

q u a c

queer under all conditions

issue # 1

EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the first issue of QUAC (Queer Under All Conditions)! This project has been a call to action for queer voices and critiques all over the Southern Californian area (with a specific emphasis on UCI and central Orange County) to speak up, act out, and create visibility for our political stances. History is written by those in power and as such, our queer experiences, loves, and ideas have been silenced through a multiplicity of oppression. It is now time to relinquish the chains of mainstream literature and publications that have hijacked our queer voices—we understand that there is much more to be learned from each other than capitalist, monolithic publications such as *The Advocate*, *Frontiers Magazine*, *The OC Register*, and *OUT magazine* which are run for profit rather than healthy education for our communities. We reject corporate advertising, telling us what a queer person, relationship, family, body, politic, and lifestyle should look like: our community is messy, diverse, and beautiful. Our real experiences as queer people are valuable and our stories need an outlet to resonate throughout our community. This zine seeks to build and unify a community that is stratified and suffocated by the Orange Curtain—being visible and queer is a radical statement in of itself. This zine promotes this visibility. This is what this project stands for.

The responses that we have been getting have been astounding—the space for queer critiques, voices, art, poetry, and expressions has been long overdue. The statements collected here reflect the diversity of our experiences and our community.

Instead of a seeking a united queer voice, this zine embraces a multitude of voices that are political, unique, controversial and sometimes contradictory. We hope that these statements cause positive community building, but we also recognize the destructive force of criticism. However, we see self-criticism as an invaluable tool to create more diverse and inclusive queer spaces. Only by bringing critique into a central part of conversations, can we recognize our own biases and garner further understanding of all facets of the community we seek to educate.

We value critique, input, responses, and conversation about the content and the style of the zine. Please feel free to email the authors at the contact information provided or send us a message at QueerZineUCI@gmail.com. Our next issue is due out in Mid-January, please submit your pieces by January 1st, 2011.

THE BODY ROCK REV- O- LUTION

BY NATE LYLE CEDILLA



This is the Lover's Manifesto.

A brave new world
Not of weak constitution,
But better known as the Body Rock Revolution!
Take it to the streets!
Lingerie and booty tight shorts for Kevlar,
Feather boas as ammo belts,
And clear heels as my combat boots.
Porno-grade fatigues made for the bedroom battlefield.

Love letters as bandanas
Your past words shield my face
As I take cover in the foxhole that is our sheets,
Waiting out the orgasmic explosions that burst and quiver
As you grind on top of me to keep me safe!

And weapons?
Yeah. I've got weapons to wage this war.
Broken hearts as grenades,
Take cover!
For the eyes of others are shrapnel
Flying towards you as you enter the room,
Piercing slivers of judgment that rip asunder your skin.
And as you make your escape from the dance floor,
Beware the minefields of broken beer bottles,
Cocktail glasses, club flyers, and condom wrappers.

One fatal step means an unwanted hookup.
And 21 shots as we bury your innocence.

This is a declaration of war against those who took love for hostage!
We are the relationship refugees!
Wandering the back alleys of The Castro, West Hollywood and
Hillcrest,
Taking shelter in the dim hallways of bathhouses.
Looking for reparations as we press our young lips against gloryholes,
Licking and tonguing for the truth.

I am a solder of sex.
I filled out my enlistment on Craigslist.
Signed away my virginity at the age of 19,
Got my "buzzcut trim"...so to speak
So that I can serve my duty as a proud queer American.
My tongue is my rifle, down there is my gun.
Both are for pleasure and both are for fun.

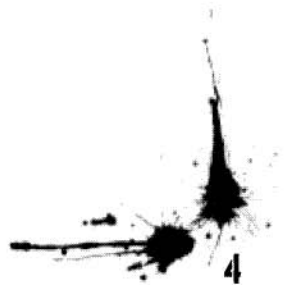
In a wasteland where abstinence is pestilence,
We are the vaccine to a soulful sickness!

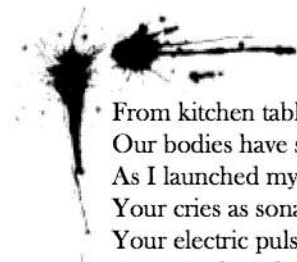
Now, don't get us wrong.
We're not out for blood.
We may chuck Astroglide Molotov Cocktails,
Drop pheromone bombs,
And use our spit as napalm...
But this is a loving conflict.

Because...if I'm going to be your soldier,
I'm gonna need something to come home to.
All of the beautiful skin and curves in the world...
Can't compare to you.

You're my two weeks notice, my pension, my retirement plan.
The only reason why making love...is even worth making.

A radical thought fondled on my lips!
A naked and lubed up revolutionary fist undoing chastity belts!
My eyes unbuttoning your chest and unzipping your waist.
Our legs as manifolds.
Twisting around our torsos and wrapping together
Until they touch to form prayer feet
As we scream each other's name as gospel
In this velveteen church we call a bed.





From kitchen table to living room floor,
Our bodies have sailed vicious seas
As I launched my torpedo into sweaty depths,
Your cries as sonar!
Your electric pulse lighting up my radar
As we explore the corners of this ocean dark.

I'll march my tongue up your spine,
Run drills all over your hips
You'll lock and load,
Put your handgun in my mouth...
And blow my mind.

But, don't think that just because we fight well
And fuck even better that we are truly radical!
Because for every held hand,
There are unknown hands resting in unknown tombs.
Reaching for shattered heavens and weeping skylines.

These palms are warzones!
Places where love does not linger
Where heartbreak escalates into civil war.
Our mouths divided, our bodies as new frontiers.
Untapped lands waiting to be stretched out
And raped over familiar beds by foreign strangers.

Didn't you know?
Love has casualties.
From sweeping firestorms of lies
To nuclear fallouts of broken friendships.
The bodies of romantics lie still in passion's wake.

War isn't love.
But, love can be war.

