"To Thy Self Be True:" Self-Representation in *ONE Magazine*, 1953-1955

Collette Salvatierra

In the 1950s, amidst a sexually repressive environment in the United States, *ONE Magazine*, a homosexual magazine, urged its readers to come into the lime light. It launched its first issue in January 1953 and from its inception the magazine informed homosexuals of their right to equality, no matter their sexual orientation. The magazine discussed equal rights, marriage, the normality of homosexuality, and also emphasized love rather than sex. Unlike the other homosexual magazines of the time, *The Mattachine Review* and *The Latter*, *ONE* did not stray away from controversy: it relished in it. *ONE* called itself the voice of the homosexual and its fictional work demonstrated different messages about being homosexual during the Cold War. The common themes espoused by *ONE* between 1953-1955 include entrapment, family disapproval, flaws within the homosexual community, the different gendered experiences of homosexual men and women, and how "coming out" would fix all these issues. *ONE Magazine* advocated homosexuals step out from the confines of secrecy by having sexual pride. The magazine exposed the challenges they faced such as government persecution, lack of a community, and the limitations of homosexual relationships to demonstrate why it was necessary

for homosexuals to "come out."[1] The imagined process of publicly affirming one's sexuality aimed at eradicating the injustices plaguing homosexuals.

ONE Magazine arose after a meeting with Mattachine members, which included Dale Jennings, Bill Lambert, Martin Block, Chuck Rowland, and "John B," where they spoke in length one night about creating a homosexual magazine.[2] Volunteer labor forged the magazine and its supporters financially backed the project. The creators modeled the magazine after European homosexual publications such as *Die Insel*, which advocated the equal treatment of homosexual men and women under the law.[3] In its first issue, *ONE Magazine* sought to prove to the world that homosexuals were not sick or lonely individuals, but comprised a community. It promoted the image of a sexual minority under government persecution as the key component of the homosexual community. Because every state in the nation made homosexual acts illegal, the sheer concept of an American homosexual magazine was a radical and courageous act.[4] The magazine ran from 1953-1965, calling itself the voice of the homosexual as it let anyone publish articles and fictional works.

The Cold War called for men and women to adhere to strict gender and sexual roles that demanded them to conform to

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[1] "Coming Out," *GLTBQ and Encyclopedia of Gay, Lesbian, Transgender, Bisexual and Queer Culture*, http://www.glbtq.com/social-sciences/coming_out_ssh.html (accessed February 26, 2013). The term came into the academic community in the 1950s when Dr. Evelyn Hooker used it to refer to homosexuals publicly acknowledging their homosexuality in bars. Hooker stresses that coming meant creating a new world of communal solidarity. In the 1970s coming out meant, stepping away from the closet of secrecy and self-hatred. For the magazine coming out meant creating a community and publicly exposing their sexual nature.

[2] C. Todd White, *Pre Gay L.A.: A Social History of the Movement for Homosexual Rights* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 33.

[3] Ibid, 38.

[4] Ibid, 40.

heterosexual norms in order to combat the threat of communism.[5] Policy dictated that men and women exhibit proper sexual desires and even climaxes. These requirements aimed at creating strong nuclear families that would withstand the infiltration of Russian spies. In this context, the homosexual became a symbol of national weakness that needed to either assimilate or stay "in the closet." Historians who wrote on 1950s homosexual movements combine it with the story of Stonewall, overlooking the homosexual rebels of the time. John D' Emilio's ground breaking work credits the Mattachine and Daughters of Bilitis for laying the groundwork for the Stonewall Riots.[6] However, D' Emilio describes them as retreating back to respectability as they promoted a conservative view of homosexuals within society. Lillian Faderman's and Stuart Timmons focus on a broader twentieth century homosexual history in Los Angeles, showing it as enriched by the influx of new migrating people.[7] Lesbian history follows the same method, focusing on the end product by examining past social networks that enabled the creation a modern female homosexual identity.[8] None of these historians analyze the work produced by 1950s homosexual organizations. Those that touch on them emphasize their creators Harry Hay and Hal Call of the Mattachine.

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[5] Carolyn Lewis, *Prescription for Heterosexuality: Sexual Citizenship in the Cold War Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

[6] John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

[7] Lillian Faderman and Stuart Timmons, *Gay L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics, and Lipstick Lesbians* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).

[8] Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (Penguin Group: New York, 1991); Elizabeth Lapovsky- Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis, *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community* (Penguin Group: New York, 1994).

This paper looks at the fiction produced by *ONE Magazine*, moving away from current scholarship to reveal how the magazine exposed homosexual insecurities and to suggest that "coming out" would eradicate their misfortunes. Scholars who focus on homosexual fiction during the Cold War look at "pulp fiction," which was a subgenre of popular sexual fictional stories. Pulp fiction was a sleazy cheap form of entertainment that mocked the repressive sexual environment of the 1950s. Academics who collect these works define them as revolutionary: breaking the mold from stories emphasizing homosexual loneliness.[9] These academics bypass the fiction produced by homosexual magazines of the 1950s, especially *ONE*. Unlike other magazines at the time, *The Mattachine Review* and *The Latter*, *ONE Magazine* did not advocate for homosexuals to blend in but to stand out and become active agents for equal rights. *ONE Magazine* emphasized "coming out" as a stepping-stone to attain equality. The magazine uncovered all the negative experiences homosexuals suffered as a consequence of secrecy and aimed at attaining equal rights and respect, rather than momentary sexual defiance.

