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Not everyone is queer

And that's okay

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Disclaimer: I've been trying to write this text for about 6 years and haven't managed to do it in a way that is not confrontational, so I ended up admitting and accepting it's gonna piss some people off.

Are you uncomfortable with being assigned male or female ? With being called a man or a woman and that people act towards you in a very specific way because of that ?

That's good. That's normal! Everyone should be uncomfortable with that! Man and woman as categories come from centuries of domination, white imperialism and cisheteropatriarchy all gathered up in one hell of a shit system, and they are constantly reproduced by most of everyone and taught in nuclear families from the day you are born. They suck. being a man sucks and being a woman sucks and their assigned roles and possibilities are incredibly sucky and limited.

Does that mean you are queer ?

No. Not at all. It makes you a decent person that has at least started a process of understanding how fucked up gender is. It could bring to light elements that end up revealing your queerness, but in itself, that discomfort with cisheterosexuality is

just a normal reaction to a fucked up system. From that discomfort comes a process of deconstruction, and through that process you might end up doing tranny or faggot or dyke and then it's queer, but in itself, the emotional process of understanding how fucked up gender and sexuality are and acting on creating paths forward out of those fucked up social norms is not queer.

Why gatekeep queerness?

Because if that discomfort doesn't go hand in hand with doing queer in a way that makes you different from cishet people, it makes you materially pretty much indistinguishable from a cishet person. This doing queer can take many forms, be it through your behavior, way of dressing, way of interacting with others, body shape and anatomy, way of being perceived by others or the kind of sex that you have. But being queer involves doing queer, and being seen by society as queer, because how others see us matters and deeply constructs and changes us, and so we can't rely on internal identity alone to define what queer means, though it is part of it. Being seen by people as trans or being seen as gender nonconforming or being seen as gay or lesbian is very much an essential part of queerness and it can't be evacuated.

What about being in the closet? What about all the shame and hurt and agony of not being able, or not being allowed to make those changes? What about trying to make changes and then not passing, being made to feel like you shouldn't exist, being looked at weird when you try things out? What about wanting to date that cute boy but not being able to act on it? What about not being sure, what about questioning your gender or sexuality?

There is a liminal space of queerness-to-be, queerness-inside, queerness as a felt thing, and it is very real. We need to be able to make space for that liminality and transition as a process but we can't ignore the material reality and social worlds in which those transitions take place, because

it influences us both from the outside and from the inside. Many queer and trans people started by questioning and that needs to be okay. This pamphlet aims in no way to attack people in the closet, or people who are questioning. Y'all have meaningful experiences and contributions to queer struggles. This text doesn't aim to throw you out of queer spaces but rather to think about the material positionality of folks.

But if I say I'm queer, surely I must immediately be a better person?

Nope. Especially if you're white. White queers are still white and as such still do racism. Middle class queers bash on working class people while profiting from their labor. Queer men can be sexist. Able queers are gonna be ableists. And liberal queers ain't queers. Feeling queer can't be a tool to avoid responsibility for the fucked up behaviors you have. Feeling queer doesn't mean you understand all other queers. Feeling queer doesn't mean you understand homelessness. Feeling queer doesn't even mean you're living any form of oppression. Feeling queer has come to mean nothing and be politically insignificant.

What about my pronouns?

They're important. They're not that important. If you're called they/them but it's the only behavioral change you require in how people act towards you, and that change is only associated in you to some feeling that you don't exactly fit in traditional manhood and womanhood, you have accomplished just about nothing. Being able to be gendered correctly on a daily basis is very satisfying and essential to the mental health of trans and non-binary folks but it can't be our only fight. Our fight is the eradication of the systems which make it impossible for queer&trans people to have jobs, housing, healthcare, etc. If people use the correct pronouns but you're so fucked in the head by the system that you can't work, you're still in shit. If people use the correct pronouns but stay passive in the face of state-sponsored destruction of

the land and attacks on native land defenders, you're still in shit. If people that are well-off use the correct pronouns but don't ever donate nothing to those gofundme for struggling qtbipoc, they're still dicks but now they somehow feel like they are doing something, which is worse.

