Concrete Alignment
Contemporary Queer Perspectives in a Neoliberal Era
We would like to dedicate this zine to every queer person who has ever existed in fucking ever. We’re compelled to create this zine due to a lack of queer voices and perspectives in mainstream media outlets, and society in general. We feel it is imperative for oppressed communities to create our own platforms to voice joy, dissent, and pain in our present and to reflect on our disjointed past.

Note to the reader: Any and all profits made from this zine will be donated to the Tranzmission Prison Project which provides literature and resources to incarcerated members of the LGBTQ community.

Authors and Contributors are all situated in Central Kentucky and come from various backgrounds and lived experiences.

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Re-alignment on corporate humanity

by: Lukas Lake-Bullock

What’s the tea on Queer and Trans rights? Well to start off with, revered gay rights organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign, Lambda Legal Defense, and the Gay and Lesbian Task Force have been complicit in furthering the neoliberal narrative on gay rights, namely, that we should have the “right” to fight America’s wars, marry and pay taxes to subsidize corporate tax cuts, and that corporations can totally buy a stake in gay rights as a business move (but only when its politically convenient of course). The narrative on LGBTQ rights has been whitewashed, void of trans and non-binary voices, and completely built on the argument that “we’re just like everyone else”. Well, to be quite frank, I beg to differ. While no two queer/trans experiences are the same, I do find that many of us are united, not in our desire for integration into the hetero-patriarchal societal mold, but rather in a desire of an acceptance of who we are now, in our current form: Radical, Beautiful, and Resilient.

Why should we care about the support of corporations who give zero fucks about human rights abuses against queer people in the countries where their sweatshops are? Why are LGBTQ people being called on to patriotically serve the U.S imperialist army in order to serve corporate American interests around the globe? Why are LGBTQ rights only viewed as a way of flexing one’s commitment to basic human decency? This explicit connection between palatability and lucrateness demonstrates a disappointing reality. Neoliberalism only positions queer people as pawns in upholding corporate power structures. Corporations do not care about our rights. They care about what our rights can do to sell their products. Think about the
amount of targeted “gay” ads you saw prior to the 2014, the year that same-sex marriage became legalized, as opposed to afterwards. Queer-centered ads only became viable as same-sex marriage became palatable to the American public. Queer identity is no trend that can be hijacked by the corporate agenda. It is an ambiguous otherness that society thrusts upon us, that we create a new meaning from. It is rebellion against hegemony (including corporate hegemony mind you). So, remember this the next time you see an ad lauding corporate tolerance, or hear arguments for an inclusive military; Marsha P Johnson didn’t throw the first brick at Stonewall, and Harvey Milk didn’t get assassinated, and countless other queer lives haven’t been lost for us to simply be reduced to the monotony of the hetero-patriarchy. We got our rights by rioting…..remember that.
Reminder (Haley Starkey)

this is a reminder. sweet one,
your heart does not beat too loudly in your chest.
does not take up too much space,
does not mistake the moonlight for a streetlamp
when you hold your lover's hand
soft and intertwined
drunk and kissing your way home.
this is a reminder.
your heart is not a machine, is not
a second-class citizen, is not
the color of a bullet hole, a gunshot wound
against a rainbow flag;
this is a reminder. sweet one,
your heart is too big for your body
too tremendous to be
encapsulated within two arms and two legs and
ten fingers and ten toes and
when you kiss, sweet,
carry your hurt like the orange lillies
in front of my childhood home
planted by my mother and
the way she gave more
than she could give. give.
this is a reminder:
the only time
your heart should feel too loud in your chest
is when your fingers are finding her's
or his, or their's,
intoxicated by that moonlight,
a will to live against every clenched fist
finding harmony in disharmony
finding your way
to your orange lilies
Those within and outside the queer community have argued about queerness and what it means, what it looks like, and the implications it has on society throughout contemporary history. Those of us who identify as queer are active examples through our bodies and lived experiences and therefore have a chance to redefine what it means to love, to be intimate, and to be human in a toxic world that discourages the unification, connection, and solidarity between one person and another. Academia and society rarely explore the concept of queerness in ways that allow us to define what queer means as an identity and a community, and the visions we have for both.

To be queer is to be in a state of opposition against the social categorization of “normal”. We can define normal in this context as conforming to the hegemonic cis-heteropatriarchal standards that shape our society. In other words, normal is more than just being cisgender and heterosexual; it’s subscribing to the belief that these qualities, on top of other things such as whiteness and being able bodied, is the ideal. By direct contrast, queerness is not subscribing to one or more of the “normal” qualities identified in the ideal cis-heteropatriarchal society. Queerness is inherent in our being and therefore we are inherently different, unconventional, and, as a result, misunderstood. We are unconventional because we are unexpected, and in many cases, unwanted. When people who subscribe to this idea of “normal” see us, together or apart, they question why. Why do people do things or act in a way that isn’t considered normal? Oddity encourages curiosity;
because of this opposition to "the normal", because of this difference, and the curiosity we encourage, normative forces have targeted us throughout history. Our very nature threatens the establishment of these socially created roles and labels and therefore threatens the very nature of social order itself.

