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INTRODUCTION

Since 1999, UCLA's LGBTQ Studies Department has been a national leader in the support and organization of queer graduate student conferences. Known affectionately around our campus as QGrad, these annual graduate student-run conferences have brought together the most thought-provoking and interdisciplinary, LGBTQ research from around the globe. After a long hiatus, the QGrad organizing committee reassembled to join the LGBTQ activist front and declare from the academy, "We are here! We are queer!" The 2014 QGrad organizing committee strove to give the UCLA-LGBTQ Studies program global visibility and participation on queer lives and matters. By showcasing the globalized experiences and comparative understandings of LGBTQ lives in the contemporary context, we invited presenters from India, the Philippines, Canada, the United Kingdom, as well as international and domestic graduate scholars from around the country concentrating on the investigation of LGBTQ experiences abroad. At the intersection of Border Studies and LGBTQ Studies, the 2014 theme, "Queers w/0 Borders," aimed to bridge the interdisciplinary understanding of queer lives at the global, regional, and local contexts. This publication participates and honors QGrad's larger effort to celebrate, contribute, and expand LGBTQ research and epistemology at UCLA and beyond.

The inaugural volume of *Queer Cats Journal* is comprised of selected submissions that were originally presented during the 2014 QGrad conference, ***Queers W/O Borders***. Graduate students from international and interdisciplinary contexts, examined cross-cultural and global themes in queer studies including LGBTQ rights, culture, health and safety. The content included in volume 1 is divided into two thematically distinct sections: part I, "Queering the Mainstream," offers work that actively questions, disrupts, and dis-identifies with hegemonic popular culture, discourse, and practice; part II, "Queering the Academy," theorizes about queer subjectivities, from the U.S.-Mexico border, to the university. Below, you will find a brief introduction to the authors and the theoretical significance of their projects.

In *Making Japan “Out-and-Proud” through Not-Yet-Consensual Translation: A Case Study of Tokyo Rainbow Pride’s Website* Kyohei Itakura’s raises issues of translation in contemporary public sphere debates by offering a cyber-ethnography of a Japan-based LGBT organization, Tokyo Rainbow Pride (TRP). Drawing from the fields of public anthropology, Japan studies and queer studies, Itakura explores how language, translation and imagery create multiple public spaces—material, cyber and imagined—through which queerness is ranked, celebrated and commodified. The linguistic ambiguity of the TRP website, which features Japanese, Chinese and English, reflects the nationalism and modernity of Japan’s commercially saturated social landscape, argues Itakura.

Traveling from cyberspace to television, Evan Vipond’s *100% Dude: Straightening Degrassi’s Adam Torres*, interrogates the representation of transnormativity in the young adult Canadian TV series, “Degrassi.” Borrowing from queer theory and media studies, Vipond argues that the character Adam Torres is a negotiated representation of queerness, who both enhances and narrows trans-visibility in the media. While *Degrassi* has been acclaimed for its inclusion of LGBT culture on the show, Adam’s character, who identified as a female-to-male (FTM) subject, ultimately reinforces gender and sexual normativity, along with racial hegemony.

Section II, *Queering the Academy*, begins with Kendy Rivera’s *La Daika: Auto-teoría of a Dyke(-ish) Tijuana Border Lesbian. Reclaiming the Bad Woman and Re-Making the Elektra Complex in Chicana Lesbian Literature*. Rivera’s work situates her own *auto-teoría* or personal moment of sexual *re-conocimiento*, within a Chicana lesbian literary paradigm. Drawing from the novels *What Night Brings*, by Carla Trujillo and *Forgetting the Alamo, or Blood Memory* by Emma Pérez, and a Chicana feminist revision to Freud’s Elektra complex, Rivera excavates moments of autonomous, Chicana lesbian subjectivity that exist apart from and in-between heteronormative and patriarchal spaces. The pairing of Rivera’s “daika auto-teoría” alongside Chicana lesbian literature creates a productive parallel between lesbian authors who use their *nepantla*, or in-between, consciousness to heal wounds left by internal and external traumas.

Moving from one literary sphere to another, Nami Hatfield’s, *TRANSforming spaces: Transgender webcomics as a model for transgender empowerment and representation within library and archive spaces*,

challenges library and archive spaces to interrogate the normative practices that have historically and continue to disenfranchise transgender users. As LIS services seek more inclusive practices that account for *all* members of the LGBTQ community, Hatfield highlights the importance of transgender community-based media, art and design as an alternative methodological framework. Specially, how can the area of LIS be methodologically influenced by popular works of transgender expression, in order to better meet the needs of the transgender community? Ultimately, Hatfield points to Transweb comics as a significant example of trans aesthetic and representation, and ultimately, a site from which information professionals can begin to rethink notions of inclusivity and equitable participation.

Ronnie Gladden's *TRANSgressive Talks: An Introduction to Unpacking the Meaning of Transracial Identity* is an auto-ethnographic piece on the emergent discourse within queer studies called, "transracial identity." Gladden defines the term as "the comingling of gender and racial incongruity." Drawing from queer theory and black studies, Gladden connects transracial identification to the possession a quadruple consciousness, wherein race, gender, transgender and transracial constructions exist within and between the contours of one's intersectional identity. Gladden's own transracial subjectivity is expressed most powerfully in "**Talking to TRANSgress: Musings on Complex Identity Intersections,**" a dialogue between their outer black male and their inner white female. With this auto-ethnographic piece, Gladden seeks to make visible a particular and historically unaccounted for, transgender/transracial experience within the LGBTQ+ community.

To our readers: may the following pages highlight the familiar, reveal the unfamiliar, and spark new and unexpected curiosities. It is our hope that this journal may provide a literary counter-space for queer cats, near and far, to continue imagining the new and ever-evolving ways we must make and re-make home.

Rachael Greenberg and Kendy Rivera
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