ONE's fiction illuminates the psyche of 1950s homosexuals that wanted to live in the open. Historians largely overlook the work produced by equal rights groups, like *ONE*, and the non-sexual agency homosexuals they exercised. Choosing to ignore how this work reiterated the stereotypes of homosexuals being ruled by their sexual desires. Analyzing the fiction produced by *ONE* highlights the ways homosexuals created their own literate communities and voiced personal desires to come out from the shadows. The fiction's diversity

[9] Michael Bronski, *Pulp Fiction: Uncovering the Golden Age of Gay Male Pulps* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2002); Katherine V. Forrest, *Lesbian Pulp Fiction: The Sexually Intrepid World of Lesbian Paperback Novels 1950-1965* (San Francisco: Cleis Press, 2005); Christopher Nealon, *Foundlings: Lesbian and Gay Historical Emotion Before Stonewall* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); Elizabeth Wheeler, *Uncontained: Urban Fiction in Postwar America. Rutgers* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001).

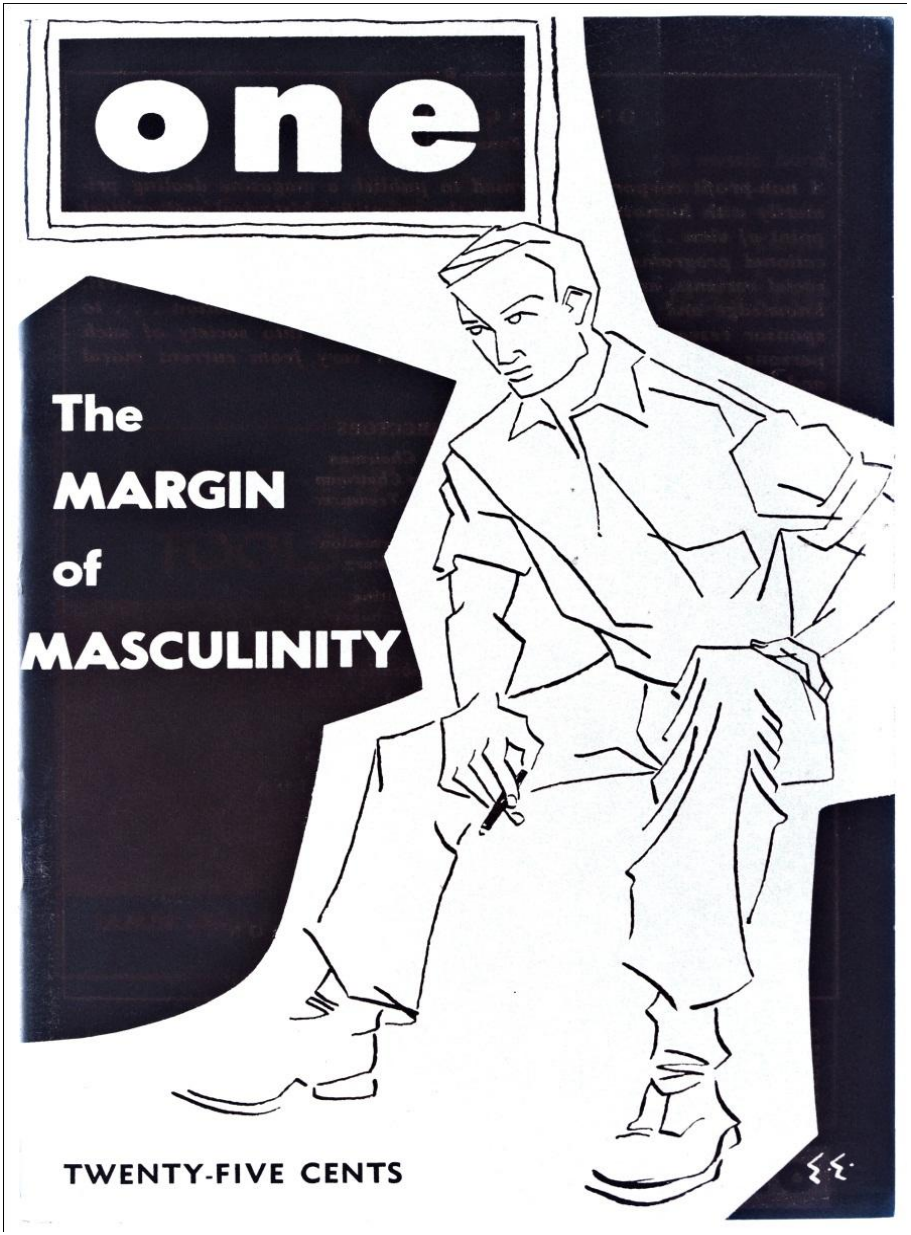


Figure 1. Cover of a monthly issue of *ONE Magazine.*

demonstrates the different ways homosexuals viewed the problems plaguing their communities and the possible solutions to eradicate them. *ONE Magazine* from 1953-1955 observed that coming out would aid homosexual's fight against government and societal persecution. It promoted its message by emphasizing the evils haunting homosexuals: entrapment, family rejection, secrecy, and promiscuity. In doing so, the magazine wanted readers to know that their current lives offered them nothing, while coming out offered them a chance to have an open future.

