

Criminal Intimacy

A Gang of Criminal Queers

2009

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Because the night belongs to lovers. Because the night belongs to us.
— Patti Smith

On Deadness

To live in this culture is to be dead, bare. Deadness is the affect and the aspiration of dominant social membership. It is the social relationship wherein life is reduced to exchange and capital. It is everywhere; in those walking the streets without ever meeting the eyes of another, in the exchanges of service work, in the aisles of a department stores and the pews of church. In capital, in heteronormativity, in law, in morality—everywhere it is the logic of death.

The unthinkability of our desires is reiterated over and again. Power and control are written on our bodies. What is passion? Desire? Adventure? Play? What, but such catchy slogans for adverts. Our love and our appetites and our very bodies are inscribed with this culture. Capital is written on our bodies. We dare not dream. How could we conceivably want more than this?

And the agents and exertions of biopower—the boots of queerbashers, the panoptical ever-present surveillance cameras with the flashing blue lights, the sirens and guns of the police, the campaigns for gay marriage and military service, the lingering pains of monogamy, and such shapely mannequins, ad nauseum—stand everywhere erected as checkpoints guaranteeing the impossibility of anything else. Life, stripped bare, is nothing more than raw survival—banal, cold, numbing. Could it be more clear? Hetero-capitalism, this culture, this totality: It is out to destroy us.

Taking and Sharing: On Getting What's Ours

The machinery of control has rendered our very existence illegal. We've endured the criminalization and crucifixion of our bodies, our sex, our unruly genders. Raids, witch-hunts, burnings at the stake. We've occupied the space of deviants, of whores, of perverts, and abominations. This culture has rendered us criminal, and of course, in turn, we've committed our lives to crime. In the criminalization of our pleasures, we've found the pleasure to be had in crime! In being outlawed for who we are, we've discovered that we are indeed fucking outlaws!

Many blame queers for the decline of this society—we take pride in this. Some believe that we intend to shred-to-bits this civilization and its moral fabric—they couldn't be more accurate. We're often described as depraved, decadent, and revolting—but oh, they ain't seen nothing yet.

Let's be explicit: We are criminal queer anarchists and this world is not and can never be enough for us. We want to annihilate bourgeois morality and make ruins of this world. We're here to destroy what is destroying us.

Let's be speaking of revolt. We are tracing the lineage of our queer criminality and charting the demise of the social order. And oh the nectar from which we drink: lesbian pirates raging the seas, queer rioters setting cop cars ablaze, sex parties amidst the decay of industrialism, bank robbers wearing pink triangles, mutual aid networks among sex workers and thieves, gangs of trannyfags bashing-the-fuck-back. We've been assured that each day could be our last. As such we've chosen to live as if every day is. In turn, we promise that the existent's days are numbered.

In our revolt, we are developing a form of play. These are our experiments with autonomy, power, and force. We haven't paid for anything we're wearing and we rarely pay for food. We

steal from our jobs and turn tricks to get by. We fuck in public and have never come harder. We swap tips and scams amid gossip and foreplay. We've looted the shit out of places and delight in sharing the booty.

We wreck things at night and hold hands and skip all the way home. We are ever growing our informal support structures and we'll always have each other's backs. In our orgies, riots, and heists, we are articulating the collectivity of, and deepening, these ruptures.

On Criminal Intimacy, World Making, and Becoming Whatever

The ecstasy and electricity of crime is undeniable. We've felt the sweetest adrenaline rushes as we've dashed from security and blown each other on the bus. And nothing offers up the feeling of being alive more than the weight of a hammer through the facade of capital. Crime helps me get out of bed every morning.

We queers and other insurgents have developed what good folks might call a criminal intimacy. We are exploring the material and affective solidarity fostered between outlaws and rebels. In our obstruction of law, we've illegally discovered the beauty in one another. In revealing our desire to our partners in crime, we've come to know each other more intimately than legality could ever allow. In desire, we produce conflict. And in conflict with capital, we may have found an escape route from the deadening of our lives. Our gang's discourse is conflict.

The real power expressed in our crimes isn't in the damage caused to our enemies or even in the various improvements of our material conditions (though we take pleasure in both). The power we express is in the empowerments and relationships we're creating. In our sex and our attack—when we pull down our masks and share our cache of bricks—we are expanding the possibilities of our affinity. In our crime, we create dynamic new relationships of criminal intimacies. In these possibilities, we are learning how we might, together, reduce this world to rubble.

We must make ourselves bodies without organs. Within each of us is contained a virtual pool of everything we are capable of becoming—our desires, affects, power, ways of acting, and infinite possibilities. To embody and activate these possibilities we must experiment with the ways our bodies act in conjunction with others. We commit crime together so we can unveil our criminal becoming.

We do not offer 'criminal' or 'queer' as identities, nor as categories. Criminality. Queerness. These are tools for revolt against identity and category. These are our lines of flight out of all restraint. We are in conflict with all that restricts every and each desire. We are becoming whatever. Our sole commonality is our hatred for everything that exists. Held in common, such a revolt of desire can never be assimilated into the state-form.

Right-wing talking-heads invoke the imagery of a 'culture war', waged between civil society on one side and queers on the other. We reject this model of war. Our war is a social war. The nexus of domination and class society is everywhere. Yet everywhere, too, are ruptures and points of conflict. In these fissures we exist in rebellion—we queers, criminals, whatever.

Our dirty talk and our nighttime whispers comprise a secret language. Our language of thieves and lovers is foreign to this social order, yet carries the sweetest notes in the ears of rebels. This language reveals our potential for world making. Our conflict is space for our possible other-selves to blossom. By organizing our secret universe of shared plenty and collective-explosive possibility, we are building a new world of riot, orgy, and decadence.

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The essays in this zine ["Writings of the Mary Nardini Gang"] were written by the Mary Nardini Gang/A Gang of Criminal Queers. These texts come from Bash Back!. Bash Back! was a queer anarchist tendency that started in the Midwest. It aimed to be a network for queer anarchists to connect and to confront the pitiful normality of capital, the state, and heterosexuality. To read more texts like these go steal a copy of "Queer Ultraviolence: Bash Back! Anthology" or look around online.

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