At the end of it...
There is love in rEVOLution.
Reflected in the eyes of others,
And spoken behind closed doors.

Like I said:

This is a direct message!

Poetic smut designed to ride the airwaves hard and dirty!

The revolutionary orgy will be televised!

Our minds, spread wide open, eager to please.

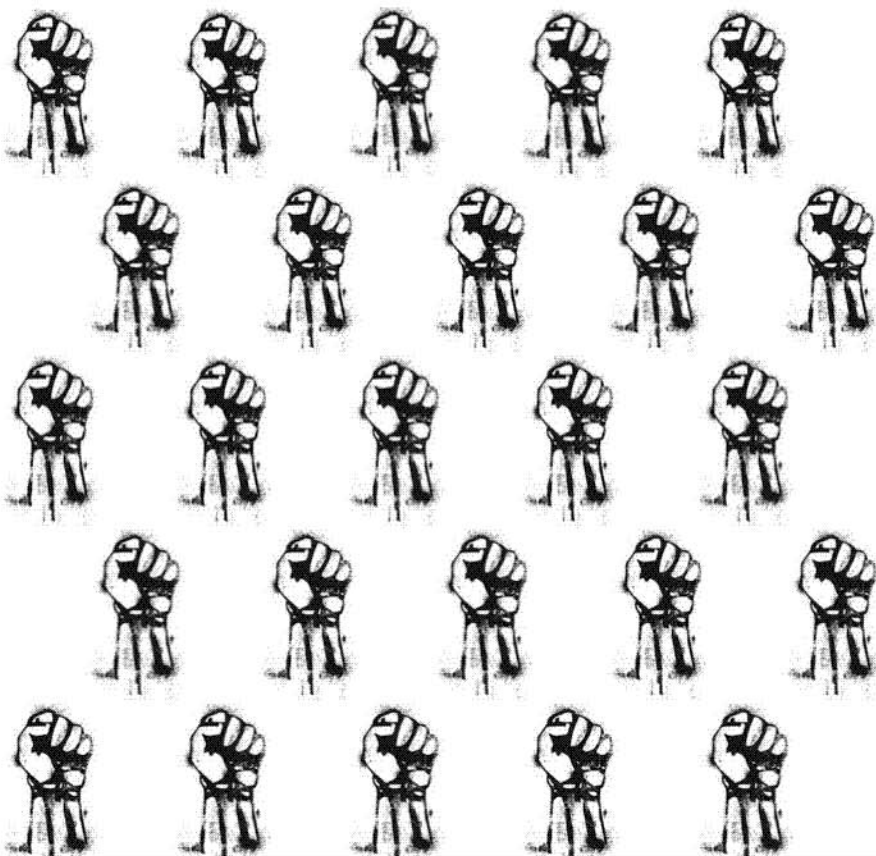
So, strap on your combat gear...

And gear up your strap-ons!

Out from the bedroom and onto the streets...

We **ARE** the Body Rock Revolution!

Nate Cedilla is a recent UC Berkeley grad now living in San Diego. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Asian American Studies and is currently pursuing a career in the non-profit sector. In his spare time, Nate loves photography, cooking breakfast, and (most importantly) writing spoken word. He also loves meeting new folks, so please visit him at <http://natecedilla.blogspot.com> or <http://thepostgrad.tumblr.com>



FUCK YOU



CAMERON JOE
[HTTP://QUEERINSURRECTION.TUMBLR.COM](http://queerinsurrection.tumblr.com)
UCI 3RD YEAR
UNDERGRADUATE

Dear HRC/Courage Campaign/Liberal gay and lesbian agenda:

Fuck you.

As a gay and lesbian movement, we are portrayed as depoliticized, harmless homosexuals who want the American dream of a fucking white picket fence and a white baby (maybe an exotic one) nestled between our gay (monogamous) love for one another. We are seen exiting a church throwing rice and flowers in the air, laughing and having a jolly good time basking in our newfound privilege.

Fuck you.

As a gay and lesbian movement, we are seen as wanting to die for the country that has so violently murdered our brothers and sisters. We are seen begging (straight) people to allow us to serve them in the military, seen sucking their cocks at the chance to be part of the imperialist machine that has fucked every non-“first” world country there is. We are seen as people who want *tolerance* and *acceptance* by our fellow straights, we want to live next to them in our big fucking houses with our big fucking backyards aiming the same fucking gun at the same person of color because a big government and corporation say to do so.

“WE WANT REAL, SYSTEMATIC CHANGE...”

Fuck you.

What does the demand for tolerance even imply? The gay and lesbian movement is implicitly saying that straight people are superior to gays because they have the right to judge our lifestyles and our bodies—we want to be *just* like them because they represent everything that is happy, wonderful, and fucking fantastic.

Fuck. You.

We don’t want tolerance, acceptance, and acknowledgement from straight people.

We want *real, systemic change* because we, *as queers*, understand that the systemic crises of normativity, capitalism, and imperialism are linked to all forms of oppression. Sexism, racism, classism, able-ism, ageism, nationalism, homophobia—these are all interlinked and intertwined with each other because of our racist and classist education system, unequal access to jobs, recruitment of poor people of color in to the military, religious fundamentalism as a profit motive, corporate tyranny, the napoleon complex (police brutality), violence, threats of violence, and most of all, straight white males dominating the world economy through exploitation, lies, deceit, and an iron fist.

Don't believe me? Ever been to a low-income neighborhood? Is it just a coincidence that the demographic is dominantly people of color? Are they lazy? Can you work 3 jobs and over 80 hours a week at minimum wage to feed a family of 4 and be lazy? Have you wondered why a majority of the top 100 richest people in the world are white males? Are all white males just hard working people, miles ahead of the rest? Have you wondered why a CEO makes a \$4,000,000,000 bonus even when they fire 30% of their company and their stocks fail? Ever wonder why our prisons are filled with people of color who are then used for slave labor for companies like Dell computers? Ever wonder why women are raped and then blamed for their own raping because they were "promiscuous" or "asking for it"?

