

Miniature teenagers in a miniature fashion parade



Jessica Mutch

It's early morning in a suburban town hall. It's the finals of the national ballroom dancing competition and the seven-year-olds are strutting their stuff. Dance music bounces off the polished wooden floor. Little girls preen and prance in leopard skin lycra, fake nails,

fake tan, fake eye-lashes and fake smiles. All of this stuck on or stretched over the fresh, young seven-year-old dancers.

It's like a kiddie's botox party. Young bodies grind together in a sexy rhumba and tease each other with cheeky faces. As a spectator you wouldn't be blamed if you thought these tiny dancers were twice their age — mid-teens at least.

All part of the dancing culture? Maybe — but when will this become the norm? If kids dress up this way for dancing competitions when will kids do this every day? Dancing is the latest example of girls trying to be too old, too young.

Walk through a suburban shopping mall or the main drag of Botany Centre on a Saturday morning and look at the eight-year-olds getting dropped off by their parents to meander around the shops. Miniature teenagers in a miniature fashion parade.

Department stores have caught on big time to the pre-teen fashion scene. Black high heeled boots, tight hipster jeans and low-cut tops are proudly displayed — in the children's section. Miniskirts and furry boots adorn the plastic bodies of tiny mannequins the size of primary chil-

dren. Britney Spears, you have a lot to answer for.

Look at the g-strings for little girls being sold in Farmers. G-strings?

I'm not talking about adult underwear that little kids buy. These are skimpy knickers designed with eight-year olds in mind. You can tell they're for eight-year olds because they have little flowers and pictures of butterflies.

But this is underwear designed to be sexy. Can you imagine a parent going to the lingerie department and picking out a pretty g-string for little Tiffany? Just make sure she doesn't get the visible panty line. Call me old-fashioned but it's just ridiculous.

Maybe teen idols like the Olsen twins are to blame for this. Their new line of fashion clothing has got young girls going crazy. As Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen get older they keep their same target audience. The youngsters want to stay looking just like those teenage megastars. Like Barbie's kid sister dressed as a tart.

I don't want to admit it, but the other day one of these kiddy Britney-Olsen clones walked by me and I thought, "Hey, I wonder if they have that outfit in my

size!" Smooth black boots, fade-washed jeans with a mint green jacket.

Maybe fashion shops have tapped into the pre-teen fashion market by just duplicating the teen and 20-something style. Just make one style in a range of sizes. Not different, just smaller.

What ever happened to the days of fluoro kiddie bike pants and Garfield t-shirts and cute pig-tails? Why do kids now have to dress like mini adults or rock groupies?

Trust me kids — you have all your late teenage years to enjoy that kind of carry on. You pre-teens should go back to looking after your *Cabbage Patch* dolls and your *My Little Pony*. Maybe that's half the trouble — no-one plays dress up with dolls any more.

In 2010, will the ultimate eight-year-old party present be a session on the sunbed, a subscription to *Cosmopolitan* and that DVD boxed set of *Sex in the City*? I hope not. I really hope not. Now, where did I put my Barbie's nice pink party dress?

Jessica Mutch is a final-year Bachelor of Communication Studies student at AUT.

Stripper-gate?...Corn-gate? How about Boredom-gate?



Karl Puschmann

Despite my confident swagger and laid-back demeanour many will be surprised to discover that beneath my easy-going "hey, whatever" attitude lies an altogether different beast. If asked to sum myself up in three words or less I'd say "very particular". And seeing as I'd come in under the word count, I'd probably add "concise".

But yes, I do have a fairly substantial hate list. Some people say "hate" is too strong a word. I tend to agree.

But I can't bring myself to say something like, "Oooo, I really dislike feijoas". It always comes out as "Dude, I really hate feijoas".

And yes I've tried feijoa wine, and yes, I hate it.

Topping the old hate list is the media's continual usage of the term "gate" in the headline of whatever minor scandal the Government has embroiled itself in that week.

It's no secret that I'm not huge on politics but can I be blamed when our media flaps around spewing out gems like "Scampi-gate" and quite possibly the single most uninspiring headline of the modern age: "Corn-gate".

OK, I get the reference to Bernstein and Woodward uncovering the Nixon cover-up but "Corn-gate", puh-lease. That just sounds awful.