Entrapment

Contradiction defined the 1950s as Americans tore themselves between conformity and dissention. The media portrayed men abiding to specific gender roles such as father, son, soldier or a disgruntled cop or detective against male domestication. The affirmation of masculinity held these opposing roles together.[10] However, the public viewed masculinity as tenuous, given that not all Americans complied with the nation's notions of maleness. Media polarized the roles of women as it represented them either complying with domestic roles of mother and daughter or rebelling as a possible lesbian-communist infiltrators willing to use their feminine wiles to seduce loyal Americans.[11] Society viewed female and male homosexuality as the antithesis of a patriotic America during the 1950s. To control this perceived destructive sexual behavior, government and local law officials entrapped homosexuals by raiding cruising sites and baiting them. Labeled as outcasts and dangers to society, homosexuals reacted to this environment in a number of ways. Equal rights organizations such as the Mattachine and the Daughters of Bilitis tried to create a

[10] Robert J. Corber, *Homosexuality in Cold War America: Resistance and the Crisis of Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

[11] Tricia Jenkins, "James Bond's 'Pussy' and Anglo-American Cold War Sexuality," *The Journal of American Culture* 28, no. 3 (2005).

homogenous homosexual society accepted by mainstream society.[12] Gore Vidal, Tennessee Williams, and James Baldwin wrote fiction aimed at countering government subjectivities towards homosexuals and labeled their written work as political.[13] Following their lead, the editors of *ONE Magazine* created a voice that was revolutionary, defying, and political. Moreover, they did not stray away from injustices and perceived police and government entrapments as a declaration of war against homosexual men.

In Los Angeles, the home city of *ONE*, government entities labeled homosexuals as moral polluters. Turbulent times befell 1930s Los Angeles as a political conflict between the city's Mayor Frank Shaw and reformer Clifford Clinton tore at the moral and political fabric of the city. Clinton accused the mayor of corruption and communism, and attempted to depose him.[14] In an effort to combat Clinton's negative portrayal of him, Shaw started a war against homosexuals, especially "queens"- cross-dressing performers. Because Angelenos saw a link between sexual perversion and communism, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) raided homosexual hangouts such as nightclubs, bars, and cruising areas in an effort to control both.[15] This war lasted into the 1950s as the LAPD continued to perceive homosexuals as a moral and political threat. California law mandated a sentence of five years for perpetrators of oral sex, and ten for sodomizers. In 1949, Governor Earl Warren finalized a law that labeled any arrested homosexual as a sexual psychopath. Those who violated this law were forced to spend their lives in a hospital for the criminally insane.[16] Within this sexually oppressive milieu, *ONE* advocated that entrapment could not condemn the sexual nature of men and women, as Mother Nature herself dictated it.

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[12] Corber, 19.
[13] Ibid., 3.
[14] Daniel Hurewitz, *Bohemian Los Angeles and the Making of Modern Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).
[15] Ibid., 128.
[16] Ibid., 236.

ONE illustrated a dim picture of the tribulations homosexuals had to face from the federal and state government. Entrapment was an overt form of persecution as state and federal government reinforced the villainizing of homosexuals. The magazine's short stories argued that the LAPD entrapped homosexuals for profit and prejudice. Sam Kidd tells the story of a cop who dressed in tight black jeans and a leather jacket to lure his male victims into a trap and arrest them, while also turning a profit for each arrest.[17] The young officer entices young and old men through his appearance and convinces them, reluctantly, to follow him to his car for an innocent chat. The chat itself is never portrayed as sexual in nature nor their interaction as deviant. However, after a few minutes of conversation, the men are immediately arrested.[18] The officer repeats the routine every night to meet his quota arguing that "a poor underpaid cop's gotta make his living."[19] The story does not explicitly describe how the officer makes money from the arrests but Kidd infers that the officer struck a deal with the bonds men, as indicated by the cop entering the bonds office to collect his share.[20] For *ONE*, greed drives entrapment as a cop seductively captures unsuspecting men into a web of corruption. Mike Schwartz also portrays a policeman obsessed with a male homosexual couple whose supposedly criminal lifestyle derives from their sexual nature.[21] The officer, a newcomer to the force, lags behind the rest of his class. As he contemplates his ill fortune on his way home he spots a homosexual couple carrying groceries. Watching them, he concludes that by stalking them and waiting for them to commit a crime, he "would stand a good chance of getting back in favor and maybe even get a promotion."[22] For weeks the officer waits for that fateful weekend when they

[17] Sam Kidd, "Anyway They Asked for It," *ONE Magazine*, January 1954, 11-12.
[18] Ibid., 11.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid., 12.
[21] Mike Shwartz, "The Voice in the Vase," *ONE Magazine*, December 1953, 21-24.
[22] Ibid., 22.

would throw a "gay" party showing their deviant nature. However, the officer waits in vain as nothing happens, feeling like the couple jerked him around and made fun of him on purpose. At the end of the story, the officer, determined to attain an incriminating picture, surprises the couple while they clean their home. When the officer suddenly arrives at their home, the couple encounters an old hidden magical vase in their closet. In a panic, they make a wish to become women and the officer is left dumbfounded and thwarted. Schwartz's story argues that police persecution emerged from prejudices rather than fact. The police officer expected the couple to commit criminal acts due to their sexual nature, however, as the author illustrates, entrapment was a gendered business. Homosexual men became viewed as more criminal due to the Cold War crisis over masculinity.[23]

ONE contested that laws did not have the authority to stop one's sexual nature. For the magazine, nature predicated sexuality. However, government institutions and society as a whole divorced homosexual relations from love and attacked these relationships for their sexual acts.[24] Although the nation policed sexual acts, a poem by *ONE* contributor, WKN, argued that laws cannot control human nature, and eloquently stated that, "you may forbid what you / consider wrong / and threaten me with jail / the laws of church and state are strong…The image of desire is part of me / Your laws cannot remake it."[25] Concluding that laws cannot eradicate homosexual desire, as it is a part of them, the poem highlights that sexual desire is innate. However, other poems and works glorified homosexual love rather than desire. For *ONE,* in its fictional work, sex and love are not separate from each other. Rather it is the emotion that

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[23] K.A. Courdileone, *Manhood and American Politics: Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

[24] Margot Canaday, *The Straight States: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). Canaday explores the U.S. government's changing definition of deviancy. In the latter half of the book discusses how the GI Bill discriminated against men by refusing government benefits to those discharged from the military committing sodomy.

