

**Cultural Studies Program  
Department of Humanities, History and Social Sciences  
School of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Columbia College Chicago**

**Bachelor of Arts in Cultural Studies  
May 2014**

**Thesis Approval Form**

**The Queer Blogger: Interrogating the Commodification of Identities**

**Anne Lacy**

**Carmelo Esterrich  
Thesis Director**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

5/16/14

**Robert Watkins  
Program Coordinator**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

5/16/14

**Steven Corey  
Department Chair**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

5/16/14

### **The Queer Blogger: Interrogating the Commodification of Identities**

Using Queer blogs found throughout American blogging networks, while drawing upon Marxism, Michel Foucault's notions of confession and coming out, and Gramsci's concept of hegemony this project is a materialist analysis that unveils the truths of how Queer identities are being consumed and in turn commodified. In contemporary American society a phenomenon is occurring online within the space of Queer blogging where Queer subjectivities and identities are being marginalized and commodified. These Queer blogs are acting as a platform of discourse where subjectivities are attempting to resist hegemonic notions of identity while simultaneously being incorporated into a capitalistic agenda of subject formation. This project ultimately calls upon the act of resistance as these Queer blogs are in fact a negotiable space for resistance, but that very resistance is being incorporated into hegemonic discourse so as to make it in fact, less resistant. Ultimately, Queer subjects should become aware of this kind of commodification as to prevent any further exploitation that these acts of blogging may cause upon an already oppressed identity.

Queer Identity, Blogging, Commodification, Marxism, Michel Foucault, Resistance

"I believe in the power of community to bring strength to marginalized identity. I believe in giving power to that identity. I believe claiming what has kept you down in the past as your own is part of the journey to loving yourself and making your own path. I believe there is no right way to be Queer" (QueerFatFemme.com).

We as American citizens often time neglect to comprehend the intrinsic role of capitalism within our daily lives, and its dire effects upon the entirety of our being, not just economically, but socially as well. It is essential to make note of these intrusions in order to initiate some kind of a social change so that exploitation can be seen as something of the past. This project examines emergent queer subjectivities and identities within popular American online blogging networks, namely Tumblr, Blogspot, and Wordpress, and seeks to reveal how these subjectivities and identities are linked to the increasing commodification of the queer subject in contemporary culture. There seems to be a new degree of Queer visibility in the United States as we see more Queer presence throughout society not to naturalize Queer lifestyles, but rather concerned with producing new and lucrative markets, where money is valued more than liberation. This project is a materialist critique on how media, and specifically blogs, have a tendency to turn the Queer subject into a consumer subject, rather than a social subject. This project uses examples drawn from specific blogs to help examine the commodification of the Queer identity as they all bring very different subjectivities and issues to the table. These underlining issues are categorized into genres of autobiographical, political, fashion and image, and coming out. Ultimately, the protagonist of this project is within the interrogation of these various issues pertaining to consumption and commodification. While

paying very close attention to the apparent tension and double gesture between the act of commodification and the act of resistance that both occur throughout these blogs to understand how these acts of resistance are in fact part of the commodification of these Queer identities themselves. This project calls on Queer subjects to hold onto autonomy and agency within these structural constraints and against these social forces, so that individuality is not reduced to an ultimatum of reification.

The word “Queer” in itself is a subjective term, and a word that has a history within LGBTQ communities that is extremely derogatory and oppressive. Originally defined within the English language as anything “strange” or “unusual”, it wasn’t until *The Adventure of the Second Stain*, a 1904 Sherlock Holmes novel that the term “Queer” began to gain a definition of sexual deviance, specifically in regards to homosexual and effeminate males. Following this, the usage of “Queer” as a demeaning term for effeminate gay males became very prominent throughout the 20th century. It wasn’t until the late 1980’s that LGBTQ political and social activists began to reappropriate the word to install a community as well as a very strong political identity in rebuttal to its pejorative presence. “Queer” went on to become a term to describe various academic disciplines as well as a key descriptor of any and all non-heterosexual/heteronormative identities and lifestyles (R. Blood). The use of “Queer” is often used by people who reject traditional gender identities as a whole, and feel it is less conformist and purposefully an ambiguous alternative to the term “LGBT” which often time feels quite limiting. Throughout this project the word “Queer” has a capital ‘Q’ for a significant reason: although it is not always capitalized by users of the term, when capitalized it is to represent its political representation. The capitalization is specifically noted to be used when referring to an identity or community, rather than just a descriptive word to insinuate a person’s desires.

## **I. Cyber Cultures and the Emergence of Queer Blogging**

Cyber cultures and communities are the cultures that have surfaced and continue to surface from the use of computers and handheld devices specifically used for a platform to find information, for communication, business, entertainment, and the formation of social interactions and communications. As the internet came about cyber cultures eventually followed with the creation of weblogs. The weblog had the feature of being a kind of log of our hour from a particular point-of-view. Generally, weblogs are devoted to one or several subjects or themes, usually of specific interest, and, in general, can be thought of as developing commentaries, individual or collective, on these particular themes. A weblog may consist of the recorded ideas of an individual (a sort of diary) or be a complex collaboration open to anyone. Most of the latter are moderated commentaries or discussions (R. Blood).

Weblogs themselves can be seen as a genre within the internet with a history just as long as the internet itself. Although the term “blog” was not coined until the late 1990’s the same idea that is based around blogging was present with the rise of the internet. It wasn’t until 1994 where the emergence of the “online diary” appeared which is arguably one of the most common kinds of Queer blogs found today within cyberspace. In 2001, the ever so popular American political blog began to make its appearance within the stream of weblogs. This is also when the phenomenon of “blogging” became so intriguing to the mainstream that the emergence of “how-to” manuals began to be published and distributed. Since then blogging is seen all over the internet and continues to contribute to popular culture in various different ways. (Blood)

LGBTQ blogging was not necessarily documented within the history I have found of weblogs and the blogging world, however, as blogging came about in the 1990’s it can be assumed that queer identities began emerging specifically within the realm of AIDS awareness.

Moving forward to contemporary society, within the rise of cyber cultures and communities, LGBTQ communities have found a space within the blogging world where Queer identities are “born”, which not only sparks visibility for Queers, but simultaneously counter-hegemonic notions of progress since these identities are being marginalized and commodified. So, what are Queer blogs exactly? What makes a blog considered “Queer”? And lastly, what are the agendas of these blogs? Queer blogs are blogs written by someone who identifies as “Queer” and has some kind of a “Queer” agenda. The most popular style of blog is that of the “online diary” where a Queer blogger writes intimately of their own personal experiences as a Queer person, as would one with a regular hand-written diary or journal. Issues often discussed but not necessarily only reduced to are Queer politics, relationships, social life, lifestyle, gender transitioning, academic discourse, coming out, style, image, fashion, life advice, and of course, identity.

A blog entitled, “Genderkid”, presents this diary-like blog space where a gender queer/trans boy college student uses his writing as a tool to produce conversation about gender, how it works, and how it affects his everyday life. This is a common theme throughout Queer blogs, as they often use their online space to explore and construct their Queer identity. In his “About” section he points out that his blog is,

..more about questions than it is about answers; whatever answers I do happen to post are probably tentative and subject to change. It’s also a personal blog inasmuch as gender is a very personal thing. I don’t mean to rant –too much– about my daily life; but I will post whatever I discover when I carry my explorations into the real world.

For the more politically active Queer blogs, it is common to see some sort of “manifesto” present, usually in the “about me” section, where the blogger unfolds their political agenda to their audience. A great archetype of this kind of politically active Queer blog can be seen within a blog called, “Queer Affinity Collective.” In the “about” section on the blog the collective Queer bloggers set up their audience with their definition of what it means to be a “Radical Queer Affinity Collective”:

This group is an autonomous, decentralized entity, in which we strive for non-hierarchical, consensus-based decision-making. The creation of this group was motivated by various discussions and the experiences of its members within various LGBTQI movements. We wanted to create a space/platform within the LGBTQI movement in Hungary to address and challenge issues like homonormativity, homonationalism, transphobia, the silencing of marginalized groups, and hierarchical decision-making. We wanted a space which acknowledges and interrogates the intersections between gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, and ethnicity, while questioning and resisting the commodification of “queer”. The main aim of this collective is to use grassroots instruments such as direct action and political art (visual, musical, theatrical, literary, etc.) to tackle these issues.

Some of the more “fashion forward blogs” which are compiled much more with photographs of well-dressed and attractive Queer subjects rather than writing, exist in order to portray the way one can choose to demonstrate and perform one’s “Queerness” or “outness” through the consumption of fashion and image. An infamous fashion blog known by many fashion-concerned Queer subjects is the blog, “Qwear.” Qwear is a collective blogging space where members of the blog post style advice specifically aimed at an audience comprised of Queer women and Trans people. It not only uses photographs as part of its medium but also

writing, and sometimes even video. The blog offers a “submissions” section where Queer subjects can submit photographs of their most “dapper” outfits, accessories, or haircuts. Qwear describes their purpose as,

the online home for female assigned and identified queers, as well as folks with gender non-conforming styles, to share their experiences around clothing, ask advice, and show off their style triumphs. Qwear celebrates the subversion of traditional ideas of beauty and gender expression.

## **II. The Commodity, Commodification, and Reification**

A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men’s labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labour. This is the reason the products of labour become commodities, social things whose qualities are at the same time perceptible and imperceptible by the senses. It is only a definite social relation between men that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of relation between things. (Marx 72)

Under Marxism anything that can be exchanged for value is deemed a “commodity” and although these blogs that Queer subjects are creating are not necessarily being “bought” with monetary value (although of course in some instances they are) they are being exchanged in a slightly different way. In order for something to be deemed a commodity there must be a very specific set of events to take place. The commodity is an object that ultimately satisfies human needs and desires, as they are the fundamental units of capitalism, and a form of economy based



on the excessive amassing of such objects. The elemental precedent for assessing a commodity's value is its indispensable usefulness and what it does in the way of gratifying needs and wants. This "usefulness" is what Marx called its "use-value" an element crucial to the commodity in itself. Commodities also withhold an "exchange-value" the proportionate value of a commodity in relation to other commodities in an exchange. Contrary to use-value, exchange-value is not innate to a commodity. Exchange-value acquiesces to conclude what one commodity is worth in comparison to another commodity. For Marx, in a complex market, all kinds of various commodities, although fulfilling contrasting needs and wants, must be measurably in the same units, particularly money. (Marx 26)

Since these understandings of exchange-value are commonly described regarding material objects that are literally exchanged and passed off to whomever was interested in the purchasing of said commodity, the process of exchanging ones identity is something to look further into as it is much more complex than just a simple passing off. The exchange of an identity is not that of a physical form, rather in the way in which the identity is presented to an audience and in this case the way that the Queer blogger constructs their identity online for their audience to consume. For an identity, the actual exchange that takes place is inherit to the act of consumption. Once the Queer blogger presents a post setting forth their Queer identity, the reading subject gains the perspective of the blogger and consumes this identity through exactly that perspective. The knowledge and perspective of the Queer bloggers performance of their identity is what is exchanged to the reading subject as they present the Queer blogger with a notion of fandom and popularity online. The purpose for the existence of these Queer bloggers is to spread their knowledge and perspectives in order to gain online followers that care about Queer issues and lives in hopes to give visibility to Queer within contemporary society.

Although this is very important to understand when discussing Queer blogging and Queer identity, this exact conversation can be contextualized for all identities online, as their exchange, consumption, and commodification are pursued in a very similar way. The difference is found within the content of the blogs, however the interplay of use-value and exchange-value remain identical. In contemporary society blogging as a whole is a phenomenon that continues to grow daily and conclusively the goal of their continuation is based around some kind of notion of knowledge and visibility.

The perspective of commodification within this research differs somewhat from the traditional usages of the term as Marx would have used it in the sense that it is not simply based on material and literal commodification, such as “the transformation of goods and services, as well as ideas or other entities that normally may not be considered goods, into a commodity” (Marx 46). The act of commodification within this project calls upon the becoming of something. This “something” is not that of a tangible thing, which differs slightly from how Marx referred to the process of commodification. Within Queer Blogging we see the construction and production of an identity being set forth, and in turn a notion of desire by other Queer subjects (the blogging audience), as they are subjected to following these guidelines in order to obtain this identity. Rather than exchanging capital for a thing, they are gaining knowledge and consuming a lifestyle, in which they will then be able to use to perform their said Queerness and in turn coin themselves as “Queer.” This is to say, the commodity is the Queer identity, it’s “use-value” is the knowledge that is acquired and consumed, and the exchange-value is the construction and production of Queer subjectivities. This project’s use of “commodification” as a term is then to be seen almost metaphorically--or to be more in touch with cyber culture and blogging--“virtually”, in which it suggests this idea that Queer subjects

are being consumed. Although this is not a completely divergent use of commodification from Marx's original intentions, it is a bit different in the sense that within this form of consumption the commodity has moved beyond material objects, as the act of things being commodified has now spread into identities. What one also must consider when reappropriating the term "commodification" in this way is the distinctive difference within historical contexts. Marx was writing and developing his theory around the commodity and commodification during the mid-late 1800's in Europe, situated within a middle-class lifestyle. Although, the historical context of this is extremely relevant, that is not to say that there are indeed plenty of elements within the structures of contemporary commodities and commodification that are still pertinent today. His whole deconstruction of what a commodity is, how it works, and why it's important are all still very relevant and useful tools to use when interrogating capitalistic structures. However the difference lies within how we are now consuming these commodities and how commodities have spread into other parts of our daily lives that were not present in 19th century Europe.

Reification is the ideal term to adopt when speaking on the process of the commodification of Queer identities. Reification proposes a depiction of fetishisation and for Queer subjectivities it is this fetishisation that is separating the identity from its intended contexts; putting Queer in places and spaces it was not proposed to make connections with in the first place. There is a manipulation and distortion of social consciousness as Queer becomes a term to describe these relationships within it as concrete and fixed objects; thingification. Turning the Queer subject into an object in order for it to be profitable within a capitalistic framework; a commodity. In a westernized Marxist view point the true Queer is in turn having to buy themselves (their identities, in particular) back from capitalism through these now said generalizations of Queer by purchasing commodities centered around their subjective turned

objective lifestyles. *History and Class Consciousness* by Georg Luckas examines the phenomenon of reification as something that is described as the product of commodification and the fetishization of said commodity. This is an abstract concept describing a relationship or context as a concrete thing, rather than what it truly is within the social constructs of society (83). This all brings about a consideration that reification proceeds to objectify Queer subjects as they are opening their pocket books to perform their Queerness. This exact act of buying one's self back from capitalism once their identity has been commodified can be seen in a post from a blog entitled, "Queer Black Feminist." "Queer Black Feminist" is a Queer blog written by Andreana Clay a Queer black feminist residing in the Bay Area, where she posts daily or weekly musings with a goal of producing more Queer, black, and feminist visibilities by the promotion of her own voice. This is a mainly textual based blog with some imagery pertaining to what her posts are regarding which lays grounds for what is a very politically-centered space. In this particular post Andreana investigates the way in which capitalism has taken over gay pride parades and the contradictions that are put in place because of this.

This capitalization on the word and the meaning associated with it, which many of us fully embrace, illustrates a distance from Lorde's words (not to mention Lorde) as we celebrate Pride and move further and further into the 21st century. A time full of contradictions for the LGBT community. A time when I'm not sure what the role of Pride festivals is anymore when, at least L and G folks are enjoying a transparent visibility in mainstream media--gay characters, gay networks, gay politicians, straight politicians advocating gay rights, and companies that hone in on the "gay market." And the significance of writing this in the 21st century is not lost on me. I know that part of the reason that I am able to sit here, typing and

staving off sleep because I'm trying to get over The Killing season finale and formulate a critique of Gay Pride is because of people like Bayard Rustin, Marlon Riggs, Barbara May Cameron, Sylvia Rivera, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Lorde. But, I'm fairly confident that this wasn't what their struggle was about. Absolute Love, yes. Absolut Pride, no. Especially when the buffer that LGBT Pride was set up against: homophobia and the oppression of LGBT folks--particularly the violence directed at LGBT (actually mostly Trans) folks--continues to operate, and divide and conquer tactics on the part of the enemy thrives.

Andreana specifically calls out the marketing of an Absolute Vodka ad that came out during pride month (June) that was aimed towards Queer subjects by placing a label resembling a gay flag on the bottle. Absolut specifically issued a production of these bottles in order to have Queer subjects purchase their product based on a sense of community. Queer people purchased this bottle of vodka not just for the consumption of the alcohol, but more importantly for the performance of an identity. By buying a bottle of vodka with a rainbow flag on it these Queer subjects feel as if they are helping perpetuate the visibility of their Queerness not just for their own self verification but for their identities place within society. The Queer subject buys a bottle of vodka in order to perform their Queerness and furthermore they are buying themselves back from capitalism. This cycle becomes redundant in all areas of Queer life. Issues such as this can be seen as paradoxical since one of the theories used within Queer theory is that of "performativity" and in this particular struggle this is in turn a prime example of Queer subjects performing "Queerness" in order to buy their identity back from mainstream capitalistic society.

The notion of reification is something to fundamentally call on for Queer identities to resist. As "Queer" becomes visible in mainstream media and blogging, capitalism recognizes this

as an opportunity of profit rather than emancipation for this oppressed group of subjectivities. This is to say, capitalism is profiting off of what is a "resistance" movement for Queer identities. A "brand identity" is a product of the commodification and in this specific instance, of Queer, as we see the consumption of the identity, rather than the becoming and being of said identity. Since heteronormative society does not know what it is like to be "Queer", stereotypes and generalizations are embraced in order to make the identity marketable to the general public. This is where the commodification produces a trend or fad, where Capitalism can develop a niche within a certain market.

### **III. The Construction of a Queer Identity**

Identity is nothing sort of a complicated concept to grasp. It holds so many complex notions of thought emergence and resistance within it one must take very careful steps in investing what it truly has grown to mean within contemporary culture, as it too has evolved along with the human condition. The emergence of "Queer Theory" within academic discourse present this specific issue as it has gained visibility within the past 10 years. Queer Theory's ultimate project from the 1990's on has always been pertaining to the legitimizing of Queer identities throughout its structure. Although this stance was an important one to be taken, in the process of assisting in legitimizing theses Queer identities, Queer Theory in turn aided in the commodification contemporary society took upon these subjectivities. Although Queer Theory's foundational project is about recognizing, studying, and legitimizing Queer identities it fails to understand how these subjectivities have readily been commodified by capitalism.

As with any term becoming marginalized within the discourse of mainstream media there is often a loss of meaning from the first intended significance, a way for society to skew the barriers of language to fit to things outside of it into other contexts. With the term Queer, specifically in these places of visibility (academia and the media) we can see not only a loss of meaning, but simultaneously, a stripping of identity from the Queer subjects it is intended for. The naturalization of these said politics is a product of the special interests of the middle and upper class institutions, explicitly within prestigious academia, where a notion of elitism is claimed, as the theories behind the focus of attention are inaccessible to a large majority of the LGBTQ community. Although a smaller used theoretical framework there has been an extremely high notion of controversy concentrated around the theory as it becomes more and more institutionalized within the constraints of academia. One issue that arises is the claim of elitism;

“Overrepresented by prestigious academic institutions, drawing on closed-circuit calls for papers, using a post-structuralist vocabulary that unabridged dictionaries haven’t yet caught up with, heavily interferential and overwhelmingly white, the queer theorist network often resembles a social club open only to residents of a neighborhood most of us can’t afford to live in.” (Jagose, 110)

By coining the term “Queer” as something derivative of academia it not only is a re-appropriation of the empowerment of the term as heteronormative society uses it to describe anything and everything outside of the “norm”, but it is also this institutionalization that naturalizes the term, in turn exploiting the Queer subject, and therefore allowing capitalism to profit from it as it develops brand identity of a queer lifestyle through its own commodification, specifically, within mainstream media.

On the blog “Bully Bloggers”, a collective Queer blog comprised of four Professors of various sectors of the humanities throughout the United States who desire to produce conversation centered around anything and everything Queer, specifically pertaining to politics, culture, world news, philosophy, and revolution there are various writings found throughout their blog posts that touch upon this struggle for Queer identity and its emergence within academia.

“The panelists mused on the limits of antinormativity as an organizing principle for queer scholarship. Antinormativity, claimed Wiegman, functions as an “engine” that drives queer thinking as intervention, permitting those who invoke the term, and who critique norms and normativity in general, to believe their work is necessarily political. The critique is well taken, for, as the panelists argued, we need to be able to think more deliberately about what constitutes the political and, also, how to distinguish between the norms with which we cannot do without and those that punish and destroy.”

What Queer Theory has brought to the foreground for Queer identities and subjectivities is how it understands identity and the formation of identities as a whole. What it advocates for is found within the construction of identities. Queer theory builds upon and challenges thought regarding normative and deviant categories of identity as it has developed to examine the limitation behind these traditional identity politics. This is to say Queer Theory has laid the grounds for people to think of identity in a much different way, suggesting no specific stance on a specific ideology, but to remain outside of these circuits of issues energized by identity politics and instead to interrogate and problematize any and all sexual identity categories put forth. Promotions of these kinds of discourses of thought is now seen throughout the Queer blogging world.



#### **IV. Consuming Queer**

When unveiling the commodification of the Queer identity within Queer blogging one must start at the source of consumption in order to understand how identity itself is becoming a product of commodification. Queer blogging sets up a platform for us to understand how consumption and commodification go hand in hand within the realm of identity formation. Due to the fact that we as members of contemporary capitalistic society have turned into consuming subjects we are in turn the ones commodifying our own identities. To unfold these truths one must ask what does it mean to “consume” a blog? What does it look like and how is it done? And what does it mean to “consume” an identity within these blogs? Within contemporary American society we are indeed the epitome of a consumer society. Every day we are thrown into a capitalistic system where consumption is intrinsic to our ultimate survival. Whether it be for pleasure or for survival we are most definitely contributing members of consumer society, so it comes as no surprise that with the rise of technologies, cyber cultures, and online communities, we have simply moved our consumption from material objects to more virtual spaces, and in this case blogs and the identity formations within them. Capitalism needs consumerism in order to be effective and run its course. Currently we are undoubtedly seeing a commodification of everything. Capitalism is relentless when it comes to the commodification of all areas of social life, and the rise of market values.

The term “market values” is relevant within this investigation as it is crucial to note Capitalism’s clear involvement with the pricing of commodities. Market values are concerned with how much consumers are willing to pay in order to receive specific commodities, as capitalism is continually pushing the limits in order to exceed any and all set expectations of profit. It doesn’t matter what it is, capitalism will find a way to profit if it is possible, and this is

something that seems to be happening more and more within the act of Queer blogging. In fact, we have made consumerism an ideology in itself while consumption acts as the vehicle to carry out consumerisms ideological frameworks. (Adorno, Horkheimer)

The commodification and therefore the consumption of daily life is something quite apparent throughout various different Queer blogs that are currently in circulation. Something within this that becomes very prevalent regarding the notion of consumption throughout Queer blogging is that of personal image style as a form of consumption. “The Sartorial Butch” is a blogging space where a “butch dyke” posts are centered around clothing and style, however sometimes strays into areas like recipes/cooking and critical theory. Essentially, this blog offers an insight into the materialism centered on queer blogging. In one particular post, “Bee Listy”, the author of the blog, writes this:

“Last night the SL and I were enjoying the gorgeous weather and dining alfresco with one of our favorite couples at one of our city’s most eclectic restaurants. We were barely into our drinks and deep conversation when I spied Brigham! Brigham’s bow-tie totally made me smile, as others in bow-ties usually make me do. They were visiting my fair city from a couple of states away and doing some camping while in Vacationland. They were totally kind to me when I boldly asked if they would be interested in being blog fodder, and they were, so here you go. A totally excellent sartorial specimen, Brigham!”

Not only does Bee Listy describe the way in which ones Queer dining experience would look like, but also what the people involved within it would wear and how important their attire and overall image truly is to their identity. It’s as if personal style and identity cannot be removed from one another in this instance. The depiction of the bow-tie within this post is such a great example of the way in which Queer subjects are setting themselves up to be commodified. In this

instance, the bow-tie Bee Listy describes is not just a fashionable accessory for a queer to add to their wardrobe, although it is most definitely that, it is also so much more. Here a material object, a commodity, that one buys to wear in order to be dressed formally, holds the notion of identity within its existence. This is to say, to be Queer it is not an identity one grows into or acquires through some kind of evolutionary process, where one finds themselves and has a revelation. Rather, to be Queer as Bee Listy points out is participating in certain areas of social structures that are deemed “Queer” while performing what is categorized as “Queer” through clothing. “Dining alfresco” at “eclectic restaurants”, with people who are wearing bow-ties while they are caught up in a magical camping trip in “vacationland” is what “Queer” means.

Along with this notion of style comes the perspective of “image” and the way in which the consuming Queer subject becomes essentialized by a specific image based on superficial needs. For instance, throughout these kinds of fashion/style/image based Queer blogs, there is a lot of discussion circulating around Queerness through perceived hair-styles and hair-cuts. In fact, hair may be one of the more important Queer signifiers for many Queer subjects as it speaks of one's Queerness without them actually having to speak or explain themselves. On “Effin’ Dykes”, a blog dedicated to posts of auto-biographical material accompanied by submission based photographs of Queer subjects along with other images that express “queerness”, Krista delves into this topic of “Dyke hair” during one of her posts;

“Dyke haircut is a haircut that marks you immediately as a homo, and it's always either one of two things:

- 1) A really, shockingly, fucktardedly-bad haircut. Often involves a flat-top, a buzz cut, or a non-ironic mullet.

- 2) An amazingly cool, can't-put-your-finger-on-why-it's-so-great, blindingly stylish haircut that either cost two hundred dollars in a salon with a fag named Gianni or was cut in your kitchen by your friend Gretchen who takes a blunt as payment.

Not only does this post demonstrate the way in which Queer subjects use hair as a way of self-expression, but it also suggests that putting one's self into a box where one's identity is based solely on how one looks is slightly discomfoting. Is it not these kinds of structures and stereotypes that the Queer community is attempting to rid itself of in order to not conform to any set structure of gender, sexuality, and identity? It seems contradictory that Queer subjectivities are being typecasted in this way, and not to mention this typecasting is being done by the oppressed individual themselves. It is this kind of pigeon-holing that Capitalism clings onto as a sub-culture is openly setting up these trends themselves. Queer subjects are consuming haircuts and hair styles and in turn identifying themselves based on it and welcoming others to identify them based on the image they have once cutting or styling their hair a certain way. In Krista's post these Queer subjects are performing "dyke" through their hair. For Queer subjects a haircut is not just a look, but rather an act of resistance to heteronormative ideals based around beauty and gender.

This type of categorization that is ever present throughout Queer blogging and Queer subjectivities is often referred to as a "coding" system in which is fairly typical throughout various Queer communities and cultures, and is often talked about throughout Queer blogging in order for Queer subjects to be able to help identify one another in public spaces that may not always be safe to be "out" in or even in safe spaces in order to respect eachother's sexual desires

and needs. On the blog entitled, “Stuff Queer People Should Know”, bloggers examines the “Hanky Code”, or “Flagging” that occurs throughout Queer subjects social lives.

Flagging, also known as the hanky code, is a way to signal to others what type of sex, kink or fetish someone is seeking. It’s a subtle way to express a potentially taboo or deviant desire publicly to those initiated to the code while going unnoticed by the normative culture. Flagging opens a platform for negotiating those desires by inviting potentially sexual attention. (And while flagging means being open to being propositioned and to being rejected, a flag is not be misconstrued as consent.)

Flagging is an act that individuals throughout the Queer community concocted in order to make Queer subjects visible to other Queer subjects. It is a consensual act where Queer subjects find this kind of categorization appropriate to use in furtherance of sexual desires while remaining completely respectful. Although this act of consent and awareness is very beneficial to find sexual partnerships that align, it also can be seen as contradictory for several different reasons. Flagging is a prime example of where society can see these tensions arise between the acts of commodification and resistance that seem to be intrinsic to one another. As flagging promotes a social structure outside of the way heteronormative culture promotes sex and sexual relations, it is this kind of resistant to the norm that insinuates a move towards counterhegemonic politics. What this kind of identity coding also perpetuates is this sexual character of the Queer that has been so engrained into the way in which society views Queer subjects. The Queer subject has always been viewed as a deviant subject and it is with this kind of classifications that Queer subjects put into place that make for very contradictory limitations to be put forth and ensued.

## V. Capitalism's Agenda

“In Bourgeois society capital is independent and has individuality, while the living person is dependent and has no individuality” (Marx 22). Under present day American Capitalism the Queer blogger is subject to what Marx speaks of in this quote exactly. The Queer identity that the act of Queer blogging produces and constructs through the presentation of their blogging work and authorship is subjected to its ultimate commodification as the identity itself becomes that of a tangible thing, rather than something one produces through individuality, they turn this notion of an identity into something to have and own rather to become and be. The concept of an identity in itself is a subjective matter, which is why the commodification of it is not easily explained. Within the past decade, Queer identities have rapidly gained visibility throughout the internet and more specifically within blogging as it is slowly but surely becoming naturalized and accepted into society and its social formations. One pivotal marking of this widespread expectancy and visibility has been in the passing of marriage laws. On the blog “Effin’ Dykes” Krista includes within a post about the coming of summer and her excitement the following,

Besides impending summer (and horniness!) We have a real reason to be making out—celebration! Two minutes ago, as I was writing this mess and streaming a live news feed on my laptop at the coffee shop, the votes clicked in. The Minnesota Senate just voted, 37-30, to pass the gay marriage bill!!!!

Rhetoric regarding marriage can be found in most Queer blogs as bills on marriage are consistently in the foreground of contemporary Queer politics. It is this visibility of gay marriage that often time assists in the growth of notions pertaining to inclusion and power. Marriage equality for Queer people is ultimately about the presence of Queer identified relationships and

how they too should be able to have the same rights as heteronormative society. To put it simply, Queer people should no longer be viewed as strange or unusual or sexually deviants, but rather to have consent from the society they participate in that their Queer relationships are just as legitimate and important as those of heterosexual relationships. However, what should be noted here is that although these Queer blogs act as a platform to showcase a clear depiction of emancipation through visibility, this is only due to the portrayal of the Queer subject as in the realm of the “alternative” by the dominant culture. This in turn uncovers much anxiety for Queer subjects around said visibility. This notion of emancipation derives from a need for liberation as an identity that has been oppressed throughout history, and although more visible now than ever before, Queer identities are still part of the “alternative.” Consequently, Queer people are still the “other”.

According to Raymond Williams in *Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory*, under capitalism "alternative" lifestyles within emergent cultures is something that dominant culture is always very aware of. Innately, capitalism has a very conspicuous fascination with any kind of culture that can be seen as emergent, and it is in this apparent interest of the emergent that suggests dominant culture is always alert to anything or anyone that can be seen as such. Queer identifying people have been categorized under this kind of "alternative" lifestyle as they are still the minority within a heteronormative society. Although Queer subjects have come leaps and bounds since the 1960's, they still are very much so deemed the "other", making them the center of attention for the dominant culture and its attraction to the "emergent." In fact, capitalism's ultimate attraction to the emergent derives from that of an anxiety-ridden place, where it is constantly checking in to make sure the emergent culture never becomes that of oppositional. Once a sub-culture takes that turn into the oppositional realm it undoubtedly

threatens capitalism's ultimate agenda. It wasn't until the rise of Queer visibility within mainstream media and in Queer blogging, that society could begin to see this apparent shift from fascination to a clear depiction of commodification. A superlative example of this is found in a blog entitled, "R U Coming Out?" where Queer blogger Zac Baldridge writes,

"The point is, we are putting the idea out there that you might only be accepted in the Gay Community if you fit a certain stereotype. Social Media is there to exploit that idea. There are men that have pictures of themselves naked in their profile or shirtless. We have people using fake accounts with pictures of models as their AVI because they want to be accepted by others on Social Media. Are we showing that the community is accepting of everyone or just if you're good looking enough?"

What Baldridge says here is an imperative point to be had throughout Queer lives and subjectivities. There are ways in which Queer subjects are putting "Queer" into a category in which can be commodified based on stereotypes, while simultaneously, this is ultimately allowing for dominant culture to label "Queer" through specific signifiers in order to be visible. This is a clear negotiation with the dominant in order to gain visibility throughout media.

As Willams notes, alternative lifestyles are always under the surveillance of the dominant culture. The dominant culture is not interested in an emergent culture becoming an oppositional culture, in fact that is exactly what they strive to prevent. In mainstream media Queer subjects are now becoming more visible with the aid of blogging however the difference between the overall media's and blogging's depiction of the Queer subject is that the mainstream is always commodifying, while Queer blogging is only sometimes commodifying. This is to say, Queer



blogging is in fact a threat to the dominant culture. This threat comes in the form of the oppositional, as Queer identities have a space within blogging where they have a platform that allows for a potential opposition to heteronormative criterion.

## **VI. The Commodification of Queer**

What Queer blogging has started to do is create a space for resistance and identity formation for the Queer identity, however ultimately, no matter the context and construction, it seems to inevitably commodify. “Coming out” is an extremely prevalent ritual that is potentially one of the most liberating of acts a Queer person can perform in order to free themselves into the world as the person they know they are as well as deserve to be no matter the societal structures and norms that are already set in place. The blogging world is now a momentous part of that process and ritual. “The Beaver Bunch”, a Queer blog that uses the website YouTube as its platform to post video blogs or “Vlogs” is constantly touching on the topic of “coming out.” The Beaver Bunch consists of five diverse Queer subjects that construct daily and weekly videos in aims to break stereotypes, discuss any and all Queer issues, and answer questions from their viewers. In a video entitled, “Come out... the Weather’s Fine”, Beaver Bunch member “Jess” presents a five minute long video on what she deems, “a general video on coming out”, where she addresses how to tell your friends and family, giving warnings of how difficult the process may be but also how amazing of an experience it can be simultaneously. This engrained ritual that the coming out process presents becomes apparent as she describes her own coming out; There was just a really big part of me that couldn’t wait-- as soon as I realized that people like this did exist-- I couldn’t wait. I couldn’t wait to tell the world, for some reason.

“Confession” is a topic that Foucault examined highly within his work in the first volume of *History of Sexuality*. Michel Foucault begins with the documentation of sexuality in 19<sup>th</sup>

century Europe and Britain. He introduces that the way in which the discourses of homophobia and its internalizations have been engrained into notions of homosexuality and the subjects it often times oppresses and restrains, as it is highly prominent in the way in which society deals with the homosexual subject. For centuries the conviction of homophobia has been something clearly present within society and its constructions, western civilization, in particular, as a society that is seen as innately heterosexual until proven otherwise. Hence, heterosexuality is the set norm, dictating the ways in which laws, ethics, and morals are derived into the everyday. Although same-sex attraction has—alongside with opposite-sex attraction—been around since the beginning of time it has a clear history of controversy. The production of the “homosexuality” or the “homosexual” within society is a new construction, where we are able to categorize a group of people to be the other. As western civilization was founded on politics heavily influenced by Christianity and its ideals, it is to no surprise that the notion of marriage would fall along with it, something that clearly in a very prevalent issue throughout the Queer community.

Ultimately, breaking these set “rules” within the realm of marriage meant condemnation. As these oppressive and strict guidelines shaped the structures of society, the homosexual was labeled a perversion of nature, including labels such as mentally ill, sinner, and criminal. All said portrayals demonstrated a clear theme of an overall abnormal person. Parts of Foucault’s findings were based around the growth of psychiatry and medicine during this time. Foucault has said that the theory and practice of contemporary psychology relied on a construction of sexuality as a “new” object of examination for the “new” science of the mind. This implied that scientists had to conquer their own senses of apprehension revolving around the subject matter, and control the subjects themselves as part of the development of their own disciplines. Foucault

also notes that the study of sexuality needed the “sexually deviant” subjects in surveillance to “confess” not just to sexual practices and aspirations, but to their sexuality as an identity in itself. It seems that sexuality as an identity has had this need for some kind of confession to take place at the core of it. Confession is the “proof” that the psychiatric world needed to make sense of one’s identity. Medicine and psychiatry needed the unprocessed material of sexual confession so that sexuality could be incessantly named, renamed, and deliberated. Foucault says,

What is essential [in this professional desire to overcome revulsion] is not in all these scruples, in the “moralism” they betray, or in the hypocrisy one can suspect them of, but in the recognized necessity of overcoming this hesitation. One had to speak of sex; one had to speak publicly and in a manner that was not determined by the division between the licit and illicit...one had to speak of it as of a thing to be not simply condemned or tolerated but managed (24).

In the process of confession, the confessing subject automatically becomes a managed and therefore a controlled subject. It is not the criminal anymore that committed the act it is the homosexual that is the criminal by being divergent from the norm. The homosexual identity is something that causes much tension as it is still very much so an oppositional force under the constraints of a heteronormative system. Within these discourses of sex and sexuality is where Foucault believed the homosexual identity was produced as a category and a course as a disease, simultaneously. An example of this literal act of confession can be found in a specific video blog post from Mary, another contributing member of the Beaver Bunch. In Mary’s video blog entitled “Catholic College Coming out” she describes her own coming out where she literally went to come out in the confessional at her Catholic school.

I was super freaked out. It was freaking me out that I liked her. So, on that following Saturday I went to confession. If you are catholic stay with me, you know how this story goes. I go in the confessional and I am just sweating sinful bullets. I get down on the kneeler and say “bless me Father for I have sinned, I have not been to confession in four months”.....of course I go to the anonymous behind the screen confessional because I do not want to be looking at them in the eye. I am scared to death.”

Within Queer blogging there is a clear sense of confession, as large majority of Queer blogs out there are based on autobiographical information, experience, or lifestyle as a Queer. However, unlike Foucault, the blogger sees these acts of “confession” as a moment of liberation or emancipation from the constraints one feels within their day to day. This sense of liberation is demonstrated appropriately from that same video blog post, “Come out the Weather’s Fine.” “I think one of the most awesome things about coming out at such an early age was throughout the years I was able to develop so much support because as soon as I came out that was it, you know, there was no turning back. So, I was able to develop a good group of friends and a really good support system that allowed me to be myself and explore the world as the person I wanted to be.”

For Jess and other Queer bloggers, the blog is a space where one’s identity can be simulated through one’s controlled blog space. However, although this a positive for the Queer community, it is with this notion of consent that these confession blogs are counterhegemonic for two very specific reasons. Firstly, they are proudly claiming their queerness regardless of societal positioning and judgment while secondly, they are also agreeing to be categorized accordingly to satisfy the comfort level of people who see them as “deviant.”

Looking at the apprehensions of one coming out, sometimes more so than others, and the outcomes within this “freeing” of the subject it seems that it is this ritual of confession that has the ability to ultimately bind people into certain categories, and yet another box of stereotypes and stigmas for them to fit in. In fact, setting them back and limiting them to certain places within society, an even more apparent dispute of counter productivity. It is imperative that these oppressive factors not be simply accepted and looked over, rather interrogated and examined within the ways in which said confining restrictions in contemporary society become overbearing to the homosexual subject when one is open in public spaces/places. Through blogging one’s outness the homosexual can be polarly subjected to either their ultimate subjugation and or their preeminent liberation, through the performance of “outness”. It is these “coming out” narratives and dialogues that are nothing short of a confession and since this notion of confession can be seen as an aid in which will ultimately draw onto what it means to commodify “Queer”.

Part of what is happening to these Queer subjectivities within the context of blogs is that these said subjects are indeed resisting hegemonic notions of subjectivities while simultaneously being incorporated into a capitalistic agenda of subject formation. This is to say, Queer bloggers use their blogs as a platform to resist heteronormative views and values while still being caught in this system they seem to want to escape. Once again this tension of commodification and resistance appears. It seems only appropriate and intrinsically essential that when speaking on this notion of incorporation within Queer blogging to draw from Gramsci and his notion of hegemony and consent. For Gramsci, hegemony is an act where a “historical bloc” of ruling-class issues exercises social power and leadership over the subordinate classes. This can be achieved through a variation of force and, more importantly, consent.

“The normal exercise of hegemony...is characterized by the combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally without force predominating excessively over consent. Indeed, the attempt is always to ensure that force would appear to be based on the consent of the majority expressed by the so-called “organs of public opinion--newspapers and associations.” (Qtd. in Barker 80)

Under Gramsci's take on hegemony, the Queer subject is put into the place of the “subordinate” , and for Queer bloggers these so-called “organs of public opinion” are in fact their very own blogs, as they are expressing consent through the output of their thoughts, knowledge, lives, and ultimately their identities onto their blog.

## **VII. The Performance of Queer**

The act of performance is one of the most effective ways in which one can demonstrate ones identity to others. This rings true to various different areas of life, but for the queer blogger the act of performativity is the mode in which their ultimate commodification takes place. Queer blogging in itself is a performative act of establishing a queer identity online--to prove ones “queerness”. Judith Butler who coined the notion of performativity claims, For discourse to materialize a set of effects, ‘discourse’ itself must be understood as complex and convergent chains in which ‘effects’ are vectors of power. I this sense, what is constituted in discourse is not fixed in or by discourse, but become the concision and occasion for further action. This does not mean that any action is possible on the basis of discursive effect. On the contrary, certain reiterative chains of discursive production are barely legible as reiterations, for the effects they have materialized are those without which no bearing is discourse can be taken. (187)

According to Butler, identities categories are in complete paradox due to the impossibility to fully gain an identity depend on both exclusions and imitation. Performativity brings forth the possibility to “open signifiers to new meanings and new possibilities for political resignification” (190).

Performance in the way in which Butler describes it is ever-present in a majority of Queer blogs, however depicted more so in certain kinds of Queer blogs than other. Bevin Branlandingham is a Queer woman behind a body positive blog that offers Queer advice, "fat fashion", travel columns, performance reviews, community building, and personal experience as an outlet for Queer people. Bevin is a proud “Femme” which comes up in almost every post throughout her blog. She is very concerned with image and how she can always perform “Femme”.

I’ve noticed over the last year or so that I have had an increase in my own queer visibility on the street. I tend to tweet about it whenever it happens because I’m usually alone and it’s so remarkable to be a Femme presenting person getting a dyke head nod or a wink on the street from a queer presenting person. It rules! It’s like that inner 20 year old in me who wore nothing but baggy Old Navy men’s clothing to appear more “andro” because I thought that’s what would get me attention from other queers is finally getting what she always wanted. To be seen. I’m also an intrepid queer explorer so as soon as this visibility started happening to me I went into self-examination mode to determine what I was doing differently. I delight in the queer acknowledgement and then sit back and examine what I was wearing, doing, or “coding” to be Queer. I’m feeling my most

authentically queer when I'm really performing my gender, and that is in a huge, over the top kind of way that I mostly only do at certain parties.

What Bevin and her blog bring to the foreground of this project is the omnipresent desire to perform ones identity. In fact, Bevin relies so much on her performance of her Queerness that it is what seems to rule her day to day. She very clearly and non-apologetically recognizes her need for some kind of approval from people that she encounters throughout her day. Although this is not to be seen in a negative light, it is also something to delve into. We see the way in which she performs her Queerness is always present as she is constantly planning on how she can execute that performance throughout her day in order to receive this acknowledgement that other subjects may give her based simply on how she is dressed or how she looks. It is this interaction with other subjects that is how she excavates into her own identity in order to comprehend who she is rather than based on how she actually feels. This is to say, Bevin's Queer identity is constructed around others views and perspectives of her. Bevin consents to perform her Queerness to this public audience she speaks of which in turn is also a consensual act to be consumed by said audience that ultimately essentializes a meaning of Queer based on superficial and material things. This in itself is how a production of commodification of the Queer subject is granted. Bevin consents to be commodified in order to perform her Queerness and prove her identity.

### **VIII. The Stylization of Existence; A Stance on Resistance**

Foucault sought to elaborate an ethics founded on what he refers to as an "art" or "stylization of existence". "The purpose of this stylization was not self-absorption, but to offer



new means of resistance to the normalizing structures of the market, scientific and social institutions, and the state" (Miller 56). This notion of stylization of existence was derivative on the history of subjectivication of the queer identity, which was partially supposed to act as a means for resistance to the commodified subject within capitalist modernity. Queer blogging in itself is that of a narcissistic act. In the blog "Satorial Butch", Bee Listy describes in the short "about me" at the top of the page that her blog is, "A peek into the closet and mind of a slightly narcissistic yet always well-dressed homo." This notion of narcissism is not something to deny, rather it is an act that is embraced as many Queer bloggers see this narcissism as part of the way in which they are resisting hegemonic heteronormative structures.

Throughout history there are various instances where we can see a group of oppressed people attempt to re-claim identity terms deemed derogatory in order for some kind of empowerment or liberation to take place. The history of LGBTQ liberation and the reappropriation of the term and identity associated with "queer" are intrinsic part of why queer blogs exist today. A semantic shift came when the LGBTQ community specifically the gay activist group, "Queer Nation" distributed an influential flier entitled, "Queers Read This", during the New York City gay pride parade in June 1990. Although originally a re-claim for LGBTQ activists, the term boomed throughout a large portion of LGBTQ members, allowing people that strongly rejected traditional gender identities, sexual identities, and by those who saw themselves as an oppressed individual within the constraints of heteronormativity to find relevance in this term. Not only does reappropriating "Queer" retain the historical connotations of something that is "outside the norm" but additionally can be deciphered as breaking the "rules" associated with sex and gender. It is these forms of resistance and activism that paved way for queer lifestyles and subjectivities to become more accepted and affluent throughout our

present day society, and although there are still plenty of activists it is not the same as it was in the 1980's with groups like "Queer Nation". The rise of blogs has given queer people a very specialized way to inform, promote, resist, and change societal norms, however what this project ultimately is calling upon is the need for awareness of how these acts of resistance and emancipation through the construction of queer blogs can be limiting as one's identity is put up for means of consumption and in turn, commodification. Meaning, by putting oneself into the category of "Queer" in itself is an act of limitation. Although, it is something to provoke liberation, it is simultaneously an act that categorizes and stereotypes. Here the Queer blogger is subjected to subjectivication. The Queer blogger is willingly, but not necessarily knowingly participating in their own commodification through these specific acts of blogging and they limit themselves to a certain kind of lifestyle, image, and political assertiveness that suggests something of sameness--a notion that Queer subjects specifically go out of their way to avoid.

As I consummate, I would like to situate myself within this project historically and culturally as a radical intellectual Queer thinker that will continue to investigate and interrogate these truths under capitalism and within our daily lives that exist in order to become aware and in turn promote that awareness to begin a conversation that can eventually assist in radical change for all oppressed subjectivities and identities throughout the world. Although this paper unveils the truths of how Queer identities are being commodified through consumption of Queer subjectivities, it also should be used as grounds for understanding the bigger issue of the ultimate commodification of all identities and subjectivities within contemporary society, specifically within the vain of media. In the blog "Stuff Queer People Need to Know", a post appears entitled, "Queeries: Audio interview with Jacqueline Boyd on inclusive queer community and tackling segregation", where the author of the article attempts to tackle the ultimate issue of

othering and segregation of Queer subjectivities. In the interview Jacqueline Boyd states,

If we want [community] to change and if we ourselves want to be made better by actually being inclusive and change our Queer community within this really, really racist city, we have to move,” said Boyd. “We have to be willing to take the train some place we haven’t taken the train before. We have to do some research and know what’s going on and know the players that are outside our community.

Encompassed in this quote is this projects point exactly. Queer subjects must be aware of how they are being oppressed, and use that knowledge to produce some kind of thought and discourse to uphold in acts of resistance in order to no longer be oppressed subjects in a heteronormative society. Recognizing the interplay of resistance and commodification is the way in which the resistance one executes can begin to become non-inclusive to the ultimate commodification of one’s identity. It is these kinds of conversations and rhetoric that are essential for Queer subjects to conduct in order to consummate this much needed awareness throughout Queer spaces as well as society and its restrictive and limiting structures as a whole.

## Works Cited

- Barker, Chris. *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*. London: SAGE, 2000. Print.
- Blood, Rebecca. *Weblogs: A History of Perspective*. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell Publishing, 2002. Print.
- Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "sex"* New York: Routledge, 1993. Print.
- Foucault, Michel, Michel Foucault, Michel Foucault, and Michel Foucault. *The History of Sexuality*. New York: Pantheon, 1978. Print.
- Gilbert, Jeremy. *Against the Commodification of Everything*. *Cultural Studies* Vo. 22, No. 5, 5 September 2008, p 551-566. Taylor and Francis, 2008. Print.
- Gramsci, Antonio, Quintin Hoare, and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1976. Print.
- Hennessey, Rosemary. "Queer Visibility in Commodity Culture." *Cultural Critique*, No. 29. Minneapolis, MN.: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.
- Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor W. Adorno. "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception." *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1972. Print.
- Jagose, Annamarie. *Queer Theory: An Introduction*. New York: NYU Press, 1997. Print.
- Luckacs, Georg. *History and Class Consciousness: Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat*. Merlin Press, 1967. Print
- Marx, Karl. *Capital, Volume I*. 17 February 2014. <[marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch01.html](http://marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch01.html)>
- Miller, Paul. *The Art of Self-Fashioning or Foucault on Plato and Derrida*, *Foucault Studies*, No. 2 pp 54-74. University of Carolina, 2005. Print.

- Rak, Julie. "The Digital Queer: Weblogs and Internet Identity." *Biography* 28 (2005): 166-82.
- Signorile, Michelangelo. *Queer in America: Sex, the Media, and the Closets of Power*. New York: Random House, 1993. Print.
- Williams, Raymond, and John Higgins. "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory." *The Raymond Williams Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001. Print.

### **Blogs Cited**

- "The Beaver Bunch." *The Beaver Bunch*, 08 Apr. 2008. Web. 5 May 2014.  
<<https://www.youtube.com/user/beaverbunch>>.
- "Effing Dykes." *Effing Dykes*, 2010. Web. 26 Feb. 2014. <<http://effingdykes.blogspot.com/>>
- "Queer Fat Femme." *Bevin Branlandingham*, Nov. 2008. Web. 26 Feb. 2014.<<http://queerfatfemme.com/>>
- "QueerBlackFeminist." *Andreana Clay*, 2007. Web. 26 Feb. 2014.  
<<http://queerblackfeminist.blogspot.com/>>
- *Qwear*. *Qwear*, 2011. Web. 5 May 2014. <[QwearFashion.com](http://QwearFashion.com)>.
- "R U Coming Out?" *Wayne Dhesi*, Mar. 2012. Web. 5 May 2014. <[rucomingout.com](http://rucomingout.com)>.
- "Radical Queer Affinity Collective." *Radical Queer Affinity Collective*, Sept. 2001. Web. 5 May 2014. <<http://rqac.wordpress.com/>>.
- "The Sartorial Butch." *The Sartorial Butch*, Oct. 2009. Web. 26 Feb. 2014.  
<<http://sartorialbutch.wordpress.com/>>
- "Stuff Queer People Need To Know." *Stuff Queer People Need To Know*, July 2010. Web. 26 Feb. 2014<<http://stuffqueerpeopleneedtoknow.com/>>