Queerness is a language that is often unspoken and understood only by those with the capacity to feel it; those subtle looks and touches overflowing with connection and transcendence; the subtext of censored relationships both fictional and real. Queerness is loud reverberation filled with defiance, pride, and solidarity. To be queer is to steal and redefine intimacy and gender from the dominant cis-hetero-patriarchal narrative; to repurpose the intersections of gender and sexuality as a means of human connection rather than control and subjugation. Queerness is to live, love, and stand together fiercely in the face of a world that would see us kept apart, pushed down, and even eradicated. Queer can take any form in any place, time, or situation, and that form can be beautiful, superficially and spiritually. Because of our unique position, queerness encourages us to find the deepest connections we can in new, previously unimagined ways. Since we don't have the overwhelming access to conventional standards that make interactions easier (though these standards are not always helpful), as cisgender heterosexuals do, we are forced to design our own original definitions of intimacy and connection.

Though seemingly restraining, queerness is actually the very definition of liberation; it's having the freedom to define what it means to be human on our own terms. We are not limited to conventional, socially constructed definitions of what it means to love or how to act in an assigned way. Two people can come together and discover new depths that are currently unavailable to
the heterosexual dichotomy. The modern heterosexual discourse claims that a man and a woman will never be able to fully understand each other or exist on the same mental, spiritual, or physical level as one another. A man and a woman or a boy and a girl are not even given the freedom to have a truly successful, healthy, platonic friendship without undermining expectations that heterogendered relationships must be inherently sexualized. How can two people achieve true intimacy in a relationship, platonic or otherwise, if they can never authentically connect with one another without such barriers? Queerness brings people closer together by defying these restrictions. Gender performance is another good example of how queerness defies the restrictions set up by the cis-heteropatriarchal ideal. Socially constructed rules for how men and women should perform separately and together are often toxic and counterproductive to human connections. For example, in heterosexual relationships, women are expected to do all of the emotional labor of the relationship while expecting little or nothing in return and men aren’t given the social freedom to express how they feel in constructive and healthy ways. On the other hand, if a person is queer they have the freedom to construct a new identity for themselves; one that is allowed to be fluid and is not bound by rigid gender roles, performances, and expectations.

Because of this modern context, it’s time for us to redefine “queer” for ourselves. Embracing a word that encapsulates who we are and the potential we have, both as individuals and a community, should not be taboo. Queer pride has been a work in progress for decades but those of us in the community are all too well acquainted with the stigma that is attached to being queer and the fear that is associated with coming out, even now. Revisiting our past, our connection to this word and all
its meanings, is essential for moving forward. We know that it will still take more work in order to reach our vision of acceptance rather than the superficial capitalistic homonormative tolerance trend that we currently see. An enormous part of that work requires us to carve out our own space so that our authentic voices may be heard. In order to achieve that, it is imperative that queer stories be told from a queer perspective. Authenticity can only be reached when the voices of those who have experienced queerness are prioritized over those who haven't. Queer up our media. Queer up families and communities. Let queerness permeate our society. Rather than merely tolerating or shunning it, let us and those around us celebrate queerness and the freedom it brings to our otherwise repressed and oppressed society.
out of my eyes, my mountains. stand, out of my eyes.

no binary.

speech, earth, and image, without what is about me. by flower.

open a valley around the mouth of a river, a cave.

washed.

Caroline Nickerson
Priority Intersection by Lukas Lake-Bullock

- Black Power
- Trans Rights are Human Rights
- Anti Capitalist
- Queer Resistance
- Native Pride
- Earth Protectors
Meg Coppola

This is an abomination:
scraped knees, oozing plasma-
slime fingers grasping, every eye
turned out red, blinking
too quick, frightened,
seeking abyss to hide in, from the
people. Gasped air, fangs
retracted, claws hid.
Dark again.
Palm settled in another boy’s,
dry and warm.
Disgusting, in another voice.
like a squid jetting away, tissue torn.
They hit me.
Why?
Because- because:
hIDEOUS language,
unspeakable tongue, limp.
No bandages for clear weeping wounds,
little knees, knobby.
I only held his hand
in my human hand.
Hideous language,
lexicon of curses:
twisted.
And:
Leviticus.
And:
abomination.
And
Why?
Why?
Why.
Little boy, scraped knees. Silence.
This is an abomination
DNA by unknown artist
Malleable Breath by Lukas Lake-Bullock

We are malleable,
We shift through the lines and confines of our truth,
In search of an escaping peace,
Below the surface,
A consciousness brews fervently,
Our tears hit pavements that are as unforgiving as the imaginary rules around us,
Why must we struggle,
Without a single breath of rest shared between our tired lungs,
Our voice is all we have,
But what of the deaf ears that texture our feelings with doubt,
Our only solution is to live,
To breathe in this poison air,
And exhale reason and defiance,
For this is a fight of existence and perseverance,
Of life and difference,
And may the art of our survival live on
Amissa by: Alex Alvarado

Do you see me?
A flickering flame of failure's flight.
Do you hear me?
A broken ballad blurred and bright.
Do you taste me?
My salted sadness of solemn suffering.
Do you know me?
A woeful wanderer of wanton wondering.
Do you feel me?
This rough and rugged, razored reject.
Will you save me?
When war is waged for wrathful wrongs.
How could you when I already locked my love and
lost my life?
Why would you? I'm already at the gates of hell.
This is the place of final reckoning.
I hear the fallen heroes beckoning.