[25] WKN, "Dissent," *ONE Magazine*, August 1953, 14.

sanctifies the sexual act. Infused with such noble emotions, homosexuals have a virtue "as pure as grace."[26] The poem condemned the punishment of homosexuals explaining that they cannot control their sexual desires. They also underline the magazine's view of homosexuality as variation of human sexuality. With this view, the magazine aimed at freeing homosexuality from guilt and shame.

Family Disapproval

Homosexuals did not only have to fight government persecution, they also had to confront family disapproval. Contemporary psychological articles by Ritch C. Savin-Williams, Eric M. Dube, and Tracis L. Hammelman examine family rejection of homosexual children.[27] Williams and Dube analyze how parents today feel a sense of loss and shame when their children come out to them. Hammelman, on the other hand, looks at the negative effects on teenagers. His article states that many youths contemplate suicide, engage in substance abuse, and receive emotional and physical abuse from their families as a result of revealing their sexual orientation. From these contemporary psychology articles, one can extrapolate that coming out in the 1950s could emotionally and psychologically devastate homosexuals.[28] *ONE*'s discussion of family rejection demonstrated how societal expectations bound homosexuals. Blood bonds commanded homosexuals to stay in the closet as they feared disappointing and/or losing their families.

The theme of family disapproval in *ONE*'s fiction highlights the inner conflict homosexuals felt, as family represented a source of both acceptance and repression. George Matthewson's poem revealed two central themes of family

[26] "Hamlet Act 1, Sec IV," *ONE Magazine*, July 1953, 23.

[27] Rith C. Savin-Williams and Eric M Dube, "Parental Reactions to Their Child's Disclosure of a Gay/Lesbian Identity," *Family Relations* 47, no. 1 (1998): 7-13.

[28] Courdileone, xi.

disapproval: frustration and lament.[29] Matthewson viewed "man" delusional as he believes that he is free. He described modern man standing "proud, perplexed and fraught with what he's got is now enslaved by cultural wishes and gripes as he wipes the family dishes."[30] Americans in the 1950s witnessed many cultural and technological changes that made it seem like they had achieved a golden era with infinite possibilities. However within these infinite possibilities, man still conformed to the prescribed heterosexual roles of husband, father, and son. The perceived antithesis of all these male roles was the homosexual, expected to follow cultural expectations and give into their family's wishes regardless of sexuality. In trying to maintain familial ties, homosexuals felt torn between two spheres: the open homosexual community and family. Rick Davis tells the story of a boy who visits his Uncle Richie and "roommate," Uncle Jay, in Washington D.C.[31] The nephew had a hard time understanding why the two men slept together in the same bedroom and why he had to refer to Mr. Leather as "Uncle Jay." He liked how both uncles took him to baseball games, diners, and local attractions like the Smithsonian. When it was time for the boy to go back home, Uncle Richie instructed him "not [to] tell [his] Mother and Dad about him and Uncle Jay living together and maybe [he] could come back to Washington to see them next year if [he] didn't."[32] However, the boy fails to grasp the gravity of this request and the reader realizes that if the family found out about Uncle Richie's lifestyle, the family would sever connections. From a slip of the tongue, the boy told his parents about the two uncles. Outraged, the dad asked the boy to tell him everything that happened during his visit and then forbade him from ever visiting Uncle Richie again. The confused boy asked why but his dad evaded the question by instructing

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[29] George Matthewson, "In Freedom's Trap," *ONE Magazine*, June 1955, 13.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Rick Davis, "The Summer I Was Twelve," *ONE Magazine*, July, 1955, 8-13.

[32] Ibid., 13.

him "someday he would understand."[33] Perplexed about his father's reaction and his accusation to his mother that her brother was a "homo," he looked up the word and found that it meant "man." He reasoned that, indeed, his uncle was a man. The story demonstrates that in order to keep their familial ties, homosexuals repressed themselves in front of their family. Illuminating their true identities terrified homosexual readers of *ONE Magazine* as they viewed their families as a tether to the same mainstream society that rejected them.

Family rejection came in two forms, disgust and willful ignorance. Disgust was the most overt form of condemnation as homosexuals who received disgusted reactions about their sexuality felt the need to choose between their family and identity. John Paul Tegner portrays a young man whose father dominated his life.[34] For every "odd" behavior (not playing sports, reading, not being social) his father reprimanded him, demanding, "What do you intend to make of yourself?"[35] The community in the young man's hometown of Hintonville reflects the same ideals as his father. In his teens, the boy found himself isolated from society until he met a traveling salesman, Fred Zimmerman. He opened up to the young man about his true nature and became a symbol of freedom. When the protagonists's father finds out about this developing friendship he bellowed that his son "was a filthy degenerate, not fit to associate with decent people" and that he "could leave [the] house the first thing in the morning. [He] was no son of his, and never wanted to see [his] face again."[36] The young man leaves home and travels to New York, where he meets Larry Framingham, his life partner. After many years he goes back home for his father's funeral where he learns his father's secret that he, too, had a homosexual past. In this story, the father overtly rejected the young man due to his own personal paranoia and self-hatred. Even though this story is dramatic, homosexual men also dealt with other types of rejection, such as their

[33] Ibid.
[34] John Paul Tegner, "The Key," *ONE Magazine*, June 1955, 12-16.
[35] Ibid., 13.
[36] Ibid., 15.

mothers's willful ignorance of their sexual orientation. Two stories illustrate that mothers turned a blind eye to their son's "friends." In the first story, the mother tells her friend Lillie about Walter, a friend of her son, George. She discussed how Walter would call George and stay the night. The mother confided in her friend that their friendship ended badly and she did not understand why he "broke down and shut himself up in his room."[37] In the second story, a mother is uneasy over her son's "friend," Mr. Ballerick.[38] The mother badgered her son about his "friend" who seemed to have a strange demeanor and was overly close to her son. Her son tried to avoid these questions, but the pressure eventually pushes him to run away with his friends. Both men in these stories subtly show their mothers their true nature, but at the same time they adhere to their mothers' delusions.