Corn-gate. Scampi-gate. Health-gate. Camilla-gate. Rubber-gate. Coffee-gate. Korea-gate. Cherie-gate. Nanny-gate. China-gate. Pretzel-gate. And even, God help us, Stripper-gate.

It is mind-boggling to think that journalism professionals came up with these

headlines. They all sound absolutely, positively shit-gate.

The restraint of our news media in May when Prime Minister Helen Clark elected to meet and greet a shaggy sheep rather than the 20,000 annoyed voters demanding an audience was surprising. I would've put money on the next day's headlines screaming "Shrek-gate" but I guess DreamWorks lawyers must have put the willies up editors around the country.

Some scandals are so scandalous they get the added notoriety of having two "gate" headlines. That whole President Clinton scoring his intern thing first came to prominence boringly as "Monica-gate". Realising this was a poor effort, an enterprising editor came up with the racier: "Zipper-gate".

A recent entry to the exclusive two-titled club was Janet Jackson experiencing the horror of a wardrobe malfunction. I guess if she wanted to, Ms Jackson could directly track the malfunction to Justin Timberlake's busy little hands ripping the bra off her amply implanted bosom.

It's a good thing she wears those freaky, silver-plated ninja stars over her nipples. Kinky bitch.

This well planned — and nicely timed to coincide with the release of her new single — scandal was first titled "Nipple-gate". This was far too tasteful for such a manipulative publicity stunt so someone came up with the much more appropriate, bovine influenced, "Teat-gate". Snigger.

Kudos to the States for having fun with the whole "gate" thing though. Which am I more likely to read "Stripper-gate" or "Corn-gate"? Sorry, no prizes for guessing correctly.

Corn-gate...Corn-gate...Corn-gate. It manages to sound infinitely more boring every time you hear it. And besides, who the hell cares about corn anyway?

This has got to stop. Unless it's a story about an actual physical gate, I never want to see or hear the word gate in the news again.

And if this mythical day appears, for whatever unfathomable reason a real life, stock standard wooden gate plays a starring role in that day's news, you can bet your bottom dollar the headline that leads the news will be "Gate-gate".

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One day, if we're lucky, we too can join the lofty 'they' club



Barnaby Sharp

When I was growing up, I wanted to be an astronaut, and a fireman and an airline pilot. Usual boy jobs I guess.

And I suppose most girls wanted to be a homemaker, a seamstress or a nurse — typical, honourable pursuits for the fairer sex.

In fact, I think I have changed my mind on potential careers more often than I have actually had any careers at all.

Maybe this was my problem — a lack of direction.

As it turns out, the answer was staring me right in the face all along.

I should have aspired to be a "they". You know — "they" say this, and *they* say that. In fact, any interesting or even remotely useful thing to know has come from "they".

Just think how cool you would be. Invitations to parties would increase tenfold. Who wouldn't want a "they" at the party? You would be the life of it without a doubt and I imagine star-struck women would fall all over you like a guillotine to a bourgeoisie neck.

The usual staid introductions would be replaced with a gleeful, almost arrogant, "I'm a they, what do you do?"

But how do you get to be a "they"? Is it like studying law or medicine?

You have to go to university and answer some highly intelligent questions such as naming three things that "they" have said in the last five years, in order to become one of the hallowed few.

I would tell you the answers, but "they" asked me not to.

Parents all over the world would cease

encouraging their children to study such redundant topics as reading, writing and arithmetic, instead drumming into little Jonny's 10-year-old mind that he should solely concentrate on becoming a "they".

And what if you had the fortune, or indeed misfortune, to have a parent who was a "they"? Would living up to expectation be too much for some, or would those lucky enough get to be a "they" by right of birth?

Those who are "they" would undoubtedly become civic leaders, carrying the knowledge basket firmly on their shoulders, or on watching their women folk carrying it for them. They are a crafty lot.

But the precious domain of the "they" isn't just for men.

They say we use only 10% of our brains. They also say the corner office is the most powerful. What do they know?

Collectively, they say a lot and they are listened to; they make up conspiracies and people listen to them. They also say "apparently" in front of every statement, giving them a perfect opt-out clause for anyone unsure of the truth.

They shape our lives by giving us the answers without allowing us to even think about the questions. They help us out so much.

They are the lucky few, but with time, and excessive parental guidance, we can all one day reach the lofty, party loved club that "they" started.

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Got a 'Big Mouth'?

Send your letters to the editor at
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