

Languaging a Future for Lovepersons :: Speculative Strategies Towards Radical Trans/cendence

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“Queer was one of the first words that spoke to me as the dream I needed in order to survive. I don’t know if trans is the same as queer, I mean I know it is and I know it isn’t—I know there can be a gloriousness to the potential of trans as a reimagining beyond conventional gender expectation. If queer laid my foundations, a trans analysis rearranged the structures and gave me the space to breathe again. Transgender: to bend, mend, extend, and transcend.” — Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore¹

“...holding queerness in a sort of ontological humble state, under a conceptual grid in which we do not claim to always already know queerness in the world, potentially staves off the ossifying effects of neoliberal ideology and the degradation of politics brought about by representations of queerness in contemporary popular culture.” — José Esteban Muñoz²

TL;DR:

If a trans, queered identity can be understood as not only transcending gender and sexuality but as a liberatory, speculative ontological gesture of abolitionary momentum—of ideological and institutional non-conformity—what keeps us from achieving the futures we and our elders and forebears have imagined? How can QTGNC³ liberation find its footing in both our own reimagined bodies and infrastructural forms of the body politic, evolving beyond a hagiographic hopefulness mired in abstraction?

This is an introduction to substantive study offering as field experiment the possibility for radical kinship structures resisting the normative institution of “family,” considering what roadblocks resist our evolution into the alternative infrastructures that would sustain and offer a realization of the queer futures of our imaginaries. Systemically and operationally, we unpack these challenges as they persist on the bodily/somatic, interpersonal, community, and institutional levels to address and attempt tangible ways of seeding these changes.

If a transfuture is characteristically anti-hierarchical and autonomous, operating in concert with nonhuman allies, how does the QTGNC *body* learn to access the alternative modes of presence, mutual aid, and intersystem solidarity it needs? Using a trauma framework, we can trace both personal and community desire for evolution as potentialities stymied by precarity and fear of alienation—more specifically avoidance of physical harm, loss of community/support and/or other financial / social insecurity—and locate the ways in which our bodies’ nervous system experiences become a silent determinant of how attainable we somatically *perceive* alternatives as being.

In seeking operative strategies for operationalizing QTGNC futures, this paper proposes cognitive articulation of this structural trauma accompanied by speculative language application as modes of re/orienting the body away from our conditioning’s cellular damage.

Language, then, offers a “soft” opening to facilitating these changes, both on the page and in personal and community practice, understood as a pathway towards cognitive and somatic repatterning.

This speculative-bodily trans imaginary presents a healing procedural tactic towards abolition of delimiting infrastructures and ideologies via groundwork realized in bodies rendered capable of somatically realizing concrete QTGNC futures beyond abstraction.

“SURVIVAL IS NOT AN ACADEMIC SKILL”⁴ : QUEER EMBODIMENT, THE REFLEXIVE TURN, AND THE SPACE OF PRECARIOUS POSSIBILITY

It might be unexpected to open a conversation about QTGNC kinship structures with an investigation into how trauma manifests in the body, but perhaps the problem is *exactly* that this seems like an unlikely direction to take. With one in three transgender people reporting living in poverty, 41 percent of Black transgender people experiencing homelessness (a rate more than five times that of the general US population), a greatly increased risk of violence and engagement in survival sex work, and substantially higher risk factors for physical and mental health, any conversation about TGNC identity is necessarily also one about navigating precarity and danger; any investigation into our futures, then, must too be an investigation into articulating, understanding the impacts of, and ultimately of healing trauma.⁵

This piece also performs a sort of reflexive forensics: it seeks to write into the record the para-academic journey of experiential learning and research that has dominated my experience as a queer/nonbinary/trans scholar for over a decade. I present this as a sort of field report: both *study of* and *possibilities for practice*.

Scholarship for me is a vocation requiring supplementary, body-intensive labor. Like hooks, I’ve always approached it *as a liberatory practice*⁶, not a source of income. My research goals are public-facing: I strive to be a conduit for critical frameworks’ application in quotidian life, especially in the service of mutual aid and community infrastructure building, primarily *outside the academy*.⁷

It took a multi-year episode of disabling chronic illness and C-PTSD (brought on by my grueling second survival job) to lead me to the somatic-speculative framework here: a failure of systemic resources required me to apply my research skills in order to articulate and understand my body’s experience. As a QTGNC person dealing with a rarely trauma-informed allopathic medical system ill-equipped to acknowledge, much less support, bodies of trans experience, both the support and *data* most of the “professionals” I was cycling through on Medicaid were lacking were found through networks of QTGNC mutual aid, and especially those intersecting with disability and mental health.

Acknowledging the *somatic* impacts of compound trauma and recognizing the links to how my body had internalized the enlightenment project of disembodied logic was key not only to *cognitively* “understanding” but to doing so *bodily*. Critically, for our purposes, it’s also what allowed me to see how my experience as a QTGNC person was inextricably linked to the ways in which my body had internalized trauma’s teachings for me as a *precarious* person. For me, this was also linked to growing up with high-functioning neurodivergence, for whom *masking* became a survival mechanism.⁸

My *neuroqueer* experience was characterized by performing roles and dissociating from my body for

decades, years during which my identity as a Queer person who didn't identify with my (or any) gender simply felt like more of the same: "personal" data that was inadmissible due to the risk factors they carried in my environment, where precarity demanded a cost-benefit analysis of not only my actions but also any language or presentation reflecting identity and personal experience.

This story is a common one: that of millions of kids growing up in families and cultural contexts where differences in gender and sexuality⁹ are framed as selfish "choices" creating problems for others. But the choices we make, especially in a country like the US (currently defined by institutionally enforced bio-precariety) are in many ways not our own. Despite being a skin-privileged person with multiple degrees like many, my position is that of the *academic precariat*,¹⁰ exacerbated by my working class background, identity as a QTGNC person, and by chronic illness.

Taking the reflexive turn here is intentional: I'm my own most available subject. Here, I offer what my extremely limited bandwidth as a member of that precariat allows. This piece does not attempt to be exhaustive or suggest that I have cited all the relevant literature regarding these subjects. It explores the experience of bodies, including my own, living under late capitalism in the United States and doesn't make assumptions as to global equivalences.

I'm also not attempting to take on the mantle of expertise, nor to pretend that being a precarious scholar at this time in the US affords support for research, nor to suggest that this work took place in officially vetted spaces. This piece not only talks about but *demonstrates* the speculative: it is a work of queered-transfutures, an eking out of permission for myself and my *oddkin*¹¹ to enter into somatic and systemic investigation in the service of change, regardless of our relationship to hierarchical, colonial-settler validation and value.