What if I'm straight, what if I'm cis?

You're valid. You're good. Deconstruct the fuck out of it but don't you go denying what you are out of guilt and shame for what people like you are doing to us and take up what belongs to queer folks. Sure, things exist on a spectrum but if your existence on that spectrum means you don't experience homophobia or transphobia, or can't relate to the communities that are living those oppressions elsewhere or in another time, or don't feel any sense of community with homosexuals (as in same-sex fucking and romancing, including bisexuals) and transsexuals (as in people that transition out of their assigned sex in different ways, including non-binaries), what's the point in taking up all that queer space? Go on and do that hard work of allyship and education and deconstruction from your place of power instead, we need you there. Shrouding your doing heterosexuality in « I don't care what gender my partner is » is a problem, just like shrouding your doing man in nail polish is a problem or your doing woman in they/them pronouns. Non-binary is something else than being assigned a gender and performing it while asking for different pronouns, it's a radical cut and differentiation away from man or woman in a way that can not be reconciled with cisgenderism.

Is there such a thing as being queer and safe?

Nope. Not under this system there ain't. If you're queer and safe you just got integrated into the whole thing. This world isn't safe for us, and it's not for anyone else either. Safety is a scam aimed at taming us down. If your queerness consists of making your middle-class white ass safe, you're doing something wrong, liberatory work is not safe. We need spaces to rest and we need friendship and we need support and commu-

havior. It's gay sex. It's dykes. It's trannies. It's an insult. It's an act of transgression. It's repression, and it's solidarity. Queer is dead, long live queers. This here queer writing this text is a white bi trans girl of middle class background in her late twenties, and a convinced anarchist.

non-normative identities, along lines of sex and gender but also race, class and capacity. This means being queer needs also be a feminist fight, one that strives to undo the violent power of men and its reproduction carried by both men and women inside of patriarchy and end up in all-too-common drama in which women and queer folks are the targets of attacks.

And we need to be able to point out the cissexist and heterosexist behaviors from both our cis and straight comrades AND our queer and trans comrades. We need to hold each other accountable in regards to patterns that typically arise due to having been socialized a certain normative way in the past or being socialized in a certain normative way in the present, whether we are cis, straight, trans or queer. Not accepting being told you are perpetuating sexism and toxic masculinity « because I'm non-binary or because I'm a trans man or because I'm a soft and nice guy or even because I'm a woman» is a problem. And now there exists spaces where we can't criticize people because they could feel invalidated, and it's also a problem. That does not mean to go yelling that transwomen are men, fuck any of y'all who do that shit, transwomen are either at the forefront of undoing masculinity cause we're women that were imposed masculinity, or just never managed to buy into any form of masculinity and have always lived a shitton of transmisogyny. And it doesn't mean to say non-binary people don't exist, that would just be a dick move, and a deeply colonial one on top of that, considering the eternal euro-christian attempts made at destroying any other view of gender than theirs. What it means is to hold each other accountable to undo cishet patriarchy inside of relationships with the people who fuck up.

Wrapping up

Being queer needs to mean doing queer, and doing queer needs to be actively gay and political. I barely use the word queer anymore since it became that "be whoever you wanna be, everything is valid" parody of what it's supposed to mean, or just anything that ain't exactly normative cishet patriarchal be-

nity to deal with the violence adequately, but trying to evade violence through endless mechanisms that make it impossible to address it or to be unexpectedly confronted to it (especially our own violent behaviors) is counterproductive. Go read and listen to some black feminists.

Aren't you forgetting important parts of radical queer discourse? What about the place of sex workers, polyamory, asexual people, bdsm, queering heterosexuality?