Family bonds chained homosexuals to secrecy as many tried to maintain their prescribed role as son or daughter. *ONE Magazine* shows how these roles suffocated them and prevented them from expressing their true identity. Yet, at the same time, it shows they represented tenuous tethers to mainstream society and acceptance. Rejected by government institutions and family members, homosexuals had to contest with a vain segment of the gay community that valued sexual gratification over self-development. The gay community, built in bars, reinforced the stereotypes that homophiles fought against to attain social recognition.[39]

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[37] John Paul Tegner, "Four o'Clock Tea," *ONE Magazine*, August 1955, 7-9.

[38] J. Lorna Strayer, "The Relative Interlude," *ONE Magazine*, December 1954, 15-17.

[39] Homophile is a desexualized term to homosexuals. There were some people such as Harry Hay and Dorr W. Legg who preferred this term over "homosexual." However, the magazine used both terms interchangeably.

Flaws within the Gay Community

ONE argued that the current "gay" community offered homosexuals a home built on sensual pleasure and not self-fulfillment. Gay bars posed the biggest threat, as they promoted inversion and sexual gratification, rather than monogamy and respectability:

> One tragedy of the bars wasteland is to see creative genius be made impotent. Bars are nice, sometimes, for diversion: but, they do not have the prerequisites of a home. They may be, for some, better than no home at all, but for me they are just slight removed from Hell. I would like to see a better meeting place for those who wish more from life than a nightmare of whiskey and sex, brutality and vanity, self-pity and despair.[40]

From the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, homosexual men and women used bars as a vehicle to express their sexual desires.[41] For *ONE Magazine*, identities built upon sexual gratification were not tangible and, as historian George Chauncey points out, men who participated in the gay community did not necessarily view themselves as homosexuals, but participated out of lust.[42] *ONE Magazine* encouraged men to build a concrete sexual identity that could not be discarded once one stopped having same sex sexual relations. To do so, the magazine underlined several problems plaguing the gay community – secrecy, promiscuity, and the bar community. *ONE* illustrated all these anxieties and highlighted the challenges homosexuals faced.

Lack of community made loyalty hard to achieve among homosexual couples, *ONE* addressed this problem viewing bars

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[40] Sten Russel, "Letter to a Newcomer," *ONE Magazine*, February 1954, 18-19.

[41] George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994).

[42] Ibid.

as a particular problem of the gay community. To *ONE*, these commercial institutions encouraged one night stands and infidelity. R.L.B. describes coming home in the early morning from a bar where "all night the gay voices-shrill laughter [and] music from a nightmare."[43] *ONE* depicted one night stands as empty actions that made homosexuals feel lonelier than before. Coming home from such a sexual encounter "is like sinking, through the dark, cold channel of madness and melancholy."[44] Bar culture facilitated these types of love affairs as men and women participated in them to satisfy their sexual desires.[45] For *ONE*, bars and one night stands fed each other as both prevented homosexuals from creating meaningful relationships and self-identities. During World War II, many port cities experienced men in the armed forces exploring their same sex desires. *ONE* contributors extended these experiences through Forrest Anderson's poem "Tonight and Tomorrow."[46] Sailors once on land "the brimming gland conjures always the hope of finding our true 'other half'."[47] Many homosexual experiences during WWII revolved around anonymous sexual encounters. For *ONE* this continued in the 1950s, preventing homosexuals from building a sexual identity outside of sensual gratification. Anderson's poem underlines the beginnings of bar culture and promiscuity. However, bar culture and promiscuity were not the only factors that restricted homosexuals; a life of secrecy also hindered them.

Homosexuals in the 1950s lived a life of secrecy as American's signaled them as immoral beings and needed to stay away from "normal" people. Homosexuals lived – and to some extent still live – on the margins of mainstream society. Another poem illustrates how homosexuals met at night to "interact" with

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[43] R.L.B., "6:45am," *ONE Magazine*, November 1955, 23.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Kennedy and Davis.
[46] Allan Berube, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Forrest Anderson, "Tonight and Tomorrow," *ONE Magazine*, March 1955, 7.
[47] Ibid.

each other.[48] Instability plagued the gay community, as bars frequently moved due to police suspicion. Homosexuals met in "some strange door" that they "borrowed for the moment," under the guise of night in order to have human contact from those like them.[49] Existing away from mainstream society, they lived on the outside looking in from their "black exalted height / [looking] down, unknown / and see the shivering curtains of your bright windows move."[50] According to *ONE Magazine*, homosexuals, as the black sheep in the family, homosexuals lived secret lives of conformity. Living on the outskirts of society they "kiss someone else's spouse," while heterosexuals "are safe in little white cottages / built [on] little white lies and / tender pink pretenses."[51] In its sarcastic tone the poem states that homosexuals "are safe (if you are smart) / behind the picket fence of yeses."[52] A life of secrecy, according to *ONE*, limited homosexuals from understanding themselves and creating a community.

Bar community, promiscuity, and secrecy affected homosexual men and women equally. However, mostly men voiced the discontent of these paramours, especially "one night stands." Though *ONE* prided itself on being the voice for both homosexual men and women, its fiction work demonstrated two drastically gendered lived experiences. The fiction portrayed homosexual men self-destructing from promiscuity, while women lived through tragic love affairs as they could not express their desires.