Phenomenologies of Possibility for the QTGNC Trauma-Body

In seeking speculative possibilities for QTGNC futures we want to simultaneously consider the micro and the macro in tandem: we want to focus both on *embodied* lived experience, as well as on the ways in which institutional systems operate on a logic that remains intentionally invisible to most. For, often, even when we begin to understand and talk about how those systems work, we find ourselves unable to participate in and/or initiate the change we desire therein.

My hypothesis, then, is that in order to move beyond the speculative into the possible we must actively engage these systems' impact on the body (and understand some critical mechanisms of that body) in order to implement and effect system change. We must perform an analytical shift away from an abstracted, capital-biopower "people" to person-as-organism, person as animal-body, person as body-in-the-world.

Here I want to suggest a distinction between a *cognitive* awareness of concepts and strategies and an *embodied* one, positing that we can only actually trans/form when we move into the latter, centering the *body* (and our larger collective *body-as-organism*) as the operative laboratory within which our ideas must be not only intellectually but *physically* reproduced.

For QTGNC bodies in particular, the process of slowing down and honing in on the world of the body can feel unfamiliar or unsafe. For many of us, the body is a landscape riddled with triggers and dangers: the ways in which we diverge from a hetero-binary "norm," and the ways in which we internalize the negative responses to this divergence in our environments growing up makes dissociation a common survival

strategy, more common still in *neuroqueer*¹² experience.

To fully understand the implications of this common experience for QTGNC people *on our bodies*, I'm suggesting here that we categorize our experience for the body explicitly as that of *trauma*, and that consider our condition as a cellular, systemic one: insofar as what is happening *in the body* and the signals that are being transmitted between your brain / nervous system and your other internal mechanisms *are the outcome of the way your body evolved to recognize and react to danger*.

When the human body believes itself to be in a state of acute danger, or has continuously been exposed to danger, risk, or threat, the way it constructs its set of possibilities and behaves is not, in fact, determined exclusively or even primarily by the brain in the way if that body was in a calm or "rational" state. The vagus nerve is interfacing between your gut and organs and your brain, sending signals as to how the system needs to function, whether "rest and digest" or "fight or flight" is possible.

Human bodies that exhibit patterns of complex (C)-PTSD develop bodily responses to their lived experience as a result of "prolonged, repeated experience of interpersonal trauma in a context in which the individual has little or no chance of escape." In these situations, the person-as-animal behaves with the reptilian brain's instinct to physically protect itself from predators superseding the limbic brain's more evolved mammalian capabilities.

Bessel Van der Kolk¹³ explains how this instinct drives us to make decisions consistent with the mechanisms driven by trauma, as opposed to those seemingly more aligned with our desires or beliefs, out of a biological instinct that this alternative will be safer for us in the long run. The animal, he explains, returns to its familiar lair even if repeated attacks occur there; the victim of abuse, gaslit into believing their experience is all they can hope for or deserve, stays with their abuser.

Applying a trauma lens is productive in considering the implications for QTGNC bodies in terms of *orientation*, using Sara Ahmed's phenomenological approach. If the body perceives expression of gender and/or sexual identity as a threatening deviation from the repetition of gesture that positions us as "normal" as we become accustomed to the modes and expectations of our surroundings,¹⁴ we associate our sense of self with "objects that take us off [the straight] line," thereby establishing the alternative as not only *other* but risk-carrying *deviant*. When we learn that our identities exclude us from the "accumulated social good" of familial temporal expectations, reproduced by the "directive" performativity of family gatherings as well as the heterosexual objects¹⁵ of the conventional family home, the lack of adequate social infrastructures to support alternative pathways often demands a "turning towards."

The stakes of performing expected gender roles here, "embracing such objects as embodiments of our own histories," are raised considerably when the less tangible currencies of familial love and affection intertwine with more practical realities of inheritance along a continuous straight *line*: where questions of financial and interpersonal, structural, and support lead us back to the body and its sense of safety (or lack thereof).¹⁶

Ahmed goes on to address the re-orientation of the body necessary to *queer* it against the straight line, suggesting a conscious consideration of a "politics of disorientation," noting that disorientation "is not psychically or materially possible or sustainable for many," and should never be "an obligation or responsibility for those who identify as queer." However, this analysis prioritizes the *mind's consideration of the body*, as opposed to addressing the *physical condition of the body itself* as it faces whether or not

disorientation is sustainable or safe for that organism.

In considering the range of possibilities available to not only the queer “person” but the queer *body*, it’s helpful to take an analysis like Ahmed’s alongside a spatial consideration like Elizabeth Grosz in *Bodies-Cities*¹⁷, stressing the psychic, social, sexual, discursive, and representational production of the body-in-space—adding to these both an awareness of the body’s behavior in times of stress and trauma, as well as an analysis of the institutional apparatus (both ideological and corporeal) that determine the relative precariousness of that body vis-a-vis its most basic needs.

Articulating the physical and emotional markers of trauma present in the QTGNC body allows us to recognize the necessary steps towards change as not only structural or systemic but in fact as healing, palliative, reparative or recuperative, both for the individual body and the body politic.

Recognizing that our contemporary landscape of logic and argument relies on and forwards the erroneous assumption of mind-body division)¹⁸, then, helps us bridge the divide to the ways in which the *macro* operates, using us as unwitting carriers.

Here we can begin to reclaim the space that Agamben names *bare life*¹⁹ as distinct from self-as-political being—recognizing that we have been conditioned to see ourselves as political subjects, holders of a distinctly capital form of biopower, and that herein lies the key to our own evolution: in the recognition and dissolution of the ways in which we have simultaneously lost track of and been controlled by programmatic fear, functioning *biologically*.

When we recognize the body as carrier and agent of a logic within which it functions as a material resource / labor-body serving others’ goals, we can challenge this through somatic practice as well as through re-patterning our *cognitive* awareness, forming new pathways via language. This process is not dissimilar in approach to techniques used in Somatic and Cognitive Behavior Therapy²⁰, integrating a re-articulation of thought patterns with active attunement to the body, essentially establishing new functional relationships for the somatosensory cortex. The language of trauma helps us name and find data around the QTGNC body’s experience that we can work to heal.

But in differentiating this experience explicitly for the QTGNC body, I want to offer two proposals: first, that engaging with trans identity outside of socio-cultural norms is *already* speculative and therefore is already asking the body to re-program its relationship to language and perception, and second, that articulating and recognizing this process as a training ground for (r)evolutionary possibility suggests that entering the space of the speculative strategically, with intention, offers opportunities to cognitively reprogram, or “hack,” our relationship to the body’s experience in the world.

A useful example of speculative language comes from *The Architectural Body*,²¹ where Arakawa and Madeline Gins offer neologistic frameworks like the “organism that persons” that while not posited as QTGNC are productively *trans*-cendant of normative human engagement with our *surrounds*; work like theirs can help us operationalize linguistic strategy as liberatory practice.

Here, we recognize and play with language as the carrier and thereby somewhat plastic membrane for our bodies’ perception of their conditions (and potentiality). In neologism, then, we begin to fray the edges of our ways of both perceiving and establishing meaning in ourselves and our environment, questioning the terms and definitions we have become not only cognitively but somatically *oriented towards*.

We’ll return to the implications of speculative linguistic hacks later. For now, what we want to take away is

this: for the QTGNC body conditioned by trauma, potentialities within our grasp are perceived to be too high of a risk *by the body*. However, even when we aren't able to change the systems that prime us towards fear, we *can* alter our bodies' response to stimuli by recognizing how our own somatic systems have come to signal to us that we are trapped in our current cycle, repatterning our relationship to speculative futures for ourselves and our communities.

BEYOND THE FAMILIAL BODY: RISK FACTORS IN KINSHIP INFRASTRUCTURES

Let's take a look at the landscape of radical, trans and queer kinship our QTGNC bodies might venture into: here, too, the political economics of precarity continually inform the choices we're making, triggering both the individual *and familial* trauma-body into shutting down potentialities deemed too risky.

The feasibility of alternative kinship is determined less often as a factor of *what type of relationships or community aligns with your identity or personal beliefs*, but moreso *how likely are you, as a QTGNC person, to continue to have access to housing, food, healthcare, and other resources when considering the potential loss of familial and/or other support?*, stakes which get raised exponentially via factors of race, gender-nonconformity, disability, citizenship, etc., with the systemic gap in intergenerational wealth between families of different races²² exacerbating these pressures for many.

In the US, the absence of institutional safety nets for survival places increased pressure on the relationship between QTGNC individuals and their blood relations. The family unit often serves as a life raft for navigating the pitfalls of a country where most are struggling financially, burdened by debt, with potential homelessness and bankruptcy looming on the horizon. Reliance on family also translates into obligation, especially expectations around care and support for children and elders, replacing absent systemic resources.

Just as the introduction of trans-divergent possibilities presents a battle for the traumatized individual QTGNC body, by extension this *re-orientation* threatens similar trauma to the familial *body*, already navigating its role as *de facto* support system where public institutions have failed. QTGNC individuals are, then, often put in the position of also navigating the trauma of others collectively making up for social infrastructure's failure.

When a QTGNC person moves into the work of developing alternative kinship structures, away from family *lines* and objects (per Ahmed), this move can *feel* to the familial body like destabilization to an already stressed system. However, trans-speculative kinship models could ultimately offer tools for increased sustainability by *intentionally* expanding the family unit through mutual aid and solidarity strategies rather than this happening solely as an emergency stopgap. How do we get there?

In workshops addressing the intersections of trauma and precarity²³, I ask participants to consider the choices they would make if basic survival was not a worry for them or their families. *What if you didn't worry that radical gender, sexuality, and kinship might increase risk for your family, given their precarious relationship to resources and care?* Most people had so long ago accepted they'd never have this sort of option that even being offered this space of consideration felt impossible to enter, a different kind of risk associated with recognizing you've never felt truly free and have only made conditional choices based on fear and assumed compromise. I began asking this question because in navigating my body's trauma I realized I was doing exactly this, every day.

While it's often impossible to eliminate the systemic conditions of risk present for QTGNC bodies, it *is*

possible to articulate and reorient our *reactions* to the ways in which those risks have often precluded the space of actively strategizing the imaginary. This may offer not a fix for the broken system, but rather allow us to theorize and build models that render it obsolete,²⁴ alternatives which might also potentially offer others productive ways of identifying the conditions of their discontent.

POLITICAL ECONOMIES OF THE “NATURAL”

If reimagining a queered *kinship* is essential in fully realizing one’s own QTGNC identity, we must understand how and why the introduction of radical formations carries such socio-culturally perceived risk / threat, perhaps moreso that the introduction of alternative gender or sexuality, for beyond concerns around socio-economic precarity, the QTGNC person engaging in radical kinship also ramps up the degree of discord by seemingly endangering the culturally sacred cows of family and home, often replete with a strong dose of sexual conservatism.

Whereas binary structures of coupled *queer love* or *queer marriage* still follow Ahmed’s *straight lines*, upholding normative family orientations, QTGNC/fluid kinship structures reject that binary, questioning not only possibilities for individual identity and expression but also demanding a reimagining of roles and divisions in private life, as well as resisting the atomized movements of capital through the institution of family via private property, resource use, taxation, etc.

Alongside the erasure of longstanding, visible TGNC identities in indigenous global cultures, a socio-cultural adherence to cis-het-binary family structures and the patriarchal gender norms upheld there have their roots in a settler, white supremacist logic: these ideals are inextricable from the relegation of the kinship structures of colonized and enslaved peoples (and even the indigenous roots of European tribal cultures) to the position of Other via the project of colonization and the movement of capital. A skewed, inherently biased, representation of human histories (and its entanglement with the natural and social sciences) continues to undergird the post-colonial landscape, defining the institutional logic at work as not only “normal” but “evolved”—conditioning in the guise of “information.”²⁵

A political economics framework demonstrates how the forces working against non-normative kinship are not operating *primarily* ideologically but rather utilize narrative as means of manipulation along transactional lines, creating conditions reproducing market logic. The ideological issue seemingly at hand is rarely the primary battle being fought, which is nearly always the work of securing power, reinforcing structures of capital accumulation and distribution, controlling housing, policing, and labor, and the trickling down of institutional enforcement via an ideological control around the “natural”.

We can trace an interpenetration of these interests with Judeo-Christian indoctrination / rhetoric, and the ways in which a sustainable commons has been systematically eliminated, a project of the implementation of proto-capitalist control, transforming bodies, labor, sexuality and reproduction into economic resources of the state. This seeming reach is fundamental to understanding how we came to perceive our current institutional structures as “natural” to human experience—and can be a way to assist us in seeing the navigation of QTGNC identity and kinship as perhaps not entirely a radical “new” but rather of a sort of ancestral work that holds tools for all humans seeking possibility beyond the Capitolocene: unearthing and reclaiming the erased ways of being in the body, on the land, and with each other.

What we see in the analysis of Sylvia Federici among others are histories of widespread, officially vetted propaganda built to normalize social, cultural, and other institutional damnation not only of the Other

body, but of any and all practices and traditions associated with the non-hetero-normative, patriarchal, male-gaze-oriented body/role, as well as commons intelligence and infrastructure, deemed a threat to the production and maintenance of a cohesive, capitalist statehood.²⁶

Extending the space of trans imagination into the familial body/politic through alternative kinship / community structures does more than shift individual labor bodies whose material value can still be manipulated; it threatens an abolitionary project far more harmful to the powers that be.

OF SCREENS AND QUEENS: REPRESENTATION AND REFUGE

Imagining not only the *negation* of one's current situation but the *building* of alternatives requires familiarity with precedent models: in envisioning possibilities the QTGNC body looks to representations of alternatives in whatever media they have access to, as well as to those queer community spaces they might have the opportunity to visit and/or occupy. And, while we can generalize about the ways in which the proliferation of and wider access to media platforms have radically and exponentially expanded possibilities for connection, this still often happens in a palimpsestic sort of parallel to the demands and expectations of participating in normative institutional kinship, in particular for the most precarious.

What I'd like to briefly touch on here, then, are the ways in which both media representation and self-sabotaging systems of social capital in QTGNC community spaces often threaten to undermine whatever possibility of alternative kinship formations individuals might have otherwise identified as fruitful.

In seeking refuge the body is reticent to make waves amidst new kin, even if what it being offered there in some ways reproduces the trauma of origin. When neither media nor queer spaces offer ready alternatives (and especially when the latter require a new, codeswitched version of adherence to social codes), the QTGNC person often finds themselves accepting a new compromise.

One might hope to find sanctuary and more support in the building of nontraditional kinship structures in queer spaces, but unfortunately what one discovers there is often a new set of deeply gendered, stratified modes of acceptable presentation and behavior.

Nico Dacumos, in "All Mixed Up With No Place to Go: Inhabiting Mixed Consciousness on the Margins,"²⁷ refers to this pressure as "the tyranny of identity," a phenomenon "fail[ing] all butches, AG's/aggressives, and studs who find themselves facing the same issues of state and interpersonal violence that FTMs or genderqueers face, minus the academic and political hype"—an issue that is, also, markedly "tied to race and class." The precarity specific to these groups, he argues, might make the choice to be a stud or butch more viable than the more radical, often medically-defined categorization afforded "officially" transgender or genderqueer persons, with resultant widespread erasure both in academic and medical / mental health documentation.

The authors collected in *Nobody Passes* illustrate a litany of ways in which the queer community displays the unfortunate tendency to eat its own, with the familiar stories of *no fats*, *no femmes* and other rampant misogyny in the cis-male homosexual community, with the lack of acceptance for queer and transgender folk who have evolved their gender or sexual preference over time, or with others who fail to fit into the alternative models more specific queer "communities" require one to perform.

Rocko Bulldagger's list of 'top ten people most excluded from your genderqueer scene' includes:

*1) people of color, 2) femmes, 3) transwomen and others who insist on continuing to use female pronouns in this day and age, 4) people who do not wear the uniform, 5) people over twenty-seven, unless they have contributed to your top surgery fund, 6) people who express hetero actions, 7) people who do not speak the latest activist lingo, 8) people who aren't kissing your ass right now, 9) transsexuals who have "fully" transitioned, however you define that today, and 10) cross-dressers.*²⁸

Bulldagger's concern is familiar: that in place of becoming united, and exploring expansive possibility together, the trans and genderqueer community ends up reproducing Dacumos' "tyranny of identity," engaging in a parallel respectability politics wherein the threat of precarity returns anew. And herein we identify a new roadblock to the establishment of radical QTGNC kinship structures: trauma patterns in our existing communities are being reproduced in "our" own spaces, where survival again becomes paramount, and, importantly, where the lack of reliable safety reinforces a feeling of the need to remain connected (and legible) to our biological kinship structures.

In "Outside In: the Failings of Alternative Communities,"²⁹ Kim Nicolini writes that "instead of offering solutions to [her] problem of outsidersness and alienation," that what she found was "enforced stereotypes, classism, and a structure that nurtures a society of the elite," and which was much more interested in "maintaining its own version of the status quo than in actually promoting an alternative to mainstream society."

Especially for those who have put themselves in a position of insecurity or risk in order to take certain steps of their journey towards a queer public identity and presence, the risk of alienating oneself from a queer community or family, now a place of refuge, can seem too great. For the queer body negotiating danger, with the past traumas already informing its sense of "logical" and "safe" decision making, moves toward radical possibility that upset the functional order of things can thereby appear to be off the table. And therefore, unfortunately, most folks are left waiting for a precedent to be set by those who have more plasticity in their condition before they are willing to upset the precarious, often weaker links of DIY kinship networks.

Returning to the political-economics of the body as a site of capital accumulation, we recognize the QTGNC body in queer spaces as one already risking the absence or loss of familial kinship resources; understanding itself within a system of *value* this body seeks an accumulation of worth and "wealth" even if not in monetary form. The social capital systems of the queer economy of acceptance and belonging can be seen as functioning very much along these lines, both in terms of access as well as vis-a-vis translation into physical resources by means of successful negotiations within these networks.

Even so, the availability of physical occupation of queer spaces is a privilege afforded to few, especially to QTGNC folks tied to the geographic and economic webbing of precarious blood-kinship structures outside of major metropolitan centers. While queer spaces and communities reflect and are reflected in (and often fetishized by) media representation, if it is this representation that offers possibilities for seeing another life for the self for even those unable to engage with current collective gatherings, problematic or no.

The movements of the 60's-90's that have become so iconic in the story of sexual liberation and Gay Rights mythology (at least in the US) might have foretold a future/present quite different from the space in which we find ourselves, insofar as these challenged not only homophobia and heteronormativity, but so too troubled normative expectations and intersections of kinship in relationship to race, gender, class,

ability, and legality/nationality.

Where did this trajectory veer off course? Where these movements sought structural change and collective re-imagining, a shift to neoliberal capital in not only socio-political function but especially in *cultural* ideology and its representations via media countered by reframing the focus of queer resistance onto the rights of the individual / citizen, which then in turn transmuted into the most visible concern and rallying cries of the collective (like the right to marry).

Here, the dangers of what Lauren Berlant refers to as the *intimate public sphere*³⁰ start to ossify in the ways the queer community performs itself to a public: conformity is reproduced by the very agents who may, personally and privately, wish to confound and break out of normative kinship structures as they are encouraged to form publicly visible bonds of constituency around what is perceived and performed as a “commonly lived” history.

For the QTGNC person in the world both wishing to “resist” by participating in protests against the very real abuse of rights as well as wishing to “belong” and “support” the strength and capacities of the closest thing to an operative queer “public,” it can be not only challenging but feel like an act of sedition to remove oneself from public narratives of both emotional and embodied life that become synonymous with “conventions of belonging.” For trans and genderqueer folk (especially QTPOC) experiencing the punishing tyranny of identity, this pressure is only exacerbated, in addition to these community members already being most likely to be facing precarity and immediate concerns of safety and access to resources.

In breaking down the rhetoric and function of Jodie Foster’s “coming out” speech at the 2013 Golden Globes, Julia Johnson and Kimberlee Pérez illustrate the ways in which Foster and other public figures attempt to play into a nonnormative collective sentiment, at the same time reinforcing a “narrative... constrained by neoliberal conditions,” but still wherein her race and class privilege afford her the “right” to a publicly understood and appreciated private life, under the umbrella of the normative social trope of *protecting the (genetic, household, private) family*.³¹

Like those in *Nobody Passes* which tell us what *type* of queer we can be when and where, even while the “queer family” or “chosen family” concept remains narratively beloved, the nuclear family / cis-gender-role social trope is powerful: played out across media and canonized via our own words and actions, via post and tweet and participation in social and political spheres wherein *belonging* feels very much at stake (to our minds, and, as we’ve established, our bodies).

Annalee Newitz considers the space of filmic unrequited love across heterosexual and homosexual characters that might appear to, at the surface, cross into an expansive public conversation about the plasticity of desire and the possibilities of partnership and/or householding, but which instead “offer audiences a new form of sexual conservatism in which your orientation matters less than whether you choose to form a family, become monogamous, and procreate.”³²

A longer analysis of alternative QTGNC kinship structures in the public view increasingly necessitates a consideration of the complex representations and role of the Houses / Kiki scene that grew out of Ball culture, which in the 1970’s (starting with the House of LaBeija) became more formally organized as not only competitive “teams” but often as literal homes, providing safety and familial support systems to displaced QTGNC youth, a disproportionate number of whom continue to be homeless and HIV positive.³³

It's not possible in this introductory survey to attempt the attention this warrants, but it bears noting that within these visible "alternative" families, in media depictions while there is deep appreciation for the House as stopgap infrastructure providing rescue, norms often remain idealized and dreamed for, a space of aspiration firmly positioned as a goal, as opposed to building sustainability into these DIY forms as strategic, intentional alternative. Complicating this further is the ways in which representation of Ball culture remains rife with criticism of voyeurism, fetishization and appropriation. As a show like *Drag Race* enters its 13th season, with the popularity of the drama series, *Pose* (FX), documentary/reality series *My House* (Vice), and the controversial voguing competition, *Legendary* (HBO Max), a stylized, consumer-ready derivative has made its way firmly into popular culture and into the language of public discourse, even while violence against transgender individuals reaches an all time high in the United States.³⁴

At the same time, we can chart television and other media's effect on a public consciousness in which "the friends-as-family idea is [widely held as] both comforting and pragmatic,"³⁵ with a litany of syndicated shows boasting both friend-groups with both hetero and homosexual characters as core members. However, these familiar (and often entirely unrealistic) narratives not only rarely offer any validation or true representation of alternative models; in fact, the central storylines these shows lean heavily on their characters' quests *to partner*, leaving behind temporary, makeshift "kinship" structures.

Though deeply problematic both on and offscreen, as a socioeconomic study *Transparent* illustrates myriad privileges afforded to the wealthy, and how the institution of family maintains its hold on individuals through the binds of ongoing financial support into adulthood. Here we see characters grappling with gender identity but even moreso we see how a wealthy family, with its ability to reframe and remake itself, with its capacity to underwrite the failures of its offspring, with the very real capacity to provide housing and/or other basic needs, is a unique and separate universe: a space within which exploration and "experimentation" is exceptionally possible, but which expects tribute of a sort which, too, has long term effects on mind and body in the establishment of a fully formed identity.

CLASS AND THE COMMONS: CONFRONTING (IN)ACCESSIBILITY OF NON-NORMATIVE MODELS

The question of agency in the formation of QTGNC kinship networks as it relates to both financial freedom and radical non-normative householding is one that is well served by considering the growth and formation (and/or failure to launch) of alternative communities in general—as well as in recognizing the concerning shifts currently taking place in the corporate re-imaginings of commons-based models. Transfolks aren't alone in our unfamiliarity with alternative models, especially in the US: to many of us these possibilities remain not only invisible on the surface, but hard to access even if searching with intention.

Finding things requires an understanding of *how to look*; if we want to locate past or present alternative QTGNC kinship spaces we also need an awareness of how things make it into the official record, and what gets erased. Much of this history has been lived in the shadows or circulated through whisper networks; while scholars and archivists are working to excavate and shine light on whatever record remains, availability of these fragmented accounts is barely accessible to those whose lives are dedicated to this research, much less to the average person seeking models for living aligned with their identity.

To replicate the conditions of a young person seeking alternatives I tried using public search engines, adding to this queries in directories for international intentional communities and questions posed to

online networks of trans and queer scholars, artists, and activists. It was a challenge to locate many examples, even with my research background and relative familiarity.

In addition to erasure and marginal positionality in our histories and public record, alternative kinship and housing structures in the US have been systemically made difficult to establish and maintain within this country's corporate real estate landscape, designed to be unfriendly to models that seek to upend hierarchies of power and property ownership.

While the radical queer intersectional movements of the 1960's-90's overlapped with experimental strategies for housing, distribution sharing, and other mutual aid structures, this became increasingly inaccessible in punishing markets with demonstrated bias against QTGNC people.

We can only briefly touch on the ways in which taxation, corporatized housing and other predatory fiscal programs in the US made alternative kinship configurations nearly impossible to those not already coming in with independent means of support. However, it's critical for us to note briefly how the optic move towards more cis-hetero norms and values for the LGBTQ agenda dovetails with increased difficulty for the establishment and maintenance of even informal community structures not fiscally underwritten by intergenerational familial ties and resources.

This broader move away from sexual freedom and from alternative, radical models for family and home within left politics in the US in general positioned experimental communities in the shadows, invisible to most, for decades. Nonetheless there persist several hundred intentional communities (alternatively: cooperative community, ecovillage, etc) in the United States, and more around the world. Despite the stated mission of these organizations to have no obstructions to joining based on race, gender, sexuality, class, or so on, the visible face of these communities is largely white, and capacity to join such a community is often a marker of privilege. Doing so, essentially, demonstrates the availability of *choice* to move away from mainstream society, risking alienation both familial and socio-cultural, as well as establishing a notably *other* type of belonging distinct from the narratives considered earlier.³⁶

Mutual aid and solidarity networks, in the past few years since this piece was originally written, have taken significant strides in coordinating establishment of land and housing acquisition for intentional community building. November 2020, for instance, saw the establishment of the GLITS One South Black transgender housing complex in Woodhaven NY, made possible by an outpouring of crowdfunding support. The consideration of intentional housing and resource models, however, even more than QTGNC led corporate and nonprofits structures, might in fact begin to offer intersectional marginalized communities (and, specifically, those interested in radical queer kinship building) the tools necessary to sustainably combat the precariousness which makes this seem like an impossibility.

Successful redistribution of resources and protocol for housing, care, education, nutrition, as well as other spiritual and emotional assets could begin to repair the traumatized systems our bodies bring to this effort, offering a model that aspires to independence, growth, and healing. It is critical to note that such an alternative is diametrically opposed to that of dependence on allopathic modalities of healing trauma, attached as it is to a western medical model that continues to treat mind and body as distinct entities, with specialists unprepared and unable to address the queer body as a site of conflict that doesn't desire a normative reintegration or reprogramming.³⁷

SEEDPLANTING WITH SPECULATIVE NARRATIVES AND NEOLOGISMS: MAKING ODDKIN³⁸

Polemical reactions to a hypothesis such as Lee Edelman's, proffering the *Death Drive*³⁹ as a uniquely formed political agency unencumbered by familial trapping, are nonetheless useful in seeing how QTGNC folks who *do* wish to engage in more traditional parenting become disinclined to align themselves with "outsider" narratives wherein queerness is posited as opposed to the goals and values of family, home, and domesticity. The polarizing of the politically radical (and often sexually liberatory) rhetoric of the queer left is often read as a negation and criticism of straightness and even of different modes of queerness, leaving many falling back on a populist, shared experience of "family" that supercedes LGBTQ affinities.

If we understand the legacy of the sort of reactionary exceptionalism that Edelman proposes and instead envision its reconfiguration within an explicitly trans/GNC, feminist, ecologically sound, trauma-informed, intersectional context, what might this look like? We can locate models for this where countless revolutionary, seemingly "impossible" futures of discovery and change have emerged: in the speculative.

Here we come full circle to the suggestions of the beginning of this work: recommending that when the QTGNC body, still conditioned by trauma, isn't yet primed to feel capable of transformation, and when the systemic infrastructure is stacked against our experimentation with alternative kinship forms in home or family structures recognized by the state, that work can happen in the realm of language that simultaneously does the work of healing via cognitive repatterning as well as beginning to lay the groundwork for a realizable blueprint in lived experience.

Familiarizing ourselves with as well as inventing radical speculative landscapes for gender expansiveness as well as for the ways in which TGNC futures also inhabit solidarity-driven kinship forms in conversation with biome and upending cis-het, patriarchal power structures allows us to begin to make room for these potentialities in our minds and bodies. Learning, creating, and using speculative language around ourselves and our experience, in conversation with these visions, begins to chip away at the limitations we've been conditioned to perceive as real. In speculative futures, too, we often find cross-pollination with pre-modern, indigenous social and kinship models, unsurprisingly spaces in which the relationship between power, gender, and sexuality functions quite differently from those oriented around a capitalist intelligence.

Here, the trans imagination is presented with possibilities within the scope of our senses, but beyond our experiences; these narratives, their imagined geographies, and their characters have allowed humans to reframe their own lives within expansive pasts and futures of their own devising. But so too we find freedom beyond the systemic confines of our current conditions—precisely why creative production, and access to it, is so highly controlled in fascist regimes.

In her poem "Rant"⁴⁰, Diane DiPrima writes that "the only war that matters is the war against the imagination," in which "all other wars are subsumed," which I've always taken not as a dismissal of the gravity of other human struggles but rather that it is in the space of the imagination that freedom persists under the greatest of repressions. We are lucky if we are among those permitted access to banned books and other media wherein radical imaginings of gender, class, race, ability, and sexuality (as well as religion and other institutional structures) have been explored. For it is not in the *world*, as of yet, but in the space of the imagination that we find our most productive models of potential future constructions of gender, kinship, and social structure.

If we look at Victor Turner's social drama theory, we can recognize a superstructure of performative institutional response to "resistance," charting ritual stages of breach, crisis, redress, and reintegration⁴¹

that illustrate at a metacognitive level how fruitless certain institution-facing efforts can be. Returning again to the strategy of fashioning *new models rendering the old obsolete* we look to bootstrap operation most possible in the liminal spaces existing *concurrently* with a repressive or otherwise normative state: a *temporary autonomous zone*⁴² arising “out of critique of revolution,” establishing alternative spaces that are either conceptually, actually, or digitally “off the grid,” where potentialities can flourish.

In the *TAZ*, one of the first darlings to go is the nuclear family, which Bey concludes is the “base unit of consensus society,” a response to imposed scarcity and hierarchy. He considers, instead, the *band*, or an open group that exists as part of a “horizontal pattern of custom, extended kinship, contract and alliance, spiritual affinities, etc.,” recognizing even as early as 1991 the seemingly boundless potential for free network associations and re-distribution of resources, and alternative establishment of anti-hierarchical modes of self-identification that the internet offered.⁴³ In fact, from the early landscapes of open forums and webrings, to and through massive multiplayer video game design both on and offline, the speculative a-topic networked non-space of the internet has continued to be a space where gender exploration has been actively encouraged, ostensibly perceived as “safe” or publicly “acceptable” in the guise of the fantastic.⁴⁴

Speculative narrative, itself a type of autonomous zone, has long been a workshop for utopian experimentation, taking to task the failures of institutional power structures, the standardized roles around which they operate and on which their maintenance relies. Utopian and queer reimaginings of social structure, hierarchy, and gender (as well as conceptions of genderless, or gender-transformative characters) are central to the work of writers like N.K. Jemisin, Samuel Delaney, Ursula K. LeGuin, and countless others; these extend into television, film and other media where gender and sexuality has often been explored in the guise of the “nonhuman” far earlier than depictions of “real life” allowed.⁴⁵

Donna Haraway’s recent collection, *Staying with the Trouble*, includes the speculative “Camille Stories,” where she imagines five generations of “Camilles” as human-animal symbionts born to the Communities of Compost, envisioned as children born “in the context of community decision making” to horizontally formed human systems intentionally designed to “mutate the apparatuses of kin making and to reduce radically the burdens of human numbers across the earth,” and wherein “every new child must have at least three parents, who may or may not practice new or old genders.”⁴⁶

Both in theory like Bey’s or Haraway’s and in speculative narrative, the creation and use of the neologism becomes a linguistic safe space where expansive conceptions can begin to become concretized. Haraway writes of how Camille “gives” her the adage “Make Kin, Not Babies,” which she explains “joins a litter of symbiogenic and sympoetic provocations that lure [her] writing,” here especially troubling the word “kin” and its fraught relationship to anthropology -- she stresses that imagining a new possibility for kin making requires that our *words* be “resigned, repopulated, and reinhabited.”⁴⁷

Haraway stresses the necessity of Science Fiction in this reimagining, with reconfigurations and invention of language as an critical tool, remarking on her indebtedness to indigenous writer and advocate Daniel Heath Justice’s gender-expansive *Kynship Chronicles*⁴⁸ and work towards, as Justice puts it, “imagining otherwise.”

Applying the speculative lens to lived experience, I propose that the space of linguistic adoption and play as personal and community practice can begin to produce a shift in consciousness without requiring or waiting for infrastructural/institutional/ideological conditions that may never come without our making them. Where we allow for this imagining vis-a-vis gender alongside other evolutionary shifts around

scientific advances, cyborg and trans/human futures, etc., we grant ourselves permission to “play,” and in so doing work on rewriting our own stories.

Returning to think about the body as the actionable landscape within which our ideas play out, we recall that language serves not only as *play* but as producer of pathways by which this knowledge is translated and established in the body.⁴⁹ And this speculative work isn't only what we may envision as the more fantastic imagination of transfutures, but can happen immediately through the active implementation and intentional, strategic use of the neologistic QTGNC language that has been developed to describe gender expansive *relationships* for our kinship networks.

Even in families where a person is nonbinary or gender fluid, it's rare that those families adopt not only the pronoun but also the other language to replace standard roles and relationships. A few years ago, unfamiliar with these myself and wondering if alternatives existed I went searching online, leading me to the genderqueeries tumblr⁵⁰ list of Gender Neutral/Queer Titles, where I found among others these, in the place of partner (loveperson), parent (par), mommy/daddy (muddy), sister / brother (sibter), niece/nephew (nibling), and daughter/son (sprog).

How does the gendered language children learn delimit our imaginaries? How does prolonged exposure to standardized binary cis-gender roles, pronouns, and titles undermine the options we perceive for self, community, kinship, and beyond? How might this be transformed if experience was nongendered, verbally, until whatever time they might choose a gender? As someone inclined towards speculative fiction, as well as traditional forms of healing and witchcraft, from early childhood my interior narrative was deeply influenced by imaginative landscapes and language, something that I am convinced has continued to encourage a certain plasticity of possibility in my capacity for personal speculation vis-a-vis my own identity, as well as the kinship structures I see potential for in my life and in the world at large.

As QTGNC individuals, the movement in and through language we use to define ourselves is often a central part of our journey, as we name ourselves anew, a speculative rebirth we get to write; for me the claiming of my own neologism, ELÆ, through the use of the Portuguese nonbinary pronoun as a “name” for myself, has felt as meaningful and real as top surgery, if not more actively doing the work of rewriting me not only in the limited physical space I inhabit but outward, forever, in my own and other's imaginary and into the archive.

THE WARM ILLUMINATION OF A HORIZON IMBUED WITH POTENTIALITY⁵¹

Beyond the personal, familial, imaginary, playful adoption of new language as a space of meaningful, actionable resistance in one's own *perception* of possibility for the self and others, I urge those seeking alternative versions of resistance to remember that there persists beyond appearance, always, palimpsestic underground counterpublics, that persist in their worlding, that welcome their joining, and which are always open to their building.

Hyper-regulated spaces, whether real or cyber, are nothing new, nor are the fascist / dictator types who would rail against public health support for or even NEA support for the art of the nonnormative *other*, out of their own fear. If we can understand all our bodies, even those of those whose beliefs challenge or reject our own, as those facing the same challenges of trauma, risk, and alienation, we can begin to seek modalities of communication that do not ignore the base human instincts controlling so much of our seemingly “cognitive” arguments. We can learn and begin to implement new solidarity infrastructures, understanding our bodies' limitations and the ways in which our familiarity and comfort with these

alternatives has been strangled by the media, while finding in that media's speculative experiments potentialities for ourselves and our world.

Our landscape isn't yet fertile for the widescale trans-planting of the possibilities we've begun to live in our bodyminds, and yet what we seed there offers a harvest that can nourish us, our lovepersons, and our sprogs. In the meantime, may you keep imagining and languaging *oddkin*, in the interest of a queered and sustainable future.

ENDNOTES

1 Taken from the quote from Audre Lorde's *Sister Outsider*, so often shortened and taken out of context: "Survival is not an academic skill. It is learning how to stand alone, unpopular and sometimes reviled, and how to make common cause with those others identified as outside the structures in order to define and seek a world in which we can all flourish. It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths. For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change." Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider*. Crossing Press, 1984.

2 Van Der Kolk, Bessel. *The Body Keeps the Score: brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma*. Viking, 2014.

3 "We could say that history 'happens' in the very repetition of gestures, which is what gives bodies their dispositions or tendencies. We might note here that the labor of such repetition disappears through labor: if we work hard at something, then it seems "effortless." This paradox—with effort it becomes effortless—is precisely what makes history disappear in the moment of its enactment. The repetition of work is what makes the signs of work disappear. It is important that we think not only about what is repeated, but also about how the repetition of actions takes us in certain directions. We are also orienting ourselves towards some objects more than others, including physical objects,...but also objects of thought, feeling and judgement, and objects in the sense of aims, aspirations, and objectives. ...The object we aim for comes into our view through being held in place...the action searches for identity as the mark of attainment. Bodies hence acquire orientation by repeating some actions over others, as actions that have certain objects in view. ...The nearness of such objects, their availability within my bodily horizon, is not casual: it is not just that I find them there, like that. Bodies tend some some objects more than others, given their tendencies." Ahmed, Sara. "Orientations: Toward a Queer Phenomenology." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, vol. 12 no. 4, 2006, p. 543-574. [Project MUSE muse.jhu.edu/article/202832](http://ProjectMUSE.muse.jhu.edu/article/202832).

4 Consideration of heterosexual objects, in Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal*, vol. 40, no. 4, 1988, pp. 519–531. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/3207893.

5 Ahmed, op. cit., p. 557

6 "(T)he body is psychically, socially, sexually, and discursively or representationally produced, and... in turn, bodies reinscribe and project themselves onto their sociocultural environment so that this environment both produces and reflects the form and interests of the body. The relation of interjections and projections involves a complex feedback relation in which neither the body nor its environment can be assumed to form an organically unified ecosystem. ... The body and its environment, rather, produce each other as forms of the hyperreal, as modes of simulation which have overtaken and transformed whatever reality each may have had into the image of the other: the (place) is made and made over into the simulacrum of the body, and the body, in its turn is transformed." in Grosz, Elizabeth. "Bodies-Cities", in *Sexuality and Space*. Beatriz Colomina, ed. Princeton Architectural Press, 1992. p 241 - 253.

7 Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body, and Primitive Accumulation*. Autonomedia, 2004. p.168-74

8 I'm thinking here of the "invented" neo-national "identity" mythologies present in particular in modern Europe in contrast to its tribal, indigenous, pagan roots, as theorized in Renan's "What is a Nation?" lecture, then later in Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, and elsewhere. Renan, Ernest. "What is a Nation?", text of a conference delivered at the Sorbonne on March 11th, 1882. In Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'un nation?* Presses-Pocket, 1992. (Translated by Ethan Rundell.); Anderson, Benedict R. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Verso, 1991.

9 I posed to Federici the question of the interweaving specifically of witchhunting with attacks on nonbinary, queer, and other nonnormative / sexually "deviant" persons or populations, but she admitted this wasn't part of her analysis and encouraged me to investigate that avenue; I didn't have time to do so before completing this paper.

10 To the previous point about documentation as a radical feminist practice being not as much 'female' as non-cis-het, we

can draw parallels to the spaces of assertion this of course can be seen as parallel to other “scientific” claims about other bodies: from phrenology to eugenics / social darwinism, etc.

11 Though this issue has only recently entered a more widespread public awareness, there have been growing concern about abuses of customer privacy and anonymity for some years now as nearly every commercial genetic testing companies have revealed selling genetic information to third parties, to ends we are only beginning to understand the ramifications of. See “Another Personal Genetics Company is Sharing Client Data,” Katie M. Palmer, *Wired Magazine*, July 2015; in 2017 the FTC issued an advisory statement on the services, and in July 2018, new guidelines were drawn for Privacy Best Practices by the Future of Privacy Forum, with some preliminary agreement of adherence from the services. Time will tell.

12 Section from “And I in the Middle Ground Found: Documentation as Feminist Practice,” by the author, in *Matters of Feminist Practice*. Belladonna* Collaborative, 2020.

13 US centric, but it’s important note how this might be different in Europe, or worse elsewhere, etc.

14 “An explosive U.N. report shows America’s safety net was failing before Trump’s election,” Jeff Stein, in *The Washington Post*, June 6, 2018.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/work/wp/2018/06/06/an-explosive-un-report-shows-americas-safety-net-was-failing-before-trumps-election/?utm_term=.db05d1651bc2,

15 Note: this is a question that can be applied to any other potentially alienating choices; in the “Building Interpersonal Infrastructures” workshop I developed and led in 2017-18 I began to explore and help others explore the invisible strictures based on systems of expectation, control, support, and access to resources, often at the root of a rift presenting between behavior and inclination / desire. It ran, among other manifestations, as part of SOHO20’s “Rethinking Feminisms” series.
<http://soho20gallery.com/building-interpersonal-infrastructures/>

16 In *Nobody Passes: Rejecting the Rules of Gender and Conformity*. Mattilda (aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore), ed. Seal Press, 2006.

17 Bulldagger, Rocko. “The End of Genderqueer,” in *ibid*, p 146-7.

18 Nicolini, Kim. “Outside in: the Failings of Alternative Communities.” In *Collective Action: A Bad Subjects Anthology*. Pluto Press, 2004. p 164.

19 Berlant, Lauren *The Female Complaint*. Duke University Press, 2008. p viii.

20 Johnson, Julia and Kimberlee Pérez, “Queerness May Have Dodged a Bullet: Jodie Foster’s Neoliberal “Coming-Out” Rhetoric and the Politics of Visibility,” in *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking*. Vol 1, No. 1. Spring 2014, pp 199-208.

21 Newitz, Annalee. “Heterosexual Love,” in *Collective Action: A Bad Subjects Anthology*. Pluto Press, 2004. pp 204.

22 *Pose*, on FX. 2018-, “Set in the 1980s, *Pose* looks at the juxtaposition of several segments of life and society in New York: the rise of the luxury Trump-era universe, the downtown social and literary scene and the ball culture world.”

23 *op. cit.*, in Newitz.

24 The Queer Community Wiki at the Foundation for Intentional Community, previously located at the time of writing this piece, lived at <https://www.ic.org/wiki/queer-community/>. One can use the term “queer” in the general search at <https://www.ic.org> to find a list of current sites.

25 For more on this, I cannot recommend *The Remedy: Queer and Trans Voices on Health and Health Care*, edited by Zena Sharman, highly enough. Arsenal Pulp Press, 2016.

26 Edelman, Lee. *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Duke University Press, 2004.

27 In Haraway, Donna. *Staying with the trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Duke University Press, 2016.

28 DiPrima, Diane. “Rant,” written 1985. Published in *Pieces of a Song*. City Lights, 1990.

29 Turner, Victor. from *The Anthropology of Performance*, 1987, PAJ Publications, New York.

30 Hakim Bey (Wilson, Peter Lamborn). *Temporary Autonomous Zone*, Autonomedia, NY. 1991.

31 Of course we’ve now seen the institutional backlash to the earlier heyday of the internet’s free culture, with repression, regulation, and restricted access on the rise.

32 Haraway, *op. cit.*, 139.

33 *ibid*, 216.

34 Justice, Daniel Heath. *The Way of Thorn and Thunder: The Kynship Chronicles*. University of New Mexico Press, 2011.

35 a *MUD*, or Multi-User Dungeon / Dimension / Domain, is a multiplayer real-time virtual world, usually text-based. A *MOO*, like *LambdaMOO* is an object-oriented variant of a MUD. (Note: The verbal similarity to Lambda Lit and Legal is coincidental, LambdaMOO wasn't exclusively a queer virtual space despite its gender-language fluidity.)

36 a forerunner of *Second Life*, and a social precursor to the social media sites and forums that are now so universal

37 Although an overarching theory of linguistic determinism is now outmoded, it has been well established that language usage and conceptual structure influences thought and decision making.

38 Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*, 1999.

39 "Gender Queeries," on tumblr., at <http://genderqueeries.tumblr.com/titles>