"THEY JUST WANT ACCEPTANCE. TOLERANCE"

Of course the gay and lesbian movement doesn't. They just want acceptance. Tolerance. They just want straight people to like them so they can ignore the issues facing people below them on the social totem pole, even if it is within their own community (the sexually and gender-presenting deviant). They just want to get married, serve in the military, and have a (white) family.

The gay and lesbian movement is run by the rich, white, gay (and sometimes lesbian) community who are ignorant (and insensitive) to issues facing the majority of the marginalized communities, especially their own. Or maybe they're just selfish, greedy assholes who don't really care about the entire community but a tiny, elitist sliver of it. A queer teenager is four times likelier to commit suicide. In New York, 20-40% of homeless youth are LGBT identified who were kicked out of their homes after coming out (that's over 150,000 high school kids and younger in New York alone). Lack of healthcare makes transitioning almost impossible for lower-income transgender individuals (it's still legal to discriminate against transgender or gender variant people in the workplace, how are you supposed to obtain a high income job?). Oh but the gay and lesbian movement doesn't fucking care, they just want a property tax cut so they can make even more absurd amounts of money for themselves and gain some sort of façade of legitimacy in the court of law. They want to see their loved ones in the hospital when thousands of queers and people of color are dying because of lack of health care and basic resources needed to survive. They want to increase hate crime legislation to lock up more people of color in to the prison industrial complex to increase their property values and "clean up the streets." And we are all standing by, cheering these people on and celebrating victories of prop 8 and DADT at the expense of people of color, youth, working class people, sex workers, and transgender people (which HRC decides to blatantly exclude from most of their politics)?! What the fuck?

The gay and lesbian movement are the same people who are running the mainstream magazines, the ones who have sold your identity off to big corporations to exploit you in to a niche (profitable) market (oh the gays love their designer bags oh and loafers are so chic now, all the gays wear them), the ones who make you feel ashamed about your gender non-conformity by blasting you with images of what a male and female body should look like, the same people who make you feel uncomfortable and insecure in “queer-friendly” spaces because they are racist, classist, or non body-positive.

Queers are beautiful because they don't need validation, they don't need straight people cheering them on from the sidelines as you run towards normativity. Queers define themselves in the margins because they are strong, they understand that anti-normativity is an internal insurrection. Queers unite with people of color, working class people, sex workers, and others in the margins because they understand the collective struggle against a system that values the few and fucks the rest. Queers understand that the right to marry and the right to serve openly in the military are inherently racist, classist, and able-ist issues that have little importance to the overall struggle towards a more fair and just world.

What happened to our community? Have we forgotten our radical history? Have we forgotten about the leather community, the radical fairy community, Stonewall, the Marxists, anarchists, social justice movements, the Black Panthers, and the AIDS epidemic? Have we really sold out that easily?

I write this as a call to action, a call to destabilize the notion that the queers want to assimilate in to heterosexual culture. That queers are no longer political. That queers want to fly their rainbow flags next to their American flags.

So? Fuck you HRC, Courage Campaign, and the liberal gay agenda that they serve. Fuck your ignorance, your elitism, and your exploitation of the system that fucks everyone who is not rich, white, and gay.

Our queer history and our queer sex is one in the same: radical, messy, sexy, beautiful, and dangerous—we were built to fuck, and fuck we will.

**FUCK YOU.
SINCERELY,
A PISSED OFF QUEER.**



Mending the wounded *Spirit*

By connecting Biography with History

By Ali Mushtaq

HAVING always written academic pieces about social phenomena, I have forgotten about my mission to truly connect my, as sociologist C. Wright Mills calls, “biography and history.” That is, my experience is a culmination of socio-historical processes as well as my interpretation of the situation. I’ve never really looked at my experience as a gay South Asian man. I could usually never decide which community I felt more a part of: the gay fairyland with men dressing in bikinis or the White world of subtle segregation. For me, these worlds have been inextricably connected as ethnic gay club nights, may they be overt (Asian night at Rage Nightclub) or covert (Circus) are paraded as the norm in gay enclaves. One time, at the Arena, a gay club in West Hollywood, a White guy looked at my Allah necklace (that I only wear for sentimental purposes) and wondered what the symbol on my chain was. I pointed out to him that the symbol was indeed was the word “Allah” in Arabic. With that, he said with hyperbolic disgust, “ewwww . . .” and pranced off seeking someone else to dance with. I did not realize that instance of being patronized had set the framework for various other situations in my short life. Another instance, I was told by a group of (Central/East) Asian men, who are equally oppressed but incognizant of their oppression, that I was too dark to socialize within their group. While here, though the Asian men act out an instance of internalized racism, the pain of having to deciding who to direct my anger towards did not subside. Should it be directed towards them, or Bravo TV where queer people of color are denied voices and perspectives in a hegemonically White broadcast? How am I supposed to know they feel the pain of being the exoticized and colonized other in the gay male community? Am I special because I’m exotic or because I’m smart? What does “exotic” mean? I think it means that my people are violent, and therefore, should not also socialize with the rest of society by White men. It also means we are the “wife beaters” wearing wife beaters; we are the darker side of Prince Ali Ababuwaa; we look better when we “look lighter,” so I’ve been told. That’s what “exotic” means to me.