Gendered Experiences

The fictional stories of *ONE Magazine* highlighted the gendered experiences of homosexual men and women. Stories about men

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[48] Alden Kirby, "The Length of Match," *ONE Magazine*, November 1954, 19.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Alden Kirby, "Three Poems," *ONE Magazine*, January 1955, 6-7.
[51] Gabrielle Ganelle, "O…Timid Creed," *ONE Magazine*, April 1955, 36.
[52] Ibid.

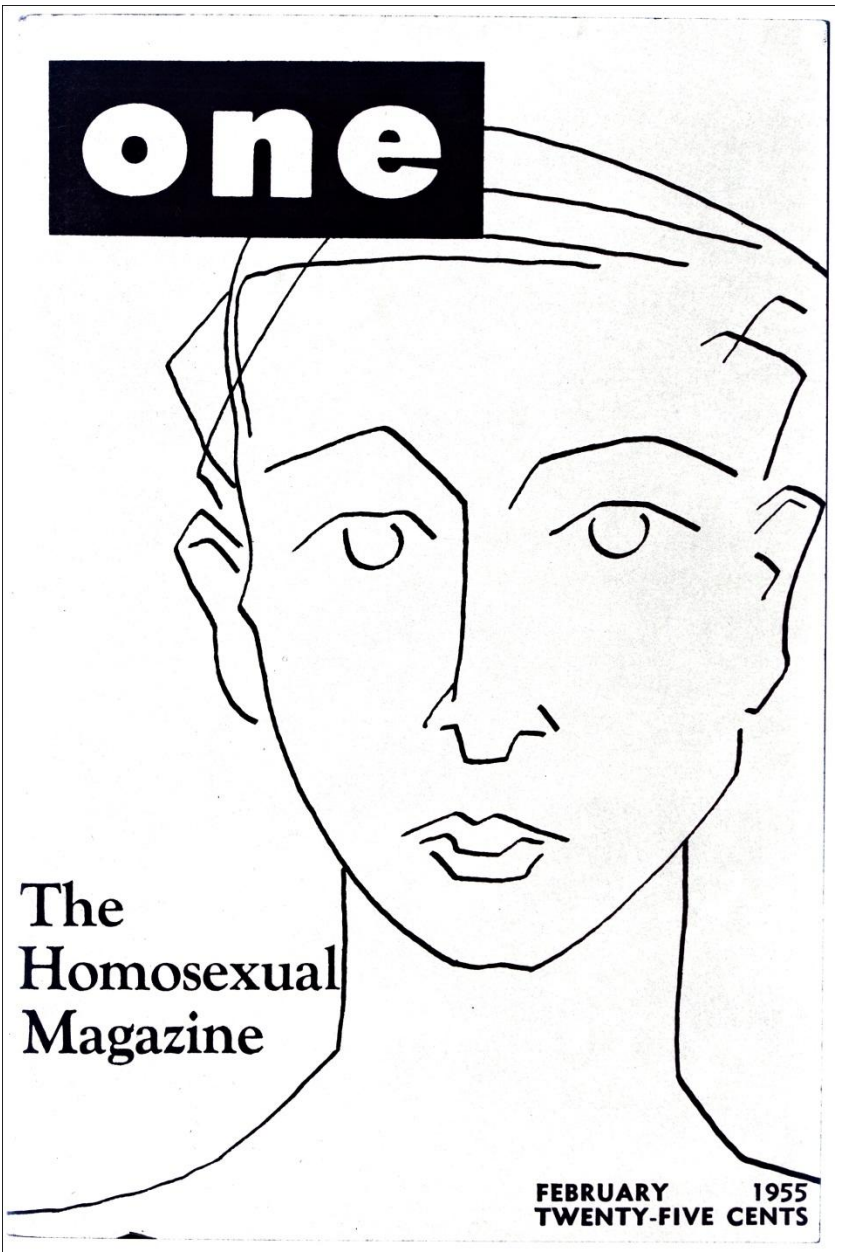


Figure 2. February 1955 cover of *ONE Magazine.*

aimed to teach "proper" etiquette for romantic relationships. The literature containing women protagonists conveyed the pain of unrequited love as women did not have the vocabulary to express their desires. *ONE*'s gendered fiction drastically differs from a popular subgenre of the time known as pulp fiction. Compiled by Michael Bronski and Katherine V. Forrest, the anthologies of popular pulp fiction from the mid-1950s to 1960s demonstrate the agency of homosexual men and women as they engaged in sexual pleasures despite a repressive environment.[53] In addition, Christopher Nealon and Elizabeth A. Wheeler label pulp fiction as a form of urban defiance.[54] Unlike these contemporary academics, *ONE Magazine* did not promote this source of agency. Instead, to eradicate societal constraints, the magazine took it upon itself to teach homosexual men socially acceptable relationship etiquette and exposed the tragic lives of lesbians.

