Queerness of Color

Decentering Whiteness in LGBTQ 101

Crimson Hite
Introduction

- Limitations
- Approach
- Outline
  - Whiteness in the Community
  - Colonialism
  - Deconstructing the closet
  - Intersections
  - General suggestions
Whiteness in the Queer Community

Kat Blaque
September 9, 2015
No fats, no fems, no blacks, no asians, no carpenters, Sports Fans, Coffee Drinkers, Food eaters, ear havers, no finger users, book readers, music listeners, or internet users.

Viktor T.
@wondermann5
Even straight guys get covers before we do
#GayMediaSoWhite
Whiteness in the Queer Community
Whiteness in the Queer Community

Marsha P. Johnson

Sylvia Rivera

Stormé DeLarverie

Miss Major Griffin-Gracy
Whiteness in the Queer Community
Whiteness in the Community

“Where are we as an LGBT community over 45 years after the Stonewall Rebellion?...Sylvia Rivera warned us about becoming a movement that was only for white, middle class people. And forty-five years later, the most marginalized of our communities are still struggling.”

-Laverne Cox
What's missing?

qtpoc
Q is for Queer
Decolonization

Colonization— “the process of forcing one's own culture on another by means of subjugation and exploitation” (Butler, et al., 2005, p. 288-9)

Binarism

— “Whiteness [h]as, from the moment it encountered us, sought to erase, eradicate, or explain away non-binary PoC. It was part of the colonial/missionary project” (binaohan, 2012)
— Some people may not identify as cis/trans/non-binary because their culture does not frame gender as a binary to begin with

White people, no one is asking you to apologize for your ancestors. We are asking you to dismantle the systems they built and you maintain.
Deconstructing “the Closet”

• Binary: in or out
• Expectations
  – “out”
  – “in”
  – desire
• Framed as universal
• Ideal vs. reality
• Personal responsibility
Two-Spirit

A term that describes Native American and First nations persons whose sexual orientation/gender experience is neither masculine-heterosexual-man nor feminine-heterosexual-woman

- This can include traditional indigenous identities and modern LGBTQIA identities
- Examples of specific Two-Spirit genders
  - Nadleeh (Navajo)
  - Winkte (Lakota)
  - A’yahkwêw (Plains Cree)
Indigenous Genders

**Mahu** is a gender role in traditional Hawaiian society that refers to people who exhibit both feminine and masculine traits. “You’re someone in the middle. That’s all it means,” said Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu, a hula and Hawaiian studies teacher on Oahu (American Aljazeera)

**Fa'afafine** are biological [Samoan] males who have a strong feminine gender orientation - the name means "in the manner of woman."....They are a gender category/identity altogether different from men and women, and are given distinct gender roles specific to them.”
—Adrian Pratt

Jaiyah Saelua
Asian/Pacific Islander
The script goes something like this. First, an indulgence: a small, private eye roll. Then, the stock answer. That queerness and Muslimness are not mutually exclusive, that Islam is not a monolith, that my Islam is expansive and my God, capacious. That queer too, is not a monolith, there are different ways to be queer, different narratives that do not fit neatly into Western models of coming out and nesting in nuclear families that replicate straightness. That people need to stop fetishizing those of us who live at these seemingly impossible intersections, that my queerness and Muslimness do not need to be reconciled because they’re so deeply enmeshed, so deeply party of who I am.

—Lamya H, “Yes, it’s possible to be queer and Muslim”
Undocumented + Queer
Latinx
Commonalities

More likely to
• Be incarcerated
• Be impoverished
• Be discriminated against
  – In housing, including gentrification
  – In healthcare
  – In loans
  – In job opportunities and the workplace
  – For self-expression
Commonalities
More likely to be at risk for HIV
Do Your Materials

- Include terms from this presentation?
- All deconstruct binary ideas of gender, reproductive physiology, and orientation?
- Frame concepts in appropriate cultural context, including not upholding colonization?
- Discourage appropriation?
If you discuss drag, discuss ballroom culture

Do not legitimize stereotypes that certain communities are especially queer- and trans-phobic

Do not set up “LGBT”, whiteness, or Western ideas of queerness as the standard to which other things should be compared

Keep intersectionality at the forefront of your mind—there are always overlaps
Caution

Do not treat any of this as “extra” information; it’s as essential and legitimate as what is already taught as 101