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LGBTQ+

# Undoing Heterotemporality

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If someone were to ask, I would say I came out in my twenties. However, “coming out” is not as black and white as it seems to people who have not experienced it personally. It is a period of rediscovery that moves forward and backward. Identity takes time to fully form; it is always there waiting for you, but it often is not until later in life that you gain the hindsight to understand yourself.

“Queer Time” is the term used by queer theorists to describe ideas outside of heterotemporality (the term “straight time” was already taken by the jazz community). In a heteronormative, capitalist society, there is an expected sequence of life events that form the human experience: birth, puberty, high school, career, marriage, and forming the nuclear family of Reagan’s dreams.

This pathway in a queer person’s life is often obscured or rejected completely due to a long list of obstacles like marriage inequality, an inability to have “biological” children, inaccessible health care that is at times worsened by epidemics (in the ’80s, it was AIDS; today, trans people still struggle to find affirming care), prejudice within many career fields, and even shortened life expectancy.

**Trans people often use the term “egg” when talking about their past selves. Instead of a closet door to walk out of and become your true self, the experience is like being an egg that slowly cracks.**

A single crack could awaken something for a fleeting moment, but it takes a great deal of them to finally give someone enough strength to “emerge.” In the moment, cracks in your egg may be quickly forgotten, but they tend to reappear and form a new history in retrospect.

“Why did I feel so uneasy taking my shirt off as a child?”

“How come I always felt more comfortable around queer folks?”

“Remember that time that old woman mistook me for a girl in middle school?”

“Wow, all my failed relationships really make sense now.”

“It turns out I was always a hopeless lesbian.”

Ultimately, this rediscovery is rebirth: a time to re-experience your first kiss, your first love, your first sexual