

We Like To

We like to lambaste the “edgy” people who think hate speech is just words and doesn’t matter, who think that political correctness is a danger to free speech, who think that people these days are “too easily offended.” Occasionally, we may even be so bold as to do it in public.

We also like to think we’re accepting of people of different cultures. We like to think of everyone as equals, and avoid excluding anyone from our social circles on a basis of their race, ethnicity, or origin. We also like to poke fun at our friend’s idiosyncratically slow speech, or at how one of our roommates yells “wǒ cào” when he plays League.

We like to think we’re accepting of people across the spectra of gender and sexuality. One of our best friends is an agender, AMAB, male-presenting androsexual, and we like to feel good about how we validate his identity. We also like to be sure say “nah, I’m not gay,” or even “miss me with that gay shit,” lest anyone think *we’re* gay.

We like to call ourselves feminists, and like to claim that we uphold equality for the sexes. We also like to half-joke about “trying to smash,” and to grimace at our girlfriends’ political rants, and joke about and are complicit with how our guys we know will unhealthily obsess over women.

We like to think we’re a part of the solution, not a part of the problem.

We don’t like to think about it too much.

Reading Response 5

I was disappointed, but not surprised by what I learned in Kong's writing. Before reading about the Compton Cookout incident, the reluctance of the University to act, and the residual feelings of discomfort and confusion in the Asian American / Pan-Asian students at UCSD, I felt like these kinds of issues did not really arise on a broad scale. I was aware of and had briefly encountered sects of people who went against the grain on these sorts of issues, i.e. the "edgy" people I describe in my quasi-poem above. I'd had a run-in with people defending the use of the word "f*ggot" on a UCSD Facebook page, and had read the Koala's write-up about their "satirical newspaper," wherein they very openly conflated being offensive with being funny.

However, in my experience, it always seemed to be the same 5 - 10 people expressing these kinds of oppressive viewpoints, and a much broader range of people contradicting them, expressing what I assumed to be the majority opinion. Learning about these incidents makes me feel like perhaps these issues are not as negligible as I thought, and that the amount of people here who would perpetuate racism, sexism, and homophobia like this is much greater than I imagined. What bothers me most about it, though, is the University's hands-off approach. It's like saying you "don't see" race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, or whatever other facet of someone's identity. By neglecting to deal with these kinds of social issues and presuming them to be solved, they cultivate an environment where oppressive attitudes can prosper.

If I were to add anything to what I got from Kong's reading, I would say that this attitude of inaction is not just a fault of the University's administration, but perhaps of its student body as well. In my writing above, I attempted to capture how many people I've encountered label themselves as social liberals, and will uphold those values when tested, but can still perpetuate more subtle forms of oppression, and don't hold active roles in cultivating a more accepting environment on campus. I think that following the Compton Cookout incident, several steps were taken in the right direction. However, I also believe that if we're to avoid something like that in the future, we really need to drive home a strong sense of social justice and responsibility throughout student body and administrative corps.