Issues of race and colonialism have deeply affected my personal experience with the LGBT community. Having had to resort to violence – out of self defense -- because of heterosexist oppression, my path in life is but an antagonistic relationship between peace and war. Do I play into the stereotype because I really am, at my core, a wolf dressed in a Hollister t-shirt? Because of this, I always saw myself as being less than human, incapable of peace because my decivilized decorum could not cope with the political strategies of the gay, White, middle-class agenda of protesting outside the Supreme Court of California for the right to marry. Did these gay politicians suddenly forget that queer and straight people of color were marching alongside their White brothers and sisters – putting aside their own struggles in a racist, sexist, and classist world - to say their gayness came first? With a political thought likened to that of Malcolm X and Ward Churchill, I demand a world of dignity and humility – not a world where queer people of color are something less than human. I don't want the right to marry if it means marrying the oppressions tied to racism and colonialism – that means gay marriage. We are only less than human in the world of straight people. These are the same racists that legally raped Black women on plantations. The same racists that directed *The World of Suzie Wong* and *Miss Saigon*. The same racists that romanticize marrying Latina maids and making a case that the White man can solve the problems of women of color. These are also the same racists that have racialized “preferences” – “no Asians because they’re ‘too small’” or “no Black men because they’ll give me AIDS.” These and other racialized discourses run rampant in the gay community and mimic the patterns found in straight society – the same society that sanctions “relationships for love” based on their heterosexuality.

Ali Mushtaq
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OVERHEARD AT MACYS

BY BOBBIE ALLEN

**MOTHER
TO SON
YOU'RE
NOT
GETTING
THAT.
YOU'LL
LOOK
LIKE A
FAGGOT.**

I met your eyes then, watched you fold yourself away—

I followed you around the racks, watched you watch

Your face multiplied in the mirrored pillars, eyes and tears,

As we fled from that bitch, fast as we could, short of running.

The World always looking, always waiting, for the moment

When you forget you need to remember who you are,

The moment when you're most yourself and most in danger:

The careless moment, the deeply ignorant Someone You

Don't Know (or Do), when you must learn all over again:

Nothing says "faggot" like a mother, like a shirt.

*Bobbie Allen is an
undergraduate creative
writing professor at UCI.
BobbieAllen.com*

trans-man

by Ira Gray

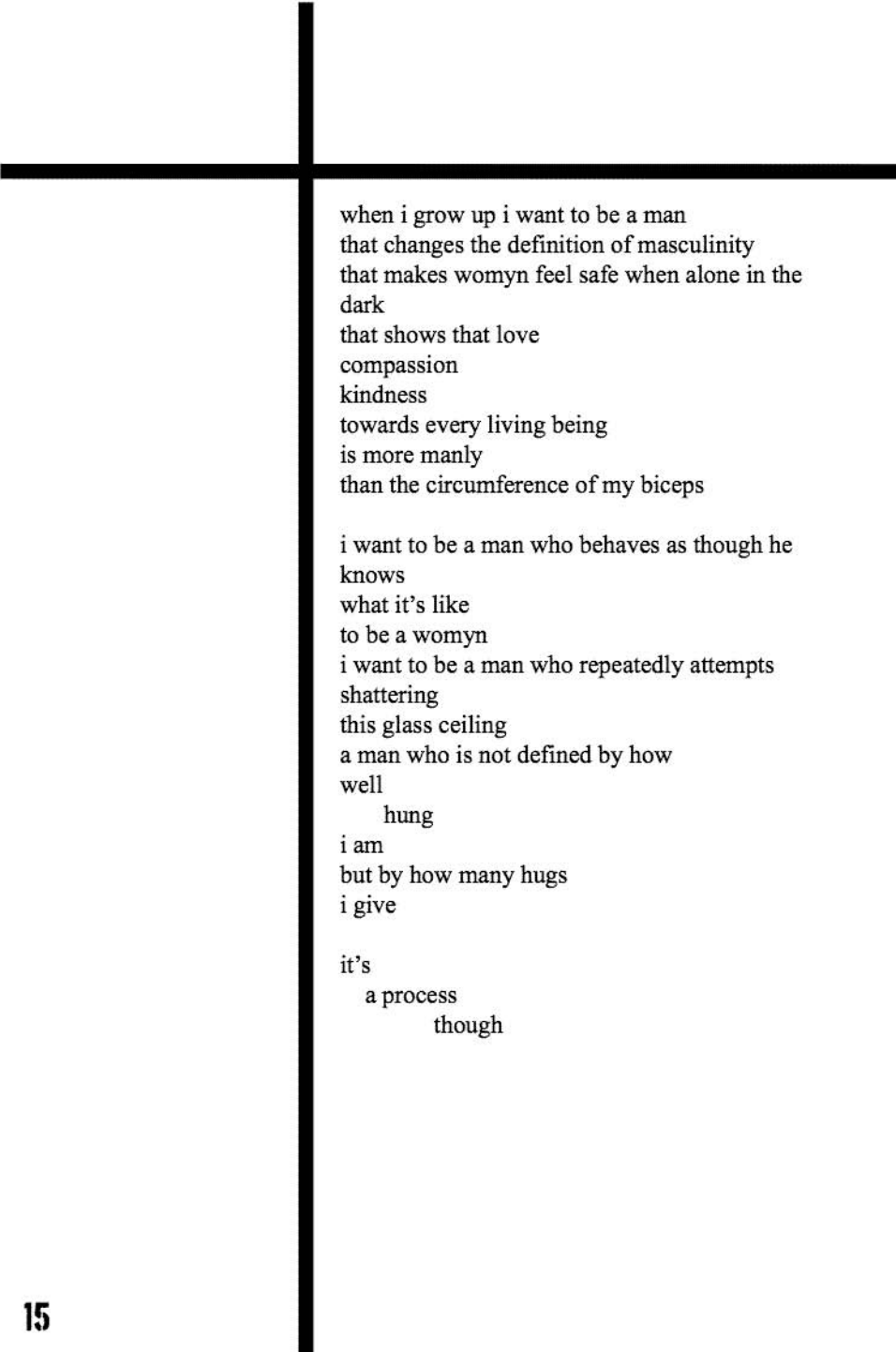
iragray.tumblr.com

these tits
 are a man's tits
and this clit
 is a man's clit
this soft skin
 my narrow shoulders
 my tiny feet
 my childlike hands
 belong to a man

a proud man
a man who has to truly
become
a man
unlike most males

the thought of having a penis
kept me awake at night
in a hot sweat
 you know, the good kind.
a cold sweat when reminded
that real men
have dicks

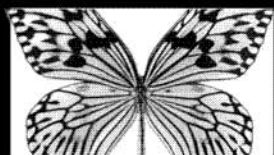
the only thing that comes to mind now is
i beg to differ



when i grow up i want to be a man
that changes the definition of masculinity
that makes womyn feel safe when alone in the
dark
that shows that love
compassion
kindness
towards every living being
is more manly
than the circumference of my biceps

i want to be a man who behaves as though he
knows
what it's like
to be a womyn
i want to be a man who repeatedly attempts
shattering
this glass ceiling
a man who is not defined by how
well
 hung
i am
but by how many hugs
i give

it's
 a process
 though



a sliding scale
that on most days
the bad outweighs the good
with nothing to put on the other side but
a silver lining

like a panty lining
the last resort
the moment when you find a bit of cash in your
pocket
when you thought you had none at all
at birth the nurses didn't mix me up with another
baby

instead
god
the gods
the powers at be
the universe
decidedly gave me the wrong body

not mistakenly
purposefully
so that i
could grow
into the best man
i could ever be

Before identifying as transgender, I identified as a lesbian. Growing up behind the Orange Curtain, this simply inspired me to reject the general public and its nuclear family ideals. People were going to judge me when holding the hand of another female-identified person whether I like it or not. Thus, I would proudly hold grrrls' hands. Resources and access to resources were a non-issue as I grew up in a middle-class family with an Austrian last name allowing me to garner privilege on economic and racial fronts despite my being a person of color. This all changed when my family disowned me because of my sexuality. This event catapulted me into my transition since I now have the freedom to do so, but it also stripped me of my economic privilege causing me to realize the culture of the Curtain seeks to otherize people of color, trans* persons, disabled persons, non-heterosexual and/or non-heteroromantic persons, and most specifically poor persons so intensely that we are forced out.

The resources for queer persons in Orange County do not exist. There is an LGBT center in Santa Ana called The Center where one can find various support groups. If you are a trans-person of color without a car, phone, or single dime to your name, then you will find nothing. Unless you enjoy sleeping outside, which in much of Orange County is illegal, you are forced to rely on the kindness of your friends until you can get on your own two feet. This requires an assimilation to capitalist culture. Getting a job during what is technically no longer a recession but still feels like one is difficult. After getting a job, you need to get the right amount of hours to pay for rent and food. This feels impossible. If this does not come to fruition, for any reason, you are back where you started: the streets. That is, unless you can find a way to be free of the Curtain, even if it requires forsaking all that you have ever known.

After mapping out one's possibilities, or lack thereof, one can easily see that the slippery slope no longer represents a logical fallacy often applied to argumentation and debate. It now symbolizes reality. No jobs leads to no money. No money leads to no transportation which leads to no resources. As a transgender person who feels the need to medically transition, a very real and imminent life or death situation, even if transportation makes itself available to you, the resources to transition (doctors' appointments, hormones, surgeries, and so on) remain unattainable. This slope, already steep, neglects to acknowledge the effects of cisgender privilege, transphobia, and dysphoria.

When looking at this situation through a transgender lens, this slope evolves into a downward spiral: seemingly everlasting and cyclical. The possibility of getting a job is even more slim due to transphobic and/or homophobic managers, depending on whether or not you are perceived as your chosen gender. The reality that most of the queer persons that are on the streets or are unemployed also happen to be transgender is frightening. It also triggers one's dysphoria, painting the world in a new light, or rather, a new darkness. Ultimately, one can go on forever about how Orange County has incited a hidden inquisition against queer-identified persons to weed us out. We must question, however, whether or not we should suffer in the Curtain or be free of the Curtain.

To be free of the Curtain or not to be free? Unfortunately, the reality remains that some of us have no other choice but to leave for the sake of survival. It can be difficult to not look at queer spaces and be tempted to further drain this area of its tiny queer identity. To let those who are privileged run out the underdog is to let them win. As activists, our job is to make this a freer world for those who do not dictate the masses. We must stay. We must fight for the Orange Curtain needs taken down and replaced with some rainbows.

Ira Gray
iragray.tumblr.com

THE BLING RING

BY KALIL COHEN

Please note: This song is based on a real incident that occurred in Los Angeles in 2009, and all the facts in the song are true.

The bling ring is five rich teens from the valley.
All of them drive a new Lexus or Audi.
They stole designer clothes and jewelry
From young Hollywood celebrities

They robbed Paris Hilton four times in all.
Her key was under the mat, it wasn't hard at all.
They jacked Lindsay Lohan and Orlando Bloom
Taking several million, things from every room.

They kept the clothes and the jewelry,
Wore them out to clubs, felt like celebrities.
What made them think, they wouldn't get caught?
Cause that's the type of justice that their Daddys bought.

*The bling ring is five rich teens from the valley.
All of them drive a new Lexus or Audi.
They robbed Paris Hilton and she didn't even notice
Those piles of cash kinda make it hard to focus*

*Her key by the door she's so confident.
Then greedy rich kids banked on entitlement.
Rich on rich crime, does that bother you?
How 'bout when the poor get in the action too?*

*"It's almost 11, let's go checking cars."
"I love those unlocked Bentleys full of credit cards."
"Cover your face then try the locks"
"Fill up a suitcase, don't worry 'bout the cops*

*"Here's a Louis Vuitton and some Alex Perry
It's one of a kind, just like we're the celebrities!"
"And over here see this original painting."
"Take it, I want it for my place in Vegas."*

*"I'm gonna wear this jacket out next week."
"And let's spend the cash at some Melrose boutiques."
"Get ready for the club, you know they'll let us in."
"I'm only 19 but the bouncer is my friend...
I mean my fence"*

*The bling ring is five rich teens from the valley.
All of them drive a new Lexus or Audi.
They knew the stars schedules from TMZ
They stole a gun from Brian Austin Greene.*

*His estate was unlocked, he's so confident.
Then greedy rich kids banked on entitlement.
Rich on rich crime, does that bother you?
How 'bout when the poor get in the action too?*

*The bling ring teens sure seem selfish to me.
Is it just them or our society?
They were born with the fortune but that wasn't enough.
Sought fashion and fame, but it was never enough.*

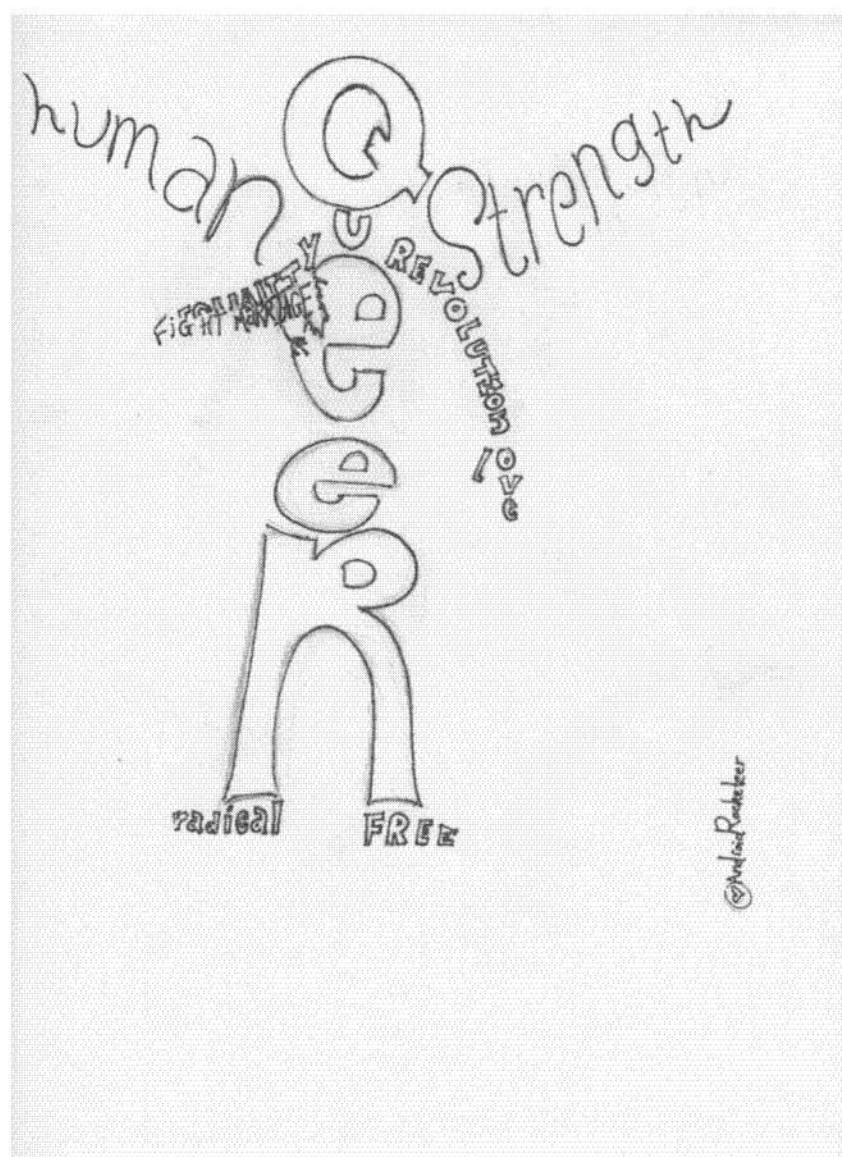
Those in charge of this society
Claims that only the rich have morality.
For hundreds of years it's been noblesse oblige.
But picking up their crumbs doesn't meet our needs.

See it's those on top who crave the most.
That's our advantage, but we don't gotta boast.
I despise their desires, I feel pity not envy.
Justice is the luxury in my fantasies.
Despise their desires, it's pity not envy.
Justice is the luxury we need.

*The bling ring is five rich teens from the valley.
All of them drive a new Lexus or Audi.
They worshipped everyone they saw on TV.
Are they happy now, 'Bling Ring' publicity?*

*Huge estates unlocked, no security.
How should we use this vanity?
Rich on rich crime, does that bother you?
How 'bout when the poor get in the action too?*

*Kalil Cohen aka Metahuman,
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the anatomy of queer
by Anabelle Vo

THE TRANS GENDER PARADOX

OR HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE MY DICK

by Jesse M. Danielson

“ ...
*transgenderism,
at least as far as
I understand it,
is based upon
the premise that
gender is a
cultural identity
that is
meaningless
outside of society
and that is not
actually tied to
physical sex... ”*

Years before I started identifying as queer in any way, I recall having a discussion with a friend about a logical flaw we perceived behind the philosophy of transgenderism. This is a problem which I'm sure others before me have addressed and perhaps even solved, but the consideration of which has had a profound impact on my thinking about who I am and how I fit into the larger picture of society. It is an issue that I have rarely seen discussed or dissected in queer spaces, perhaps because I have not been active enough or perhaps because nobody wishes to offend anyone, and while I have seen individuals talk around it, either by refuting the premises behind it or by constructing elaborate theories that seek to make it disappear, I have never felt that anyone I have spoken with has given me a solid solution. The paradox that I refer to is that transgenderism, at least as far as I understand it, is based upon the premise that gender is a cultural identity that is meaningless outside of society and that is not actually tied to physical sex, and hence can be changed, yet transgender individuals seek to change their physical appearance and sex in order to better identify themselves with the cultural identity associated with the opposite sex.

That this is the case is quite understandable from the perspective of observed reality, but it makes little sense within the theory. Transgenderism, and in fact modern queer theory as I understand it, rejects the notion that external society determines one's personal identity. In this case, the idea behind a sex change or passing has more to do with personal development along that path and has nothing to do with conforming to social norms. That sounds great on paper, and when it is the factual reason for transition the paradox becomes irrelevant, but upon a closer examination of actual behavior one might notice that the ultimate termination of this path is often at the point of passing, that is when the individual passes as their chosen gender amongst other people. In other words, the metric for determining how well one fits into one's chosen identity is how well others feel one fits into that identity.

