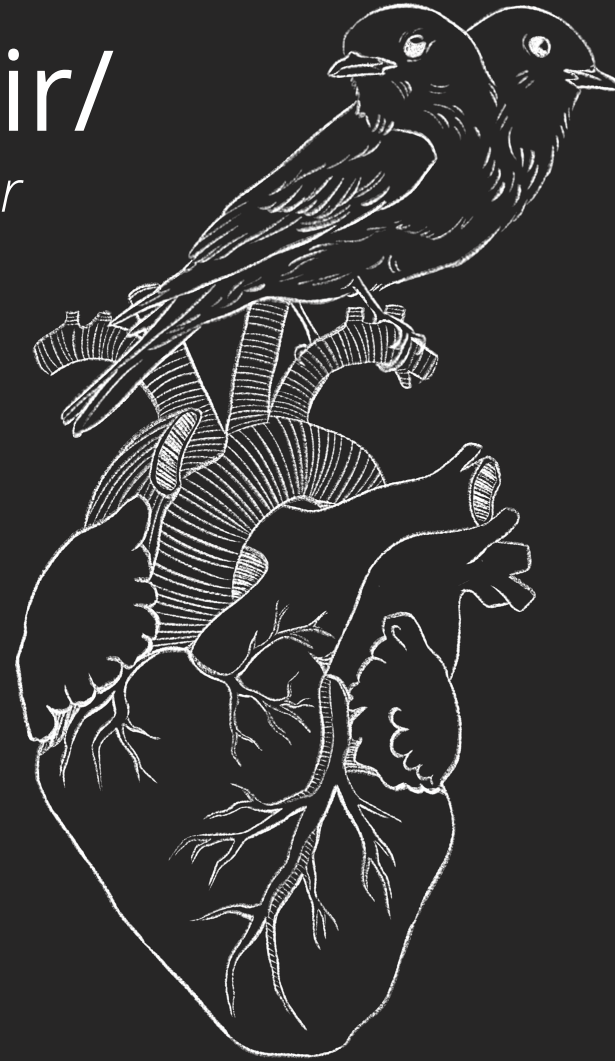


queer • /kwir/

according to Fletcher



by Jen Frye

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I asked members of the Fletcher Classes of
2022 and 2023 to answer the prompt:
what does 'queer' mean to you?

Here are their responses.

A member of the LGBTQ community.

Anonymous

One who identifies as anything other than
cis/heterosexual.

Alex Thomas, MALD 2023

Emily Dickinson wrote:

“Hope” is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -

Being queer means being my whole-hearted self. It means loving all of my parts - the masculine energy, the feminine energy, and everything in between - and equally loving those parts of others, too. Being queer means authenticity and freedom. It means seeing the world (and other people) through a lens of honesty, transparency, light, and love. It means that my heart and spirit are what guide my decisions instead of the physical body I was born with and/or the expectations that others have for me as a result of being born in that body. With all due respect to Dickinson, I would modify this slightly to say, "queerness is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul and sings the tune without the words and never stops at all."

Simultaneously, it is raised eyebrows and hushed remarks. It is the story of Matthew Shepard (and so many unnamed just like him); the images of 49 unalived people, lined up in rows, with a rainbow of flowers and burned candles and teddy bears alongside them to protect the afterlives of those killed at a nightclub in Orlando; it is the sobering fact that 2021 was the deadliest year (on record) for transgender people, most of whom were Black and/or Latinx. Being queer is, for so many people around the world, considered illegal. It is considered a sin. It is weaponized. It is fear.

But -

But-

But-

Queerness is the thing with feathers: it is colorful flags hanging from school windows and stickers pasted onto water bottles and laptop cases. It is a set of parenthesis at the end of a professional signature and hand-written signs reading, "free Mom/Dad hugs." It is Lil Nas X and Frida Kahlo and RuPaul and Leonardo da Vinci and King Princess and so many more. It is watching the Fab Five do their thing when I can't sleep and having the opportunity to sit in a leadership class and listen to the first female dean of the Fletcher School casually talk about her queer family. Queerness is community. It is hope. It is love.

Rebecca Nash, MIB 2022

Queer to me is whatever queer means to a queer-identifying person. It's therefore flexible.

Anonymous

Queer is a sort of catch-all term covering non-cis-het identities.

Anonymous

'Queer' describes everyone who doesn't fit the standard cis-het-wanting sex model; it means "different from the mainstream sexuality/gender discourse". Of all the beautiful and wonderfully specific alphabet soup labels, 'queer' feels like the truest and best umbrella term, and using it fosters a sense of community across diverse, specific identities, because in the end we're all excluded in some way and the best way to fight back is to embrace our power together and make our own home and way of being. 'Queer' (both the word and its meaning) is beautiful, wonderful, reclaimed: a shout against close-mindedness and 'normality' and 'fitting in' to reclaim our space, our power, and ourselves.

Anonymous

For me, being queer means that I refuse to exist within the rigid boundaries set by society.

Sam Bonelli, MALD 2022

The removal of traditional boundaries of categorization.

Anonymous

Different.

Anonymous

Queer means not conforming to the binary as defined by the culture around an individual. As for queer culture, it's a collective of these many expressions.

Anonymous

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