

+FIGHT FOR NOTHING+
(Some Thoughts on Queer Nihilism)



+ A Text By Edith Doyle +

The Following text is taken from the 'School Schmool- Activist Day Planner and Radical Guide' Produced by QPIRG Concordia in 2013. This zine is part of 'Bootlegs' by Down & Out Distro, a project which aims to reproduce texts from books, journals, blogs, newspapers etc and turn them into condensed and easily accessible zines (without ever editing the texts themselves). Texts have been chosen which carry themes, of insurrectional transfeminisms, queer nihilism, cruelty, amorality, insurrectional praxis, and revenge. and are presented as a 'collection' which we offer in an effort towards building intimacies/familiarities with certain emergent trajectories in insurrectional theory- in particular with regard to queer and transfeminist developments in insurrectionalism.

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|Fight For Nothing|

Some Thoughts On Queer Nihility.

Forward

By way of introduction, the writers of this piece would like to cite a number of factors and nuances which frame the form of nihilism we will advocate here. Firstly, that we see the nihilistic lens as inseparable from, and foundational to any meaningful queer and insurrectional project, that without this trinity (A Queer, Insurrectional, and Nihilist one) each of these lenses become isolated, stagnant, and meaningless. Second, that we position our nihilism within the "active" tradition, meaning that we take nihilism (nothingness/the void) as a stimulus to action, to joy, and to love, rather than as the popular conception of nihilism might regard- to the passive pursuit of nothingness/inaction. Finally, we do not see the nihilist lens as solving any problems or generating solutions- we understand that this is unpalatable to some, and unfeasible to many. We acknowledge that our nihilism is the product of our particularly nuanced struggles, oppressions, influences and experiences. We don't ask that queer nihilism work for you, or wish to spread it like some facile ideology. We simply acknowledge its possibility within our own lives and express the raw joy it evokes in our encounters with the world.

"Dead in the Land of the Living" (Nihilism as a tool for breaking Queer Stagnation)

In a moment where 'queer theory' has come to mean little more than critical analysis, where 'queering' has become the treasured verb of 'alternative' academics to mean simultaneously anything and nothing, and where bourgeois, cis men would have us believe that now is the time of 'post-queer' politics; there is a need for a radical reclamation of what it means to be queer, a need to remember that just because

some rich gays can get married, many of us are still ‘marked to die’ based on our being trans, sex workers, black/of color, and/or poor.

Queer Insurrectional Nihilism proposes a framework to reject this reality whilst also recognizing that many of the ‘solutions’ offered by the police, the state, and ‘movement managers’/NGO Anarchists[1], such as ‘safety’ and ‘inclusion’ are themselves worthy of rejection. This means that safety and inclusion are often posited as liberatory, transgressive, and desirable means to an end; whilst in reality the mechanisms necessary to maintain these projects rely on increased hostility, pacification, and oppression of other marginalized peoples- such as trans women and/or black women and women of color. Coupled with this rejection of the increased hostilities inherent in ‘safety’ discourses, is a total rejection of, and hostility towards the existence of the police, the state, and ‘movement managers’. Queer and Insurrectional nihilists will generally view these bodies (police, states, movement managers) as authoritarian, oppressively violent, dogmatic, and (in many cases) as enemy combatants. As such, solutions offered by these bodies, and indeed the continued existence of the bodies themselves are to be rejected.

A nihilist lense suggests that whilst we should recognise the reality of our own potential destruction/death at the hands of independent transphobes or police officers as negative; we must also reject our absorption into any positive project or campaign that would ‘protect’ queers from these experiences whilst still maintaining the bio-political fabric of society at large. Queer, Insurrectional, nihilism rejects any inclusion or protection within/from society (since there is a recognition that any inclusion will always come at the cost of someone else's oppression) and instead endorses an anti social turn, declaring open conflict with society: “The machinery of Control has rendered our very existence illegal- and of course, in turn we’ve committed our lives to criminality”[2]

1. By Movement Managers/NGO Anarchists we mean both groups and individuals who seek to control, manage or direct the uncontrollable mob, mass of people, or collective anger of those struggling against domination in order to make ‘coherent movements; and/or “palatable demands” – Think ‘Stonewall’, those ‘organizing’ the general assemblies during occupy, or that dude talking about ‘the movement’ in the last meeting you went to.

2. ‘A Gang of Criminal Queers’- Criminal Intimacy in Total Destroy- Milwaukee, WI: 2009

“I Want to be Negated” (Nihilism as a lens for re-imagination)

Starting then from this stance of “the excluded” and “self excluding” queer insurrectional nihilism begins by positioning itself beyond the realms of that which is existent, and into imagined realms of possibility. This stance seeks not to repair, reform, or even engage in the existing paradigm of reality (except in moments of attack against it), but rather to live something unnameable, destructive, and joyous in the margins. To describe this pursuit, let us use the term “criminal Joy” which may take any number of different articulations- from the pursuit of sex with imagined or re-purposed/renamed body parts, to the kneecapping of a gay politician/businessman, or a simple physical or mental pursuit into another reality (daydreaming for example).

Coupled with the pursuit of “Criminal Joy”, a nihilistic approach to gender is one that allows us to look beyond corporeality, to attempt a dismantling of identity, and to explore the possibilities of flows of force, removing the “I” or the self as an active creator of experience, and existing instead as a vessel for and embodiment of experience. A practical example of this is the lived experience of some trans women whose womanhood often exists distinct from the supposed ‘reality’ of their prescribed ‘gender’.

“No Future, Utopia Now” (Nihilism as a practice of the present)

Whilst speaking of re-imagining and breaking from reality, it is important to note that the nihilistic lens rejects prefigurative politics and the putting forward of programs for the future; any attempt to claim the future is misguided and authoritarian. Instead, queer nihilism encourages us to stake a claim on the present, firmly and fully occupying it- not “to be the change we want to see”, but rather to take everything we desire here and now. To this end, it is important to understand that queer nihilism is neither a project nor a program but rather a way of existing, a recognition that any demand is co-optable and as such the struggle for ‘nothing’ is to be preferred to the one for ‘something’.