

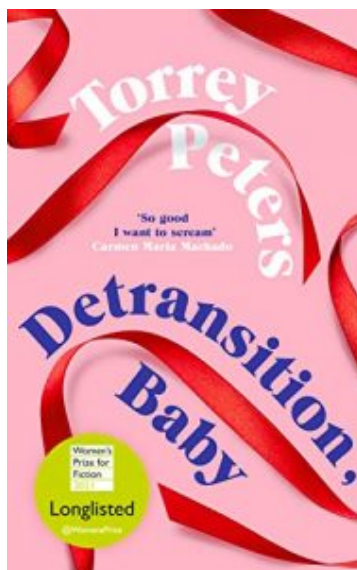
15 Recommended LGBTQ+ Books for #IDAHOBIT2021



Since 2004, 17 May has been the annual **International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (#IDAHOBIT)**. On IDAHOBIT we unite to celebrate gender and sexual diversity and to stand against prejudice and discrimination experienced by LGBTQ+ people and communities.

[Spectrum](#) is LSE's LGBTQ+ staff network and is here to represent and support staff who are lesbian, gay, bi, trans and of any sexual orientation and gender identity. IDAHOBIT 2021 is a hugely important opportunity to keep up momentum for positive change, despite the difficult times we are facing globally. For #IDAHOBIT2021, members of the LSE community have recommended 15 LGBTQ+ books to entertain, engage, move, inform and inspire.

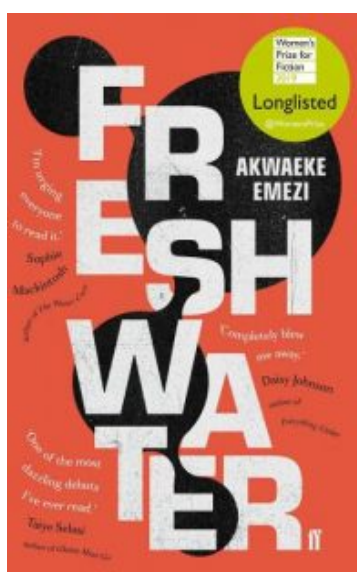
[Detransition, Baby. Torrey Peters. Serpent's Tail. 2020.](#)



Longlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction, *Detransition, Baby* tells a complex story about gender, transition, desire and the ambivalences that come with prospective motherhood. In a cultural moment in which the straw-man figure of the 'detransitioned' person is being mobilised against trans rights, this compelling and uproarious novel wonderfully articulates a transfeminist politics by giving a messy and human portrait of trans, and cis, life.

Recommended by Dr Jacob Breslow, Assistant Professor of Gender and Sexuality, Department of Gender Studies

[**Freshwater. Akwaeke Emezi. Faber. 2018.**](#)

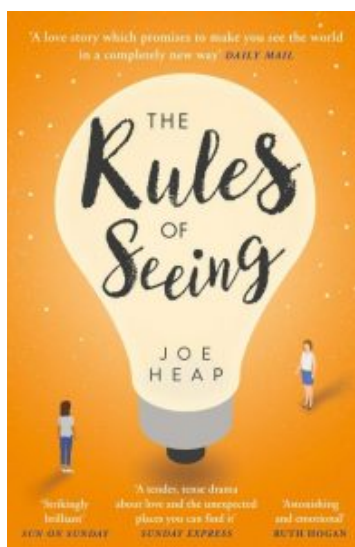


This fictional book that connects with autobiographical “realities” is a compelling debut novel by the goliath of an author, Akwaeke Emezi. As an Igbo/Tamil writer, Akwaeke explores the dynamics of gender, sexuality, race and culture in such a jarring and moving way, while exploring a story that takes you on a rollercoaster of emotions.

Emezi does all this while touching on ancient Nigerian spiritual forms of knowledge and beliefs and the internal struggle that comes from being an “ogbanje”. They paint a beautifully painful yet liberating picture of a life struggling to have a body and spirit that truly aligns, or reaching an understanding that this alignment may never come but is a tension that can be a source of power. This book shook my perspectives wide open, as if I was drinking freshwater, making me personally reflect, while wanting to learn more about the experiences of others.

Recommended by Ikenna Acholonu, Africa Engagement Programme Manager, Firoz Lalji Centre for Africa

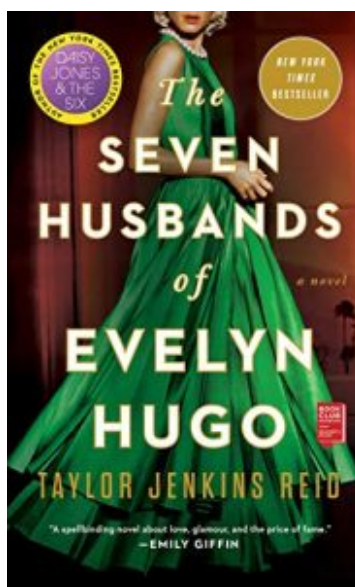
[The Rules of Seeing. Joe Heap. HarperCollins. 2018.](#)



This book is completely gripping and you will be invested in these two very different characters from the beginning: Nova, a lesbian who has been blind from birth, considering a sight-giving operation, and Kate who has an injury and consequently struggles with her mental health and a disintegrating marriage. The chance meeting between the two changes both of their lives forever. This is a thought-provoking, dramatic (sometimes thrilling) novel with many twists and turns that will keep you turning the pages.