ONE viewed male promiscuity as a hindrance to self-growth and aimed to correct this vice by teaching men to adopt the ideals of Plato. The magazine reprinted works of Plato as a means to reach back to the past and validate current homosexual existences. In addition, *ONE* sought to teach men to value their mind over their body. Plato advocated that homosexual love should better the lovers intellectually, rather than satisfy them carnally. *ONE*'s reprinting of the series, "The Symposium," defined their view of love and what it meant to be a good man through ancient philosophy. Five lengthy articles composed this reprint and set the tone for Plato's ideal love through his protagonist, Socrates. In the fourth installment of the series, Diotima described procreation as the ultimate form of love.[55] Procreation could be both physical and spiritual. Diotima believed good love to spring up from beauty as men "are in a state of pregnancy, both spiritual and physical."[56] For women, "procreation is the nearest thing to perpetuity and immortality"

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[53] Bronski; Forrest.
[54] Nealon; Wheeler.
[55] "The Symposium by Plato," trans. W. Hamilton, *ONE Magazine*, October 1955, 16-18.
[56] Ibid., 17.

and to the "perpetual possession of the good."[57] In the fifth installment, Socrates finds this type of love worthy of a woman's nature, "whose creative instincts is physical… and show their love this way."[58] Socrates connected physicality and procreation worthy of a woman's mentality but unworthy of men. Their ultimate form of love comes from the meeting of the minds which immortalizes man.[59] In addition, to achieve this ideal love, men could not fall in love with youths. This type of love idealized physical beauty and, due to this, eventually became "a mass of perishable rubble."[60] Physical beauty and procreation form a tenuous and vain love that does not value the human being. *ONE* exemplified this philosophy, showing stories where men seeking physical satisfaction get punished.[61] In the first story, the main character's journey for pornography of young, beautiful men becomes a paranoid obsession as he hides from the possible entrapment scams and falls into sexual gratification. The story portrayed him hiding behind the shadows and constantly running to avoid getting caught. The second story showed an old man complaining that his young lover left him after he spent a lot of money on him. In his frustration, he ends up dead from an accidental overdose. The young lover ends up with all his possessions which the youth prized over the old man's life. With these stories, *ONE* warns homosexuals that idealizing the beauty of youth brings disaster and leads men to empty lives.

Meanwhile, the Lesbian fiction in *ONE* portrayed women living heterosexual lives because of unrequited love. The stories follow a formulaic format where women, during their college years, fall in love with other women but retreat into the heterosexual world as they are unwilling to accept their sexuality. *ONE* showed how these women lived tormented lives

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[57] Ibid., 18.
[58] Ibid., 16-17.
[59] Ibid., 17.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Hartsell Young, "Death in A Royal Family," *ONE Magazine*, December 1954, 11-13; James Bass, "Death in a Royal Family," *ONE Magazine*, December 1953, 10-13.

as they constantly thought about their past and wished they could have broken free from their fears.[62] These stories resembled each other as each of the female protagonists experienced a deep love towards their best friend.[63] The stories described the love felt by these women as pure, yet, condemned by society as their love meant that "there was something wrong with you."[64] Fear connected these fictional women as they ran away from their "true love," because they did not want to face the reality of their attraction. Later in their lives, after they retreated back into heterosexuality and married men, these women tried to rekindle their love affairs. However, fear takes over once again as they imagine, "if I were a man. I would marry you and take you with me."[65] These stories follow a Romeo and Juliet formula where the couple's love defies society. Nevertheless, their relationships eventually deteriorated due to their inability to step into the light to defend their relationship. *ONE*'s fiction contradicted the sexualized stories of pulp fiction and the lesbian social networks of that time period as historians Lillian Faderman, Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy, and Madeline D. Davis describe.[66] These academics demonstrate that lesbians created bar communities that revolved around "butch" and "femme" personas. These guises expressed the sexual desires of these women and contrasted the lonely image *ONE* portrayed of lesbians. The magazine showed the loneliness and despair of these relationships as it aimed to demonstrate that lesbians, like homosexual men, needed to create an inclusive community away from bars. Although *ONE*'s lesbian stories repeated the same formulaic story, they highlighted the continued sense of

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[62] All Lesbian stories analyzed in *ONE Magazine* have a common theme, though they are not presented here.

[63] Jody Stowell, "The Gateway," *ONE Magazine*, December 1954, 5-10; Georgiana Blaker, "Camouflage," *ONE Magazine*, March 1955, 35-38; Jody Shotwell, "The Ironing," *ONE Magazine*, September 1955, 23-25.

[64] Blaker, 36.

[65] Stowell, 10.

[66] Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilights Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991); Kennedy and Davis.

loneliness felt by these women no matter the existence of a hidden sexual world.

Occasionally, *ONE*'s portrayal of homosexual men and women exaggerated their lived experiences. However, in this exaggeration, the magazine tried to convey the real issues that editors and authors believed hindered the formation of a cohesive community. *ONE*'s fiction portrayed many of the challenges homosexuals faced. Its solution, however, would make many homosexuals of the 1950s uncomfortable.

ONE Magazine's Solution: Coming Out

ONE's fiction urged its readers to take pride in their sexual orientation. This message set the magazine apart from later homosexual magazines such as *The Mattachine Review* and *The Latter*, which promoted assimilation.[67] To have an openly homosexual life amidst political persecution required courage and encouraged homosexuals and lesbians to live among mainstream society, not in its margins. In its first issue, *ONE* published a poem that conveyed their desire to celebrate and recognize same sex love like the great heterosexual love affairs.[68] To achieve recognition, homosexuals needed to take pride in their sexual orientation, so that they may share in the "great love songs of the world."[69] This pride would elevate their love to that of Romeo and Juliette, Tristan and Isolde, and Abelard and Heloise. Sexual pride brought same sex love out from the shadows, as they proclaimed to the world "We love!"[70] The poem asked homophiles to stand tall and unashamed by celebrating their romantic entanglements and not their sexual urges. The poem set the tone for the values *ONE Magazine* promoted – sentiment over sensuality. Geraldine Jackson's untitled poem in March 1953 further exemplified this ideal as it lamented, "shall our loves have no memorial/shall they perish as

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[67] Corber.
[68] Helen Ito, "Proud and Unashamed," *ONE Magazine*, January 1953, 6.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.

though they had never been."[71] For homosexual love to achieve recognition in the annals of human history, homosexuals had to change the laws and "force respect for [a] love that's honest loving."[72] This underlined the sentiment of coming out, to showcase homosexual relationships. First, however, homosexuals had to engage in respectable relationships. The magazine encouraged homosexuals to live in the open and required them to abide by the value of sentiment over physical pleasure. Historian John D' Emilio defined the 1950s homosexual organization as going back to respectability.[73] *ONE*'s fiction, however, did not divorce sentiment from sexuality. It used both synonymously as the magazine argued sentiment sanctified sexual desire.

