

Introduction

"Taxonomy: the classification of something even if it hurts."

— Leo Fox

Scientists are able to take pictures of the human brain using a tool called magnetic resonance imaging, popularly known by its acronym, MRI. This is the primary means by which Andrea completes her work. She uses a radio frequency antenna to apply energy to a person's head and waits for that energy to bounce back in the form of an image.

A library catalog works by disciplining language. Luke has handled texts of all persuasions, spent a great deal of time and money to learn their control. Say you are in the library. Say you find Luke swaying between two stacks, one hand pushing a cart, the other tracing strings of numbers and letters lining the shelves. Ask him where the gay books are. That depends, he'll shoot back. It depends on who's asking.

MRI is not dramatically different from taking a photograph with the flash turned on—a photographer directs light at a subject, and that light bounces back to form an image. At the molecular level, each photon makes its way to the subject, where some are absorbed. The photons that make the return journey tell a story of how they were changed by the molecules they encountered along the way. When all their stories are combined, an imprint of the subject is formed, frozen in time and space.

The Library of Congress Classification System does not take well to nuance. Its classes are mutually exclusive. A catalog, by design, must flatten a book. How does a word index a person? As a devotee of HQ77.7¹, Luke might think of HQ79² as he engages in HQ447³. He might indulge his tendency towards HQ71⁴. Remember. He is a subclass. The Family, Marriage, Women—he is, against his best efforts, a subsidiary of these things.

What makes an MRI machine different is that the energy bouncing back to its antenna is not a direct representation of the

¹*Transsexualism*

²*Sadism. Masochism. Fetishism.*

³*Masturbation*

⁴*Sexual deviations*

subject's body. Instead, it is a measurement of how each of the subject's molecules interacts with every other molecule. MRI is only capable of telling the experimenter about the relationships formed between different parts of the body. It summarizes billions of tiny interactions. Permanent and temporary bonds. Collisions. Repulsions. Andrea's job is to unravel and decipher these relationships into coherent pictures.

There was a time when queers and transsexuals would slip support group information into the library card catalogs that failed to name them. Find us squeezed between Sexual Life and Erotica. Find us making controlled vocabulary into poetry. Life is what happens when you're busy alphabetizing.

Lilac Peril aims to push energy into the community and see what bounces back. It is an attempt to shift the analogy of publishing away from photography and toward MRI. Our relationships are what give us power, and communal insight requires context, not isolation. We hope to accelerate the formation of connections, bring people together to create unique works—maybe even begin to decipher the image of a spirited city's trans writing community.

Issue 00: Anti-Taxonomy is our birth into the world. When we chose the theme, eating noodles outside a restaurant in the seat of the American empire, we didn't quite know what it meant. Our livelihoods are enmeshed in a web of science and academia. Our bodies often feel beyond category. What does it mean, though, to be categorically against category?

While we write this introduction, genocide crescendos in Gaza. Elsewhere, it surges in Armenia, Sudan, Tigray, Congo. Apartheid is a taxonomy made of and paid for in blood.

Our trans liberation is anti-colonial. Our trans liberation is anti-taxonomical.

Words cannot offer much in the face of such vast material need, and yet, in the shadow of our greatest grief, we offer this: the works of twenty one trans writers and artists wrestling categories wide open. May it be a balm to you.

With love,
ATM & LS