Recommended by Amanda Gaddes, Executive Programmes Manager, Department of Health Policy

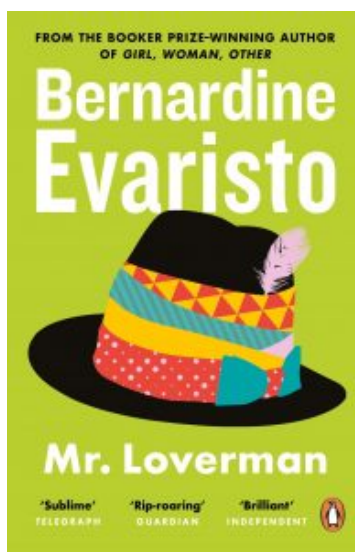
[The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo. Taylor Jenkins Reid. Washington Square Press. 2020.](#)



This book is primarily set within the ultra-glam of old Hollywood and explores themes of family, love, friendship and identity over the lifetime of the protagonist (spoiler alert: they're bisexual). This was one of my favourite lockdown reads as despite some tragic moments, it isn't as heavy as LGBTQ+ novels tend to be and is a super quick and entertaining read. Pure escapism. Despite her many character flaws, I do literally want to be Evelyn Hugo when I grow up, she's iconic!

Recommended by Amanda Gaddes, Executive Programmes Manager, Department of Health Policy

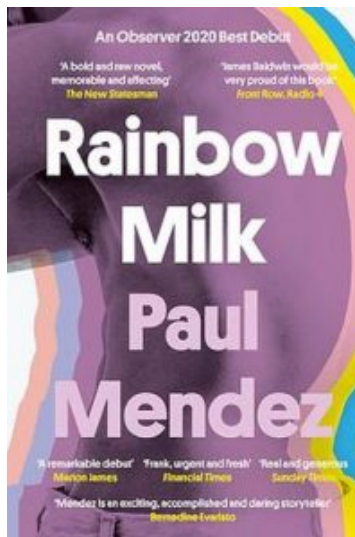
[Mr. Loverman. Bernardine Evaristo. Penguin. 2020.](#)



This is a terrific novel about a black Caribbean man in his seventies in East London who is deciding whether to come out to his wife and family. Evaristo's writing is beautiful and I found the story captivating. I loved following Barry around different parts of London, and I enjoyed reading about a perspective and story really different from my own.

Recommended by Victoria Frost, Deputy Head of Student Services (Wellbeing)

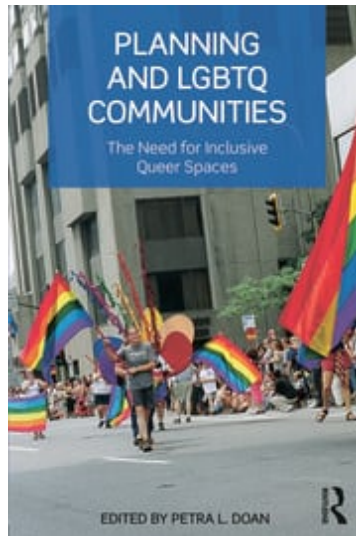
[Rainbow Milk. Paul Mendez. Dialogue Books. 2020.](#)



Rainbow Milk has numerous glowing reviews and for good reason. It's an intense yet tender exploration of a young black queer man finding himself in London having grown up in a very religious household. With a fresh take, it delves into themes of masculinity, bodies, sex, family, class, race and intersectionality in general. This felt like a very special read and I can't wait to see what Paul Mendez comes up with next!

Recommended by Amanda Gaddes, Executive Programmes Manager, Department of Health Policy

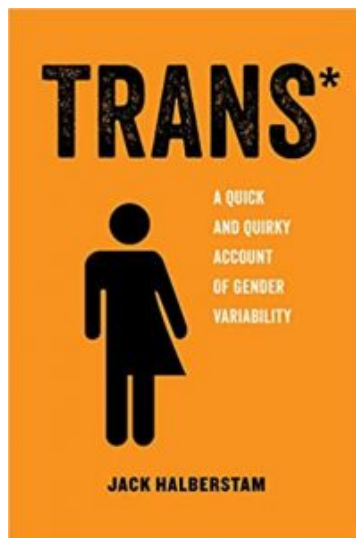
[Planning and LGBTQ Communities: The Need for Inclusive Queer Spaces. Petra L. Doan \(ed.\). Routledge. 2015.](#)



Petra L. Doan's book is an illuminating entry point into thinking about urban interventions that take queer concerns seriously, and address them explicitly. This is particularly useful for contemplating how cities can be 'queer', whether they have famous 'gaybourhoods' or not.

