcomes. Face-to-face contact is vital for people with dementia as the conversations will contain visual and other sensory clues for the person.

From personal experience, I have two grandparents in Sweden with Alzheimer's. Both at different stages in their conditions. During the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, my grandfather moved into a care home, leaving my grandmother to live alone. Both of them must've felt so upset and confused, but my grandfather needed professional care due to his health conditions. However, the thought of family members not being able to visit either of them (especially my grandmother, who had to live alone) breaks my heart. I can't imagine what this could've done to worsen their conditions. Fortunately, now they can see people again. But there are important lessons to be learnt about this from the pandemic - loneliness affects people with Alzheimer's.



*Thank you for reading*

THE NEW  
EQUILIBRIUM

&

BOYS  
IN  
POLISH

THE NEW  
EQUILIBRIUM

MAGAZINE

ISSUE 02

NOV 2020