That one's identity, that one's notion of oneself, is dependent on the recognition of society directly contradicts the core assumption behind both transgenderism and queer theory in general as it stands today. If one's identity is

“...the metric for determining how well one fits into one's chosen identity is how well others feel one fits into that identity.”

determined by the dominant culture, then it is not possible to be a different gender than one's birth sex, nor is it possible for many other types of individuals to exist because they are not externally recognized outside of queer spaces.

Perhaps this is why I have not seen this paradox discussed: resolving it threatens the existence of all queer identifying persons who do not fit into a set of expectations already generated by society at large!

Now before I go on, it's important to understand the relativity of identity. The last paragraph suggests a simple counter argument: these individuals actually do exist and they can be observed to exist, and therefore the premise must be flawed. This is a fair point, but note that these individuals only exist within the spaces where they are believed to exist. As a hypothetical, in a queer space an androgynous person will be identified by their peers and themselves as being androgyne, but when that same person is walking through the mall they will be identified by their peers as a strangely dressed man or woman, and will be treated as such. Naturally, within the person's head, they are identified in whatever way they please, or perhaps not at all.

This would again suggest a solution,

that only what's in the person's head actually matters, but the problem is that how they are treated has to do with what everyone around them identifies them as, which is controlled entirely by presentation. A good example of this in action is what I shall call the pronoun dilemma. I have observed that a transgendered person's ability to pass has a direct influence over what pronoun they are addressed with, even in a queer space. For example, I have a friend who is a transwoman who is virtually indistinguishable from a cisgendered woman. Even though the people around her may know she is not physically female, I have never heard someone mistakenly use the pronoun "he." Meanwhile, I have another transwoman friend who, while appearing quite feminine, is quite noticeably male. Other people, even in a queer space, will on occasion refer to her as a "he" by mistake, especially people who know her previously. This is a motivation behind transitioning for many transpeople, and ultimately a reason why they seek to pass.

The identity of gender then behaves more like the identity of race than like the identities associated with sexual orientation. A black person, no matter how stereotypically white they may behave, will always be identified as black by society at large and treated as such (though a clever reader may note that within the context of African-American society they may be identified as something else). This is because the identity and the stereotypes that go with it are based upon a physical trait, i.e. skin-tone. Race as an identity is therefore non-fluid and cannot be changed by self determination alone. Sexual orientation, however, is based upon behavior, i.e. a man who only kisses

"I have observed that a transgendered person's ability to pass has a direct influence over what pronoun they are addressed with, even in a queer space."

other men is generally held as being gay. While behavioral and physical expectations are present in both images, for a black man that society may expect him to like rap music, for a gay man that they expect him to be thinner than a straight man, in the end both identities are dependent either on a key set of physical characteristics or a set of behavioral patterns which serve as the chief identifying factors.

Unfortunately for transgendered individuals, gender is based upon the physical characteristic of sex, and like race that characteristic is immutable, or at least it largely is after a certain age. While expensive surgeries, artificial enhancements like tucking or binding, hormone therapy and picking the right sorts of clothes to wear may aid the individual in deceiving those around them into treating them as their preferred gender, in the end, if the individual's birth sex is ever revealed, that, and not their efforts or behavior, will have the most influence on how they are perceived, even in the most accepting and hospitable of environments.

“...we must reclaim the transgender identities and recreate them as a separate set of gender identities of our own”

After all, even the most well adjusted transman will identify himself as a transman, not as a cisgendered man per se.

The physical adjustments essentially serve the same function as whiteface would to an African-American individual, at least as far as social acceptance is concerned, though obviously with a far less negative connotation.

This does not mean that physical alteration is out of the question. Indeed, if such changes contribute to feelings of personal well-being and adjustment then it can still be a good option, and passing as such can still have a profound influence on the treatment received from everyone else. However, if we as transgendered individuals wish to be accepted by both our direct associates and by society at large, we must reclaim the transgender identities and recreate them as a separate set of gender identities of our own, rather than seeking to be classified into a gender category into which we do not actually fit and in which we are not actually recognized. Instead of seeking to conform to a different set of stereotypes, we need to control the set of stereotypes we will ultimately be assigned anyways. If we want the right to exist, we must exist as who we are, and not as who we want to be. Finally, we must realize that we are not fully in control of our identity, and that if we wish to be tolerated and accepted we must first accept ourselves as we are, as someone who is not actually a member of the identity to which we aspire. If we believe that there is nothing wrong with our bodies, our minds, or the combination thereof, then with time perhaps others will come to believe that as well. That is why, while I may be a transwoman, I still love my dick.

Femme

My lipsticked lips and
my flirty skirt don't make me
a bad feminist.

Exclusion

Don't you dare stamp on
my bisexuality
with your bulldyke boots.

Genderfuck

Are you a man or
a woman? I think so. Yes.
No. Neither. Maybe...

Izzy John

letsgetthisqueer.wordpress.com

First Flight

by Izzy John

September 2009: I arrive in LAX, with my life in 2 suitcases, just another exchange student in the Golden State. I'm excited, I'm terrified, and I'm recently out. If a year counts as recently; I suppose I mean that I was only just beginning to come to terms with my sexuality in a way that would profoundly change not just how I loved and fucked, but how I saw the world and my place in it. This Re-identification happened in California, at the LGBTRC at UCI and the community I immersed myself in from an early stage. I lived with international students, I had that group covered, so I sought out a social group with gay, or gayish, as the common denominator, as my new homestead, as something I knew but something that was new. I discovered and claimed the word queer as a positive term. Leaving behind the contexts of the English schooling system, I was finally able to shake off the effects of 7 years in a homophobic girls boarding school (which I loved as a place, but which didn't exactly acknowledge the existence of queer kids, let alone support them, and so I was stuck in the closet, behind the Harry Potter style cloaks).

My identity was not only queered, but internationalised. I had never before had to identify as International, nor had I been so acutely aware of what was affectionately dubbed my "Britishness". I was also a white kid on a predominantly Asian-American campus, which made me even more acutely aware of my white privilege. I find it deeply ironic that it was in the United States, which is consistently whitewashed by the ruling elites and upper-middle classes, that I suddenly discovered exactly how pale my skin was. I get that this sounds like self-indulgent bullshit, but all I could think at the time was, "holy hell, this is who I am and who I'm becoming and I don't even know it!" It's pretty fucking scary, this whole self-revelation gig. More so because I happened to be several thousand miles from my homeland when realisation started creeping up on me like holiday weight gain.

In fact though, that was the best damn thing about being a queer international student, that glorious freedom from home, that autonomy from expectations, that distance from friends, and especially family. Now I love my family with all my heart, but I wasn't out to them, and god, it was good to have the ocean as an excuse not to go home for the weekend. I had a new family, all the colours of the rainbow, and they still are my family, and that's the absolute greatest thing on earth, to have family all over the globe. It means home can be everywhere, as well as the time and space often desperately needed by queer teens, and rarely given. If you're reading this, and are closeted and afraid, and get a weight in your stomach everytime you set off home, go abroad. Just do it. Do it through school if you can, if not, quit your job, sell your pokemon cards on ebay to raise the funds, just go. It sounds like a cliché, but changing country really does change your life. I'm living proof. More on that to follow - after all, I am on the other side of the world now - I had to go home sometime...

6 EASY WAYS TO BE QUEER IN ORANGE COUNTY WITHOUT BEING OSTRACIZED

by Mona Eshaiker



1. CUT YOUR HAIR A-SYMMETRICALLY--BUT NOT TOO SHORT LADIES WE DONT WANT TO BE TOO OBVIOUS

2. WHEN TALKING ABOUT YOUR SIGNIFICANT OTHER IN PUBLIC REFER TO HIM/HER AS THEY --DONT EVEN THINK ABOUT USING PARTNER THATS A DEAD GIVE-AWAY AND IS ONLY USED BY STRAIGHT COUPLES WHO WANT TO SOUND PROGRESSIVE

3. SECRETLY WEAR RAINBOW--THIS IS A TRICKY ONE--YOU WANT TO REP YOUR COLORS SO THAT OTHER OC QUEERS CAN NOTICE--BUT NOT ANYONE ELSE HINT WEARING A RAINBOW FRIENDSHIP BRACELET IN ADDITION TO OTHER COLORS CAN HELP ACCOMPLISH THIS TASK WARNING WEARING A SOLE RAINBOW ITEM MAY PUT YOUR HEALTH AT RISK

4. HAVE 2 FACEBOOK ACCOUNTS--THIS IS AN OBVIOUS ONE

5. HAVE A FAKE BF / GF USE ONLY IN EXTREME CASES SUCH AS FAMILY PICNICS

6. MAKE PHOTOGRAPHY YOUR HOBBY--THIS IS SO YOUR QUEER PHOTOGRAPHS CAN BE DISGUISED AS ART RATHER THAN INCRIMINATING EVIDENCE

UNTITLED X

BY: SERGE XX

ELASTIQUE-COCOON.ORG

I PIERCE MYSELF THROUGH BREAKING GLASS

I PIERCE MYSELF BECAUSE MY POTENTIALS ARE... XX

I PIERCE MYSELF WITH UNSANITARY NEEDLES

I PIERCE MYSELF BECAUSE WOUNDS COULD HEAL LATER

I PIERCE MYSELF AFTER SHOOTING UP IN THE TOILET

I PIERCE MYSELF BECAUSE I LOVE THE FEELING OF ABUSE

I PIERCE MYSELF IN A MANNERLY ORDER

I PIERCE MYSELF BECAUSE THE ADRENALINE SOOTHES ME

I PIERCE MYSELF THROUGH YOUR CRUCIFIXION

I PIERCE MYSELF WHILE ENGAGING IN UNWANTED MASTURBATION

I PIERCE MYSELF WHILE STANDING IN THE RAIN

I PIERCE MYSELF BECAUSE JESUS COULDN'T STOP YOU

I PIERCE MYSELF BECAUSE MAMA TOLD ME TO

I PIERCE MYSELF BECAUSE I ENJOY THAT PLEASURABLE PAIN

I PIERCE MYSELF THROUGH MY DECAYING, OPEN WOUNDS

I PIERCE MYSELF, BUT SURELY I WON'T DIE

I PIERCE MYSELF BECAUSE I HAVE NOTHING BETTER TO DO WITH MYSELF

I PIERCE MYSELF BECAUSE JESUS DIDN'T STOP ME BEFORE

I PIERCE MYSELF SO I DON'T FEEL AFRAID

I PIERCE MYSELF BECAUSE YOU HAVE NOTHING BETTER TO DO WITH ME

I PIERCE MYSELF BECAUSE I RAN OUT OF NOVOCAIN

I PIERCE MYSELF BECAUSE SIMPLY YOU'RE NOT COMING BACK

I PIERCE MYSELF BECAUSE YOU TOOK IT FROM ME DURING MY ADOLESCENCE

I PIERCE MYSELF BY THE PRICE OF A NAIL

I PIERCE MYSELF SO I CAN HOLD BACK THE TEARS OF TOMORROW

I PIERCE MYSELF AND MY EXPECTATIONS ARE INDEED...

I PIERCE MYSELF AND YES, I BLEED.

[AN EXCERPT FROM 2001]

Serge.xx

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September 2010



Norma



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This is a zine. It is the result of collective artistic and analytic output. Don't throw it away. Read it, give it to a friend, leave it in a restroom, leave it in a bar, leave it in a classroom, contribute to it, make your own.

For more zines/info about zine culture
check out <http://zinelibrary.info/>

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