According to *ONE*, love cleansed homosexuals from their sense of shame and enabled them to embrace their sexuality. The magazine glorified relationships based on love. This sentiment "renewed / endowed with light" and aided individuals to find their rightful place.[74] Love would transform the homosexual into a "noble affliction," filling their hearts with "love and adoration for a fellow man/ too great to be understood by any but a chosen few."[75] This sentiment became the vehicle through which homophiles redefined their identities from sexually-based to admirable where same sex love "will be remembered with deep respect/long after the affliction which made it possible/ has been forgotten."[76] With homosexuality equated to love, homosexuals could embrace their sexuality. In this context, homophiles could now celebrate their existence, even though they "were born with a shroud/ the in-between/the twilight world."[77] Although, they did not know the "why" behind their nature, love redeemed and enabled them to create connections amidst the heterosexual chaos. "A Glimpse,"

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[71] Geraldine Jackson, "[Untitled]," *ONE Magazine*, March 1953, 6.
[72] Ibid.
[73] D'Emilio.
[74] Norma Ramsey, "Night," *ONE Magazine*, April 1955, 41.
[75] "My Noble Affliction," *ONE Magazine*, October 1955, 10.
[76] Ibid.
[77] "My Noble Affliction," 10.

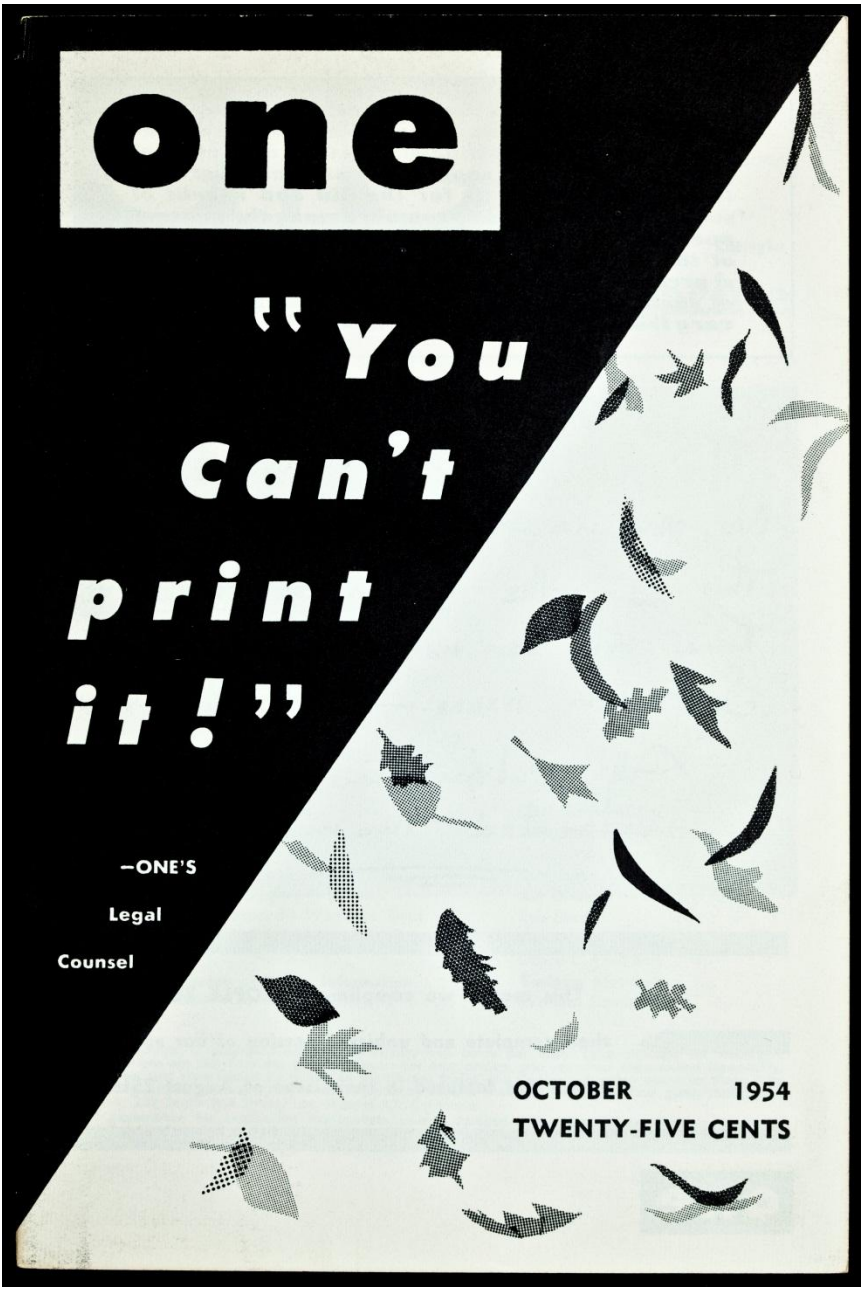


Figure 3. October 1954 cover of *ONE Magazine*.

depicted two lovers meeting among a heterosexual crowd in a bar. Their love cloaks them from being viewed as depraved individuals and accepted as part of the heterosexual romance continuum. The couple hold hands and are "content, happy in being together, speaking little, perhaps not a word."[78] The poem portrayed the sentimental couple as the stable force amongst bar commotