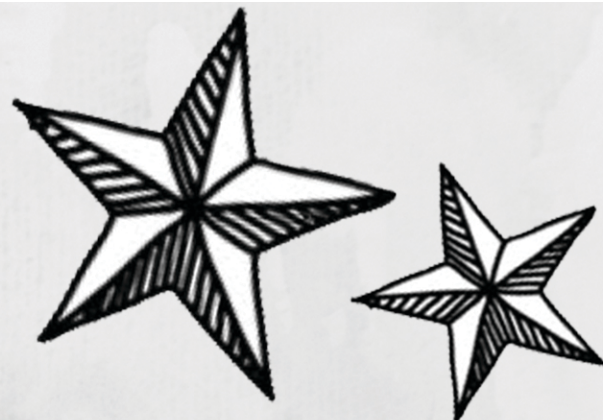


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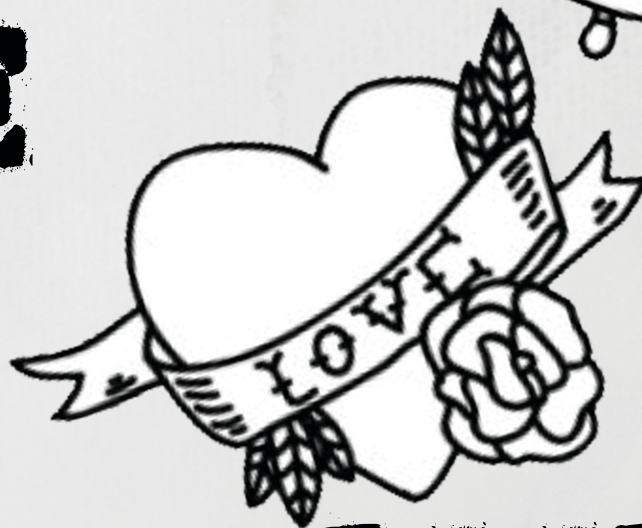
**THE**



**COUNTER**



**CULTURE**



**ISSUE**

# 11.10.2016

## Vol. XLVIII, No. 10

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Audrey Effenberger '19

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# INDY COUNTER CULTURE

On November 8, the people of Massachusetts answered a very crucial question by the ballot. It was not a question that occupied nearly as much airtime as the election; nevertheless, it concerns almost every one of us who reside in this state for the foreseeable future. This question, listed as '4' on the ballot, if answered 'yes' would "...permit the possession, use, distribution, and cultivation of marijuana in limited amounts by persons age 21 and older and would remove criminal penalties for such activities."

This newspaper has always considered it its prerogative to give a voice to views not duly articulated in conventional media. While the case for legalization of marijuana may not be as widely distrusted as it once was, we think it might still be long before it comes to be appreciated for what it really is: compelling. This article attempts to explain why we think so.

There are up to three arguments advanced by skeptics of legalization that may be worth considering: one (1), that the use of marijuana, at least for recreational purposes, is immoral; two (2), that marijuana legalization would in some way restrict its use; and three (3), that reduced use would be desirable for society. We begin by evaluating the validity of each of these claims, and consider whether they are supported by empirical evidence.

Firstly, it fair to assert that any reflexive presumption against the moral underpinnings of marijuana-consumption is both ignorant and misguided. Oftentimes this claim is advanced as a result of negative experiences people may have had with marijuana, which may be affected as much by their relations with people who admit to using it, as by their own biases. Neither is a particularly relevant basis for deciding policy, and much less for categorizing something to be immoral. The immorality of prohibition, on the other hand, is far more obvious. It is frequently pointed out that black Americans are arrested in much higher numbers than whites for possession of marijuana, and that the implications of the War on Drugs have been very different across racial groups in the US. Crucially, there is little or no evidence to assert that there exist any substantial differences

in usage-patterns across these groups, pointing manifestly to the racial biases that prohibition seems to perpetuate.

Secondly, the effects of prohibition on usage-patterns of marijuana are often overestimated. Colorado, which legalized marijuana for recreational use in 2012, saw

outcomes for society, is unconvincing. Perhaps it is conceivable that the marginal increases in usage in states that have legalized marijuana reflect social acceptability and attitudes, which are unlikely to undergo changes quite as quickly as the law. But even if one were to concede the point, there is little evidence to suggest that restricted use is itself desirable for society. Aside from the obvious limits prohibition places on individual liberties, by allowing the government to decide what one can or cannot consume—a dangerously slippery slope, mind you—it ignores valuable scientific research.

A study published by the Lancet that used 16 criteria to measure the harm caused by various substances—including damage to health, social, and economic costs—revealed that marijuana is less harmful than alcohol and tobacco, both of which are perfectly acceptable to consume in most parts of the world, and most specifically across all states in the US. Several other researchers have reached the same conclusion, many of whom even point to marijuana's benefits as a mild, and less dependent sedative than most available in the market. There is no better case for establishing the therapeutic effects of marijuana than its usage for treatment of a variety of ailments, including nausea during chemotherapy and chronic muscle pains.

It might be a while before marijuana is consumed with the same freedom in society as alcohol. Regardless of which way future referenda on similar questions go, however, it is important to question the purpose of prohibition. In terms of the social and economic costs it imposes on our society, it doesn't seem to be doing us any good. In terms of its possible impact on public health, there appears little reason to worry. If anything, the case for legalization of marijuana isn't only compelling, but also a moral one.

The Indy News Editorial Board (news@harvardindependent.com) looks to the future for changes in the state's policies regarding marijuana.

## Question 4

By the NEWS  
EDITORIAL  
BOARD

Legalize  
marijuana?

54% said YES

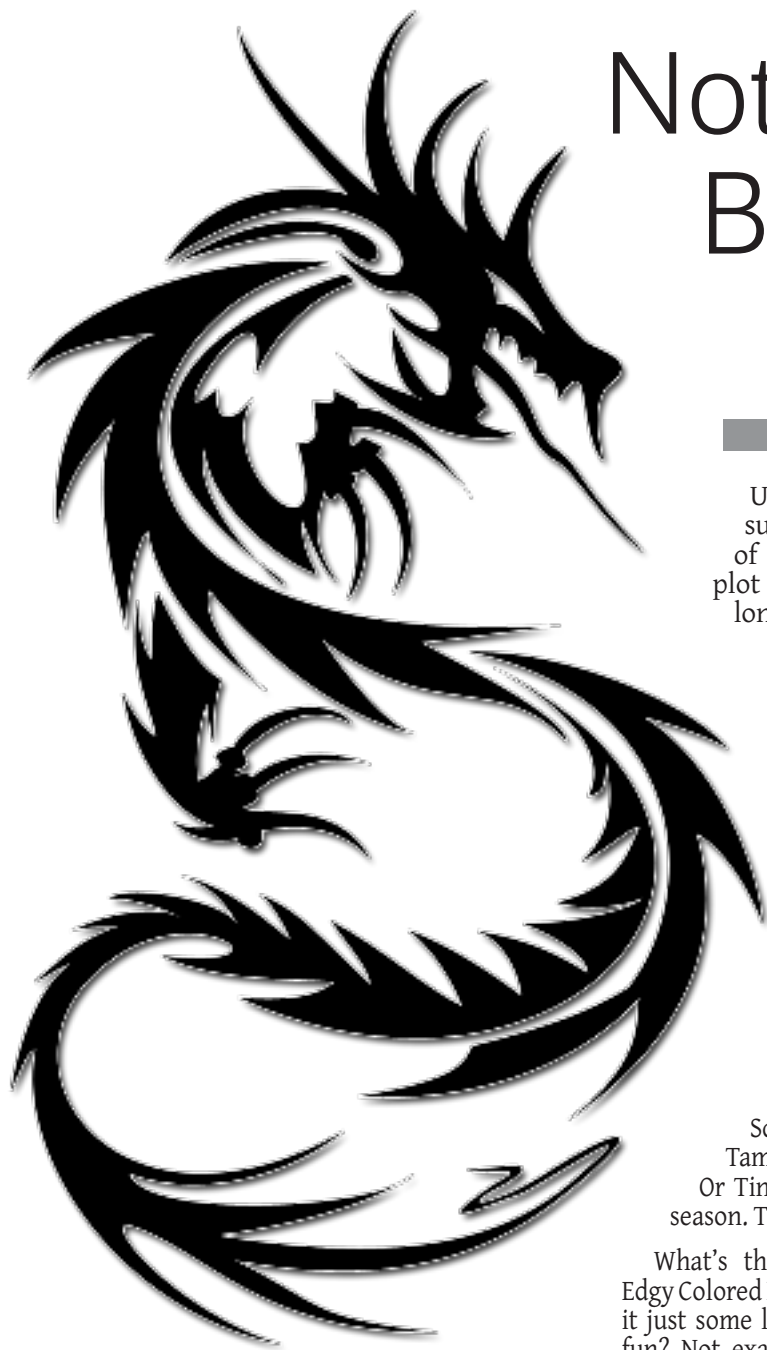
1,745,904 in favor

46% said NO

1,512,180 against

no increase in rates of use among teens, and a 5-6 percentage point increase among those of age 18 and above. It is important to note that even if the marginal increase in consumption were to be considered undesirable in and of itself, its effect is largely displaced by the fact that the supply of legal marijuana is more reliable; one would expect to trust buying packaged marijuana from a convenience store far more than from third-party underground dealers. The competition that legalization allows for in the market can further improve the quality of marijuana being transacted, and can ensure that not only does it become cheaper to procure, but also safer to consume.

Finally, even the claim that current trends in consumption may change as a result of increased legalization, and may hence lead to undesirable



## Not Your Dragon Lady, But Dragons Are Still Pretty Cool

By JESSICA JIN

Unworthy Main Character is suddenly thrown into a whirlwind of character growth, and then the plot device that is the MPDG is no longer necessary. She disappears as quickly as the autumn leaves she keeps talking about.

But here's a lesser-known version of the MPDG – the ECHA, or the Edgy Colored Hair Asian. The ECHA appears in movies and TV tropes wielding some kind of weapon, or at least an icy sarcasm. Most importantly, she has one or more brightly colored streaks in her hair, to show that she's Not Like Other Girls. Think Mako Mori

from Pacific Rim. Or Knives Chau from Scott Pilgrim. Or Gogo Tamago from Big Hero 6. Or Tina from Glee that one season. The list really goes on.

What's the problem with the Edgy Colored Hair Asian trope? Isn't it just some lighthearted aesthetic fun? Not exactly. The problem is, the ECHA is one continuing way that modern media fails to create diverse roles for Asian people, instead rehashing a long-existing trope of the exoticized Dragon Lady – a flat character who is deceitful, domineering, or otherwise mysterious.

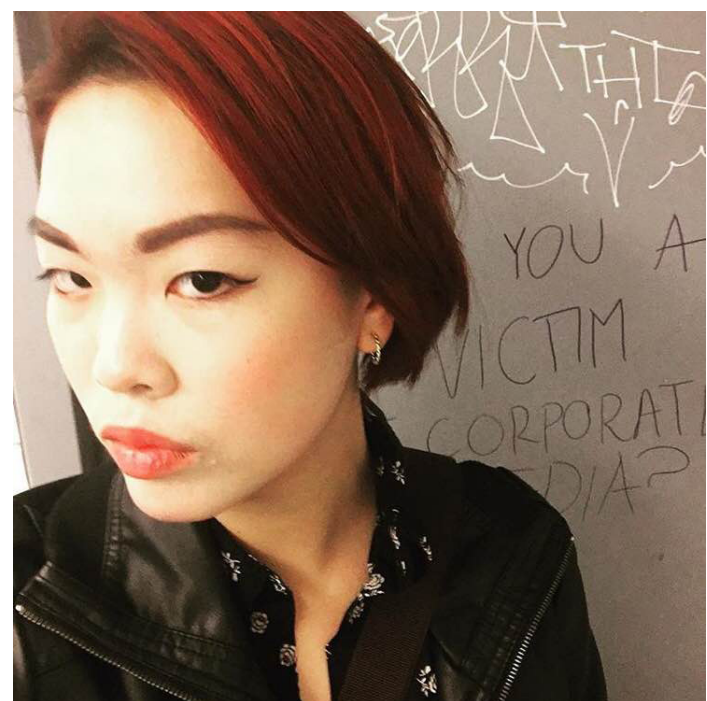
It's complicated. As media doesn't represent Asians in diverse roles, the role models available to me growing up were the Edgy Colored Hair Asian girls. I wanted to imagine myself badass like Mako

Mori or O-ren Ishii. Swords and dragons are, objectively, pretty cool. I dye my hair strange and bright colors, just for the hell of it. I wear Docs because they're honestly comfortable.

But what we as Asians need is not another trope. We need media representation that allows us to be diverse in all the many ways that I know us to be. We need black hair, and blue bangs, and all the multitudinous shades in between. We need the freedom of a voice that can be kind, can be sarcastic, can be snarky – not because anyone is expecting us to be, but because we have the power to speak.

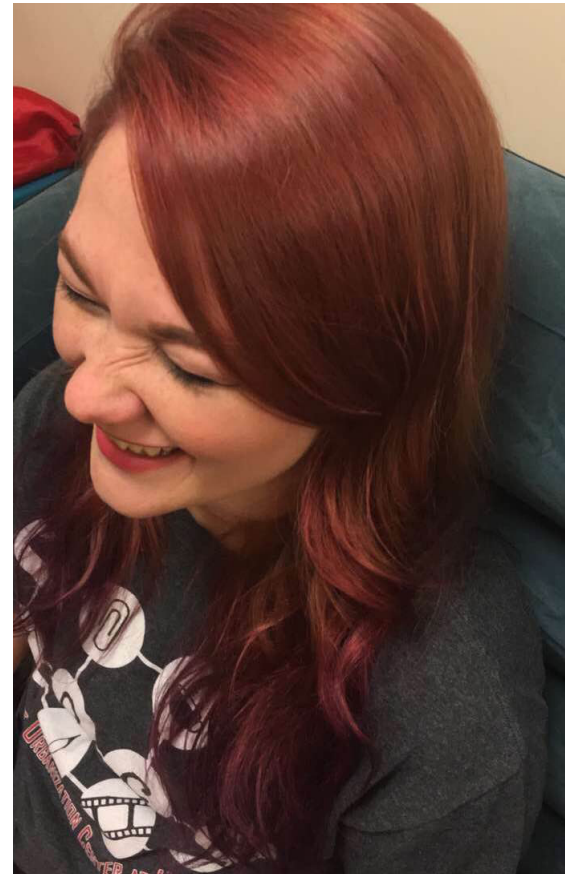
All we need is to be heard.

Jessica Jin (jjin@college.harvard.edu) is an intern at the Harvard College Women's Center and writes on gender, race, and memes.



So you've probably all heard about the MPDG trope in modern media, or the Manic Pixie Dream Girl. She who mysteriously drops into the ordinary main character's run-of-the-mill life, destroying every convention he held to be true with one stomp of her Doc Martens, flashing mischievous looks at him through her haphazardly arranged bright-blue bangs, who is the Interesting Girl, who smokes clove cigarettes and says valid shit like "Kerouac's a filthy misogynist" and "do you ever think about how futile seasons are?"

# INDY COUNTER CULTURE



## That's **NONE** of Your Business

Comments on my changing colors.

By HUNTER RICHARDS

My phone reads 12:13 as I glance at it on my way to my noon class and as I run past the law school -- hoping my professor is also running late today -- I'm almost so caught up in whether I will be interrupting lecture that I nearly miss the mother giving me a disdainful look while passing by with her toddler.

In the months of having bright dyed hair, I still do receive as many concerned looks as the small quote and Delta sign on my inner arm drew in the first week of having my tattoos. If there is one thing I hate, it is people trying to tell me what to do. I dye my hair because it is easy for me to feel like an exhibit, which people enjoyed seeing but only in an isolated and tamed state.

Before choosing any form of body modification that veers outside of typical, my advice would be to perfect a response to the many people who will ask for a justification of your choice. But to be honest, even though I feel certain and strongly about my choices to get my tattoo and dye my hair, it was rather impulsive. Just when I thought sophomore year couldn't get much worse, midterms hit me.

My engineering courses were fun but challenging, and often left me feeling like I was no longer unique or special.

I bought \$5 blue-green hair dye online at 3 am one night after studying for finals sophomore fall. It wasn't necessarily that I liked how the shade of teal would complement my red hair -- no, it was more that this was the cheapest option for Amazon Prime and I need change now. I dyed it myself in my dorm room and forgot to warn my roommate, who was caught off guard by the suddenly blue-tone to our shower curtain. I stuck to only dyeing the bottom 4-5 inches of my long hair because I'm not one for commitment, but that didn't mean I didn't frequently switch the tint once the color began fading.

Once I started feeling more grounded, I didn't dye my hair as often as I had before. I initially dyed my hair as a distraction. But it became a comfortable and creative way to express myself. I have always dyed my hair for myself. However, I quickly realized that many people wanted to comment on it. The Nice Jewish Boy I started seeing sophomore spring said he really liked the

color I had in my hair. But when I told him that I considered dyeing the entirety of my head blue, he "didn't think that would look as good." Up until I told him I had wanted to dye all of my hair, I actually had decided to go back to something resembling my natural red hue. I was actually coming down from an all-nighter and exhausted at that time but the unwanted negative response fuelled made me feel especially stubborn.

It didn't stop with my hair: after getting my tattoos, boys frequently felt the need to comment on my choices. "You're still in the honeymoon phase." I like comparing a tattoo to marriage because it certainly is a commitment, except this is a commitment to myself. My tattoo is similar to paying an ideally one-time membership fee to being happy and investing in myself. My tattoo was just that -- an investment in myself. While I understand tattoos may make you less appealing to certain employers, my paycheck will already be much lower than yours because of the gender wage gap and marginalization, so it's really not any of your concern. With the many aspects of life that I have no control over, I choose to exercise liberty in the areas that I do.

# INDY COUNTER CULTURE

Dying my hair is a much smaller commitment, to be fair, but nevertheless an investment in myself. I deserve it. I deserve the freedom to make “irrational” decisions, regardless of what potential employers may think of me, because I value taking time and effort to invest in myself. Dying my hair reminds myself that I am the one with sole control over myself. This is my body -- no matter who gave it to me, no matter who may encounter it -- and, for the time being, it is solely mine. You may be decorating your dorm room carefully for the year with the intention of leaving it no different than when you moved in out of fear that you’ll be term-billed, but there’s no term-bill for me. This isn’t a decision I’ll grow out of because I don’t plan on moving out of this body for a while and I want to make myself comfortable in it.

Hunter Richards (hrichards@college.harvard.edu) muses over what colors she’ll move to next!

**G**aydar—a fun portmanteau for some, a way to enact and affirm stereotypes of LGBTQ+ people for others. But for those in the queer community, signaling—what some might call gaydar—is a valuable tool for finding people to relate to, creating community, and seeking out friendships and partnerships with other queer people.

Historically, LGBTQ+ people have used specific markers to establish themselves as distinct from cisgender and heterosexual people, and some of these have turned into stereotypes. Think lesbians in flannel wearing docs and driving Subaru, gay men in fitted pants with colorful patterns and earrings. And lots and lots of glitter. The specifics of presentation are so ingrained in LGBTQ+ communities that names have been developed to describe these them—butch, femme, lipstick lesbian, wolf, bear, etc.

Today, many LGBTQ+ choose to get very specific body modifications that signal to others their place in the community. Common signals include piercings besides the earlobes (particularly cartilage, nostril, septum, and eyebrow), tattoos, and non-traditional hair colors and styles (especially short hair and undercuts). This serves as a way for LGBTQ+ people to more obviously and explicitly disrupt the conventions of hetero- and cis-normativity.

Based on the results of our Counter Culture Survey, significantly more self-identified LGBTQ+ people have non-traditional hairstyles

## queering the body

Tattoos,  
piercings,  
hair, and  
queer  
presentation.

By MEGAN  
SIMS



than not. Furthermore, a greater percentage of this population has tattoos than non-LGBTQ+ identified people. There are significantly more piercings besides the earlobes. For some, these choices were explicitly made for signaling. Talking to LGBTQ+ people on campus, one told me that while they were at Visitas, they had an industrial piercing, and someone they met (who later came out) believed that to be gay, one had to have an industrial piercing.

Within the survey results, however, very few people mentioned getting body modifications for gender or sexuality confirmation. Many of the self-identified LGBTQ+ expressed similar sentiments for their body modifications—they liked the way they looked, they wanted to commemorate a

special event or honor someone important, like to change things as a reaction to stress or boredom, or just wanted to. One respondent, who has over twenty body modifications, said “All of my modifications mark different moments in my life, often when a family member dies, occasionally when I go through a pivotal moment in life.”

Though the establishment of a queer aesthetic has been deeply important for many in the community, there are limits on the ability to present in ways that are openly and distinctly queer. Many on our survey who don’t have body modifications expressed concerns about parents, future job interviews, figures of authority, and others who might pass judgments based on their body modifications.

# INDY COUNTER CULTURE

Furthermore, many of the methods of modification so closely tied to queer presentation are often more closely associated with queerness on white bodies. Popular images of androgyny, for instance, are often undercuts on thin white cisgender people. Deviating from these norms constitutes both different ways of engaging with queerness and, often times, a greater danger of facing violence due to visibly queer signals. Particularly for people who don't inhabit bodies that are white, cisgender, middle or upper class, and thin, presenting as obviously queer can greatly increase the risk of violence. We see it in the violence enacted against queer and trans people of color far too often in this country. We see it in the way certain individuals are still discriminated against within LGBTQ+ communities. We see it in the classic conservative image of the fat, angry feminist with colored hair.

Some students have critiqued the Indy's survey and the broader implications of queer presentation as centered on whiteness and elements of presentation most frequently present in white communities. They pointed out astutely that different communities will define queerness—and queer presentation by extension—differently, and that to attempt to create an overall understanding of queer aesthetics. For instance, one survey respondent said, "I don't feel that they are necessary for me to express my identity the way I would like to, though I recognize that they are really important to many people." Because ultimately, queer identity goes far beyond the body and the way we present our bodies.

Megan Sims (megansims@college.harvard.edu) loves her tattoos and piercings but hopes that queerness will someday expand beyond limited forms of presentation.

**“Do** you ever get snot on that?” my little brother, to my mother's dismay, asked a woman with a septum piercing at the supermarket. She smiled sweetly, ignoring his question.

It was a valid, albeit socially inappropriate, question. Not having a septum piercing myself, I had always wondered about them—I guess it runs in the family.

Is it hard to blow your nose? Do people judge you if you have one? Does it hurt to get it done? It wasn't until one of my close friends decided to get one that I learned the answers to these hard-hitting questions.

For those of you who were as clueless and straightedge as me, I am sharing my

conversation with her about piercings and tattoos, but especially septum piercings. After entrusting you with this knowledge, I can only hope that you don't take a page out of my brother's book!

*Q: How many tattoos and piercings do you have?*

A: I have seven piercings and one tattoo. My ears were pierced in 4th grade. I got my last piercing in July, and my tattoo in November of 2012.

*Q: Why did you decide to get those particular body modifications?*

A: My ears were first pierced because my parents probably decided it for me because I'm a girl (#gendernorms). The second one I got with my grandma as a bonding thing. My dad was pissed though. I got the cartilage piercings next because I thought those look cool. One closed up, but I guess that makes it look edgier. I got my nipple done because it's hot as shit. I got my septum piercing because I thought it was edgy.

*Q: Why get a septum piercing over a stud in your nostril?*

A: I did my septum instead of my nostril because I didn't want the scar. Also, the unique factor.

*Q: What are peoples' reactions to your piercings, especially the one in your septum?*

A: [Pierced] ears are normal, so nobody really makes comments about them. My dad is the only one who has said anything negative about [the additional piercings in] my ears. I've gotten mixed reviews about my septum, but a lot of guys say they really like it at bars. People always point it out when I meet them for the first time. That being said, I know that some people are mentioning it for the talking point and not because they actually like it. I know not everybody likes [septum piercings].

*Q: Do you feel you have ever been discriminated against because you have a septum piercing?*

A: No, I don't think I have, but I've been very aware of it and don't wear my piercings when I think I might be discriminated against. For example, I don't wear [my septum piercing] when I go to class or when I'm trying to impress anyone professionally. If I know I'm going to be trying to earn someone's respect, either educationally or professionally. As a blonde girl, I already have that going against me, so I don't need to add to that. People

## Putting a Ring on It

Septum piercings, decoded.

By CAROLINE GENTILE

definitely look at me more when I have my septum piercing in. I just don't want to have to deal with that conversation, and don't want professors to think less of me or bring it up. I just avoid that situation in general. It's a piercing not everyone likes- my parents hate it. I feel like more people our age actually like it—or maybe they're just being nice, I don't know.

*Q: Have you always wanted to get a septum piercing?*

A: I always thought it was ugly when I was younger because I thought it looked like a bullring. Growing up, nobody had them except the emo kids smoking outside the mall, and they had the ugly, chunky silver nose rings with the ball on it. You can get really pretty pieces that make it look more artful than gothic.

*Q: You knew it was coming...is it hard to blow your nose?*

A: Yes, having it in really does make it hard to blow your nose! That's one of the downsides. It also falls out when I sleep or if I'm making out with someone.

*Q: Did it hurt?*

A: Actually, no! It was my easiest piercing and didn't hurt at all.

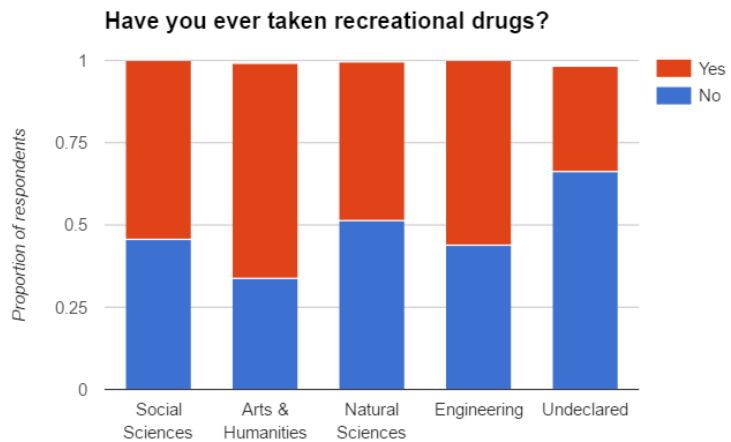
*Q: Do you have any regrets about it?*

A: No regrets at all! To be honest, there's not much to say about it; it's just a hole in my nose!

Caroline Gentile '17 (cgentile@college.harvard.edu) was so excited to finally have all of her burning questions about septum piercings answered!

# INDY COUNTER CULTURE

## THE 2016 COUNTER CULTURE SURVEY SUMMARY



Count on the Indy to venture where no other campus publication will.

Earlier this semester, as the Executive Board brainstormed potential new issues, our roving minds collectively drifted towards the issue of drugs and body modification. No other publication, at Harvard or elsewhere, had attempted to quantify the reach and depth of these often-discussed topics in a campus setting. The counter culture movement is said to be a young one; we were interested to see how it manifested itself on the young and bustling Harvard campus of 2016.

671 correspondents, or 1 in 10 Harvard undergraduates, took the 2016 Counter Culture survey that was publicized over undergraduate email lists. There was a clear gender bent to the survey respondents: nearly 71% of the respondents identified as females, while 27% identified as male and the remaining 2% identified outside of this binary. Of the overall respondent pool, 23% identified as being LGBTQ+.

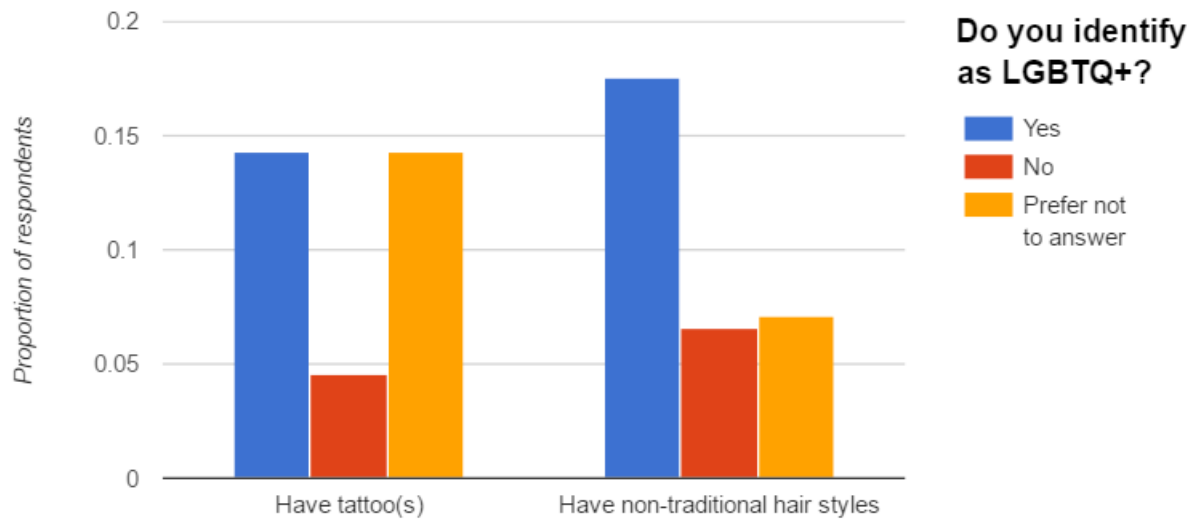
This map shows the proportional number of respondents from each house who have done drugs.





# INDY COUNTER CULTURE

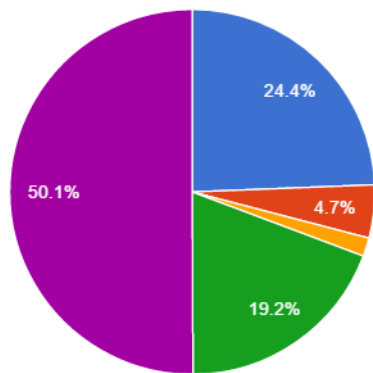
## Queerness and body modification



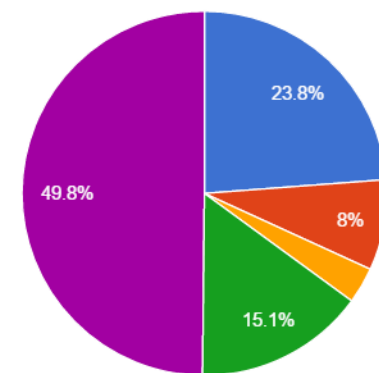
A vast majority of the respondents - 90%, to be precise - reported supporting Hillary Clinton in the Presidential elections, with just 14 individuals or 2% of the total respondents supporting eventual President elect Donald Trump. An average survey respondent was most likely to be moderately liberal and extremely non-religious.

Only about 31% of the respondents had done drugs prior to arriving at Harvard. After they arrived on campus, this number jumped to 44%. Residents of Kirkland House were most likely to have consumed drugs. Visual and Environmental Studies (VES) concentrators led the way when it came to mapping concentration-wise weighted drug consumption, either before or during Harvard.

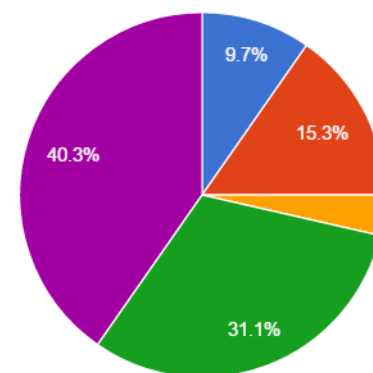
### Not very religious



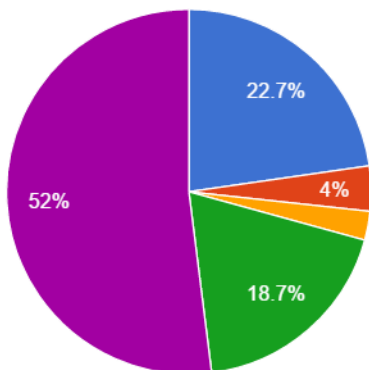
### Moderately religious



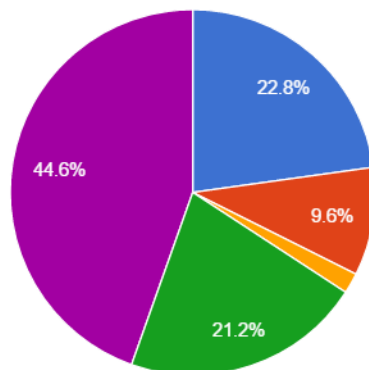
### Strongly religious



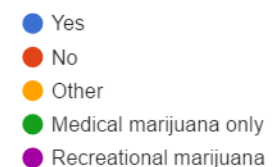
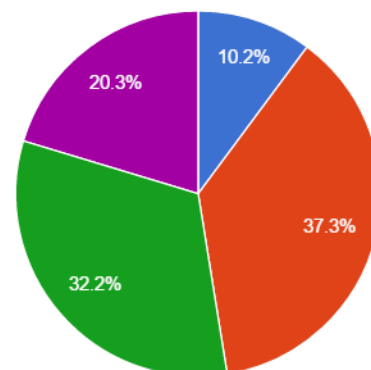
### Liberals



### Moderates

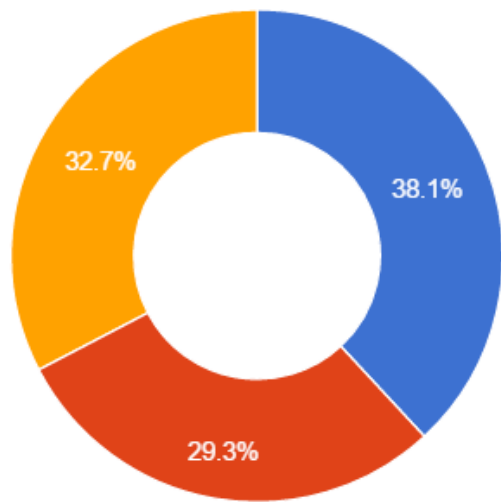


### Conservatives



# INDY COUNTER CULTURE

**Did you get your body mod(s) during the school year?**



- Yes
- Some of them
- No

VES was closely followed by History and Literature concentrators.

People with GPA's in the lower range (below 2.99) were most likely to take drugs, and individual's likelihood of taking drugs goes down as the GPA increased. Identifying as "Extremely Liberal" was highly correlated with having done drugs: nearly 71% of such respondents reported having done drugs. When it came to religious views, individuals who were in the middle of the spectrum were the most likely to have done drugs.

Marijuana was the most likely drug of choice for these students, with meth and heroin being the least likely. Only 1 and 3 respondents have consumed meth and heroin respectively in their entire lives.

Harvard students aren't chronic drug consumers, though. A vast majority, nearly 49% of those who had taken drugs after coming to Harvard reported having done drugs only 2-5 times since having come to Harvard. It was interesting to see how the supply networks operate: for these students, the suppliers were almost as likely to be members of the Harvard community (47%) as not (46%).

It was hard to reach a consensus for what might be the going rate for drugs bought while

at Harvard, suggesting that these prices might be a function of individual relationships, gender, ability to negotiate etc. For example, the price per ounce of weed varied from \$90 per ounce of weed to \$260 per ounce of weed.

A majority - 57% of the survey takers - supported the legalization of both medical and recreational marijuana. This is in line with broader trends. Various states, including Massachusetts, voted to legalize recreational marijuana in the November 2016 elections, although reports have suggested that it might remain banned on the Harvard campus.

As for body modifications, ear piercings were the body modification of choice for most survey takers (44%), including both "traditional" ear lobe piercings and other piercings. Tattoos lagged far behind in second place, with only 7% of respondents reporting having some form of tattoo on their bodies. Straight-identifying individuals were more likely to have some kind of body modification (including ear piercings). However, LGBTQ+ individuals were much more likely to have body modifications when ear piercings were not included.



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## Untitled

By DARIUS JOHNSON

the first thing they teach you in bible school  
is the original sin  
the first exodus of the human race  
out of the garden  
where God grew our flesh and watched it wilt  
under the weight of falling apples  
and cognizance  
when he used the earth as seed  
to grow the first bodies  
the stench of our curious liquor  
more poisonous than snake's venom  
brought draught to the soil...

Adam's eyes, filled with breasts for the first time,  
watered—  
half insatiable like mouth beholding prey  
half irritable like saint beholding devil  
the scar on his ribcage burned  
and his first gift to her,  
after her sin fed his mind with knowledge,  
was a garment with which to cover herself.

in the first exodus of the human race  
we left eden  
but when will eden leave us?

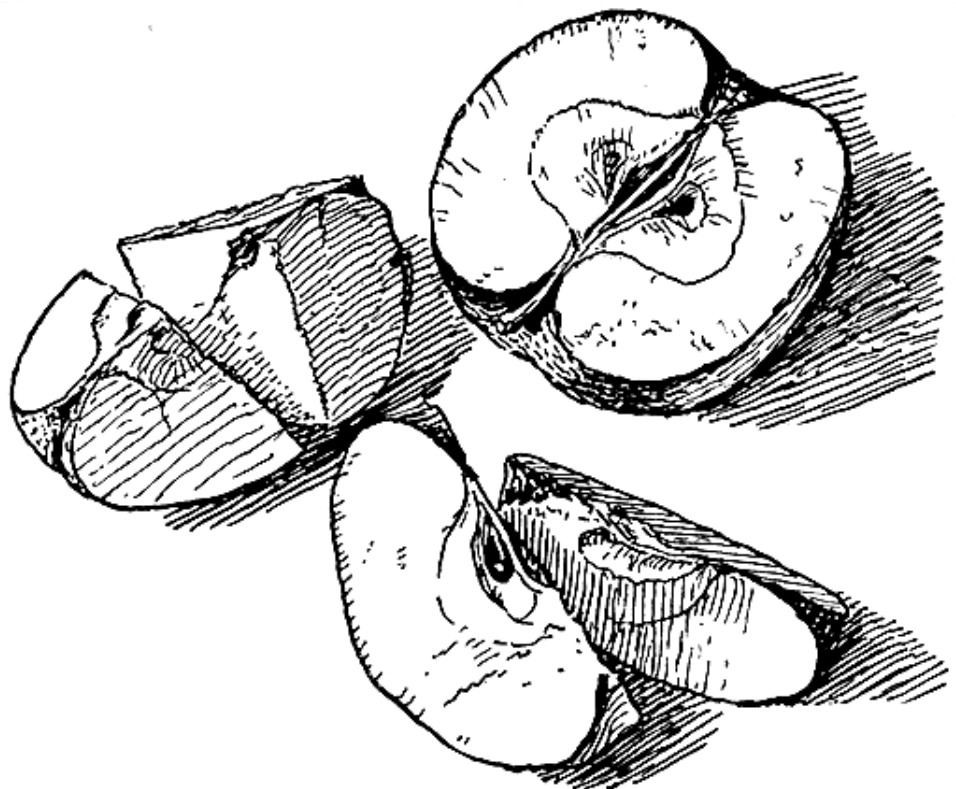
we men don't question our promiscuous serpents  
and all of their lazy tricks—  
don't question gravity,  
the power of a falling apple—  
things to which we think we bear no resemblance—  
but the bearing of a naked body  
the dancing of flesh around calcified dust,  
plump and moist with life and passion,  
is of no concern to us.

from the relentless sashay of hips  
we do not recall  
tiny billows of dirt  
struggling to stand and shriek against the silence  
that accompanies a barren earth.

don't you know a barren chest knows not creation?  
knows not cream, honey, nor nectar  
knows not spine like tree trunk  
before whittled down into rocking chair for your  
leisure?  
commonplace. painted. polished, shined. covered  
with fabric  
burned with cherub breath until unrecognizable  
un-enterable  
don't you see - we have put Eden into our women.  
and into some of our men.  
we have turned a body into pasture  
for burning bush and scarlet scar  
that grow hologram blossoms—  
all color and no texture.

exodus is a necessity  
is natural like water ripples in disturbed ponds  
before the water gets too stale  
and we forget all the movement we can make.

Darius Johnson (djohnson01@college.harvard.edu) is a poetry contributor to the Indy.



APPLE CUT TO SHOW POSITION OF SEEDS.

*Line And Form*, Walter Crane (1900)

# drawn and quartered



Inkspiration from  
Harvard students.