Recommended by Dr Ryan Centner, Assistant Professor of Urban Geography, Department of Geography and Environment

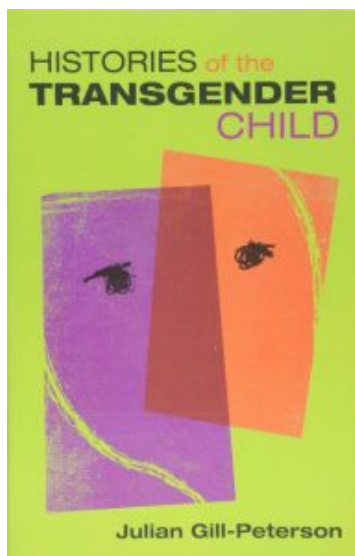
[**Trans*: A Quick and Quirky Account of Gender Variability. Jack Halberstam. University of California Press.**](#)



Although this book is not exactly as orientated towards novices as its subtitle suggests, it brings the formidable insight of one of the most prolific trans scholars to bear on contemporary debates and confusions, with a thoroughgoing insistence on both humanity and playfulness.

Recommended by Dr Ryan Centner, Assistant Professor of Urban Geography, Department of Geography and Environment

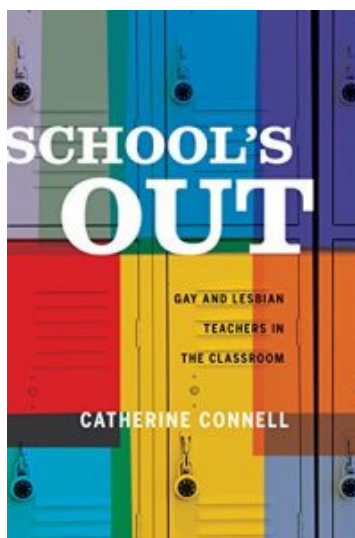
[**Histories of the Transgender Child. Jules Gill-Peterson. University of Minnesota Press. 2018.**](#)



Trans children are not new. In fact, trans children have been surviving, thriving, struggling and transitioning for decades, even prior to the coining of the term 'transgender'. In this meticulously researched and outstanding monograph, Jules Gill-Peterson delves into the medical archive to uncover stories of young people who navigated medical gatekeeping and institutionalised racism. This book is a must read, particularly at a time when trans children are facing increasing legal and cultural antagonism.

Recommended by Dr Jacob Breslow, Assistant Professor of Gender and Sexuality, Department of Gender Studies

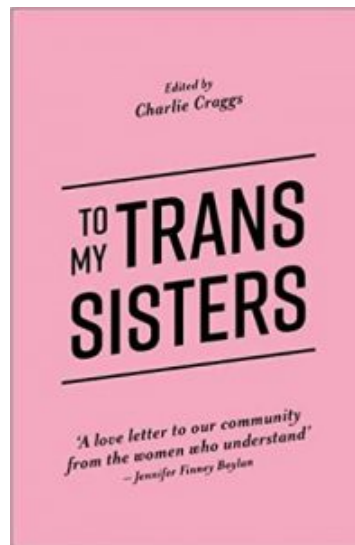
[School's Out: Gay and Lesbian Teachers in the Classroom. Catherine Connell. University of California Press. 2018.](#)



Although focused on the US context, and teachers working in secondary education, this insightful monograph delves into the personal and professional lives of queer educators with sensitivity and discernment to show the very real everyday dilemmas, affronts and sometimes joys they experience in differently structured institutional settings, and in contrast to their heterosexual counterparts. This is an important text for taking seriously what queer academics must confront as people with real (more-than-work) lives in bureaucratic professional settings that often efface or ignore their non-normative sexual identities — a minimisation that presents challenges for inclusion, even if LGBT people are mostly no longer openly, categorically vilified in these work environments.

Recommended by Dr Ryan Centner, Assistant Professor of Urban Geography, Department of Geography and Environment

Want to dig deeper into issues facing the LGBTQ+ community or become a better ally?



For this year's [LSE Students' Union Pride Week](#), we created a resource list featuring [books, music and podcast recommendations recommended by LGBTQ+ students](#). Judith Butler's hugely influential [Gender Trouble](#) and [Undoing Gender](#) are a must for anyone interested in queer theory or contemporary gender relations. We also love Audre Lorde's beautiful autobiographical novel, [Zami](#), and the iconic [To My Trans Sisters](#) by Charlie Craggs. Walt Odets's [Out of the Shadows](#) is another classic, exploring everything from survival to self-acceptance. For more inspiration, check out this [Penguin Random House List](#).

Shared by Thiago Pontes, LSE SU LGBT+ Officer

LSE Review of Books thanks all the members of the LSE community who contributed to this reading list with their book recommendations.

Note: This reading list gives the views of the contributors, and not the position of the LSE Review of Books blog, or of the London School of Economics.

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