

Transcript: “The Aww Factor” by Jackie Hagan

Presented at AEME 2021 Events Principles and Practice: a level playing field?

Hiya, this is Jackie Hagan I'm going to do a poem for you but first I know that there's a lot of people in the, you know, the Zoom audience who, who run and contribute to Carnivals and Parades and I - Carnivals and Parades and that whole bit of, well, you know, where you see your own street or a street you go down all the time and it's all different - I love that stuff

It gives me life, so thank you for doing that and make sure that I can come to the ones in the future. Because I'm in a wheelchair I can't see much now so...

This poem is called the “Aww Factor” and it's about when adults make this noise to other adults: “awwwwwwwwww!” [laughing] like that, on YouTube or fluffy, like you know, chicks or summit, but doing it to another human is [laughing] it's really... you know, some people are vilified and some people are ‘babified’ and Disabled people are definitely ‘babified’.

I talk about two people in this - Josh and Pantyliner - and they're two people who are, they're just the people on TV that you see in the advert who are perfect, who don't - who aren't real, are they? Like, I mean like Kate Moss - no one looks like Kate Moss, including Kate Moss... [laughing] and it's like that - it's just a fantasy that we all, you know, we feel bad about not living up to and that sometimes is what says what's possible - ANYWAY, the poem!

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That sing song lilt and tilt of the head - “Awww! Are you in a wheelchair?” It comes from people who are essentially ‘nice’, people whose hearts are made of heart

That sing song lilt and tilt of the head, “Awww, are you 73 and still in love?” Like strength of character is childish

There's a boy with a lion's heart, let's call him Josh for now.

We might as well as he doesn't exist.

He has strong teeth, he is not shy, he cries and does not cry, he is hard, he is tall, he is football. Shaves with the 33,000 blade Gillette and uses showergel called ‘Steel’.

There's a girl with a lion's heart, let's call her Imogen - for now. She has no hair from the eyebrows down, gives us the right amount of embarrassment for having a human body.

She's gentle, strong and discreet - like a pantyliner - in fact, let's call her pantyliner.

She's told she's not pretty enough so she goes to Boots 'cause "here come the girls" and they're f*cking insecure. 'Cause we made them that way.

Josh and Pantyliner go on holidays. They have kids called "Hashtag", "Generic French Name" and "Status Quo".

"Awwww! Do you not have kids?", because you simply didn't want to have kids, "Awwww, God, I'm so sorry for you!".

It goes without saying that Josh and Pantyliner are white, they have loads of friends with bright, white teeth.

That sing song lilt, "Awwww! Are you, not white?", "Systemic racism is just so sweet!", "Gays are so cute!", "I want to cuddle basic human rights!".

It goes without saying that they are not yet disabled, "Awww! Are you terminally ill? Like a teddy bear?".

It goes without saying that they are middle class, "Awwww! Have you lived a life of poverty, shortened life expectancy? It's just so precious!".

[Sighs] There's a point when empathy turns to disgust, when we are not doing it right, we're blamed we should be robust, we should have 'tried harder' to be a 'good immigrant', a 'good disabled', 'useful for society' - an 'inspiration'.

'Good council estate', taking the beatings on the chin and putting your name down to be a scapegoat, zero hours contract. 'Good Black', 'good Brown', 'good old', 'good fat', 'good weirdo'.

Grateful, sexless, quiet, un-demanding, calm in the face of constant attack and invisible

- until 'Diversity Week' [laughs].

This emotion, let's call it "Awwww!", it's useful - it means we get help in a disaster, at the end of the world... or maybe they'll just put inspiring music on in the background as we burn to the grateful strains of the Greatest Showman, this is me... this is not me.

We do not "Awwww!" adversity.