There is a convergence between all of these marginalized practices and queer struggles. Historically, they have often all fallen under the queer umbrella for very good reasons, because they are a deviancy from the established cisheteropatriarchal order. But I'm feeling the need to differentiate between things here, because if queer folks as a whole don't have the term queer to recognize each other anymore, we basically don't have no more words to define ourselves, the whole LGBT acronym and mainstreamed culture being bullshit. I feel like distinguishing fights allows for better solidarity, situated solidarity, and all of those practices are not in themselves queer either. Queers ain't necessarily sex workers and sex workers ain't necessarily queers (though it's rather frequent). Same goes for ace people, if they're ace and queer then they're queer but asexuality is not in itself queer, and polyamory has been practiced as amour libre by several straight groups for ages and that hasn't made them queer, on the contrary there are so many fucked up cishet dynamics inside of straight polyamory, and also the straight bdsm scene. And if you actually queered heterosexuality, it's can't be very straight anymore really.

But queer is about things being porous and blurry, it's about the negation of the social order and everyone that fights cisheteropatriarchy and does things a different way, you can't gatekeep that!

We've been doing blurry and negation and disidentification for a while now. I have to admit I don't find it relevant, you're just avoiding reality by trying to escape it, while strug-

gles happen inside of reality. I want things to know where they fall, where they come from and where they seem to be going, cause that's how human brains work, they create categories with words to make sense of the world. I want those categories to be joyful and flexible and wholesome, but I need them to be here to be able to name things that exist in the world. And yes, for sure, queer struggles concern everyone, but it doesn't mean everyone is queer. And anyways, I have no power to enforce any form of gatekeeping and I don't actually want to enforce it, being the queer police sounds like the dullest job with the most chances of getting mugged. I just want to know that talking to a queer person is gonna involve them being gay.

What about gays and lesbians reproducing cisheteropatriarchy?

Intra-community problem. Not the place of non-gays and non-lesbians to decide how to act towards them. Personally, I feel for several older gay men who lost so many friends and lovers during AIDS, and for all the people that were integrated and lost any sense of radicality to their sexual orientations. I also understand where a lot of cis lesbians are coming from in their rejection of man and I have compassion for them even though they are sometimes unpleasant and transphobic. Oh and of course fuck Eric Duhaime.

Notes on gender and sex.

Gender has become so nebulous, with a complete absence of regards to the material reality people are living in. It has created a disconnection between a certain part of queers and cishets that say gender has no meaning and that sex doesn't exist and the rest of the world that experiences gender as a very real thing. In order for queers to exist, the world needs to recognize sexes, otherwise there are no queers, because queerness is the transgression of norms assigned to your sex.

Sex is a thing. Sex as in sexuality, and sex as in male, female, and different forms of intersexuation. There are a million ways to live in bodies that have a certain sexual morphology

but they do have a sex, we re a sexed monkey. And there are several differences that generally follow the lines created by those sexes, otherwise trans people wouldn't undergo medical transition processes. Where that reality has been used to create a norm, a social norm of behaving that is imposed through violence to perpetuate a certain way of doing man and woman and heterosexuality, that's where things have gone to hell.

So transsexuality and homosexuality are useful words to define queerness. They are a transgression of the rules of what the body, in its sexed materiality, should do. They are also the place of revelation of greater joy for the people that live in such a way, especially when it is possible to not get mutilated, beaten to death or lose all possibility of employment when making apparent such deviance.

Some academics try to make us believe everything is post-something and extremely complex, which is partly true, but there's also some simple things, like my eyes that see sexes. They see queers, but they also see sexes, and we mustn't ignore those. Medicine has allowed us to blur those lines and it's now possible for non-binary people and trans people to create differentiation with cis people in regards to their physiology and that's amazing, and it's also great that trans and non-binary folks are able to express themselves more, but it doesn't destroy the reality of our bodies as trans and non-binary in regards to our sex.

Man and woman remain the hegemonic categories that the overwhelming majority of us come from and which we seek to destroy as a hegemony. Ignoring them and what they have done to us and how they continue to shape our existence today in our relationship with cisnormative, heteronormative, patriarchal society and its families is irresponsible. We are not undoing gender and we are not revolutionary in our queerness unless we are fighting that institution, its sexism towards women and queer folks, and the myriad different ways it targets people that are perceived as belonging to dehumanized