



## INTERSECTIONS

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This creative thesis explores the intersections of identity, gender, and sexuality, relevant topics in our times of binary gender roles and pervasive heteronormative social structures. This thesis is divided into two parts: 1) an introductory essay to place the creative work in an existing conversation, including self-analysis, relevant critical theory, and research on the necessity of visibility, and the effects of narrative on perception and creation of norms and, 2) a hybrid body of creative work that challenges the conventions of form and the barriers and parameters of normative society.

The introduction brings context to these issues of societal construction, their related social power structures, and the systematic erasure of non-normative identities. Much of the presented research involves “othered” individuals, by which I mean people who fall outside the normative consciousness, such as those that are not included in a heteronormative societal framework.

Visibility itself is necessary to affect people’s acceptance and understanding of LGBT+ peoples, and a well-known form of visibility is the act of “coming out.” The visibility of specific perspectives, such as a gay man coming out, can contribute to broadening the scope of what can be considered normal. For example, Anderson Cooper, CNN newscaster/journalist, came out in order to make it clear that gay people exist and to stop perpetuating his perceived hiding. When people become visible, as is the case when coming out/living out, they can begin to positively erase their non-normative status. However, the push by the Human Rights Campaign in the 2000s for “homonormativity” through the Employment Non-Discrimination Act is an example of negative erasure – the erasure of LGBT+ people of color, people from low-income households and backgrounds, transgender people, and additionally other queer people due to their absence from the Non-Discrimination Act’s guidelines.

I have chosen to work with autoethnography as a communicative and interactive bridge between the creative work and the research. Autoethnography is a research technique that takes the form of self-reflection and writing that explores the researcher’s personal experience and interaction with the research and research subjects.

The creative portion of this is meant to converse with the concepts of “otherness” that exist outside of the visible spectrum of normative society. The hybrid collection of self-reflection, drama, poetry and short fiction will enact principles of visibility and education, contributing to the ever-expanding understanding and visibility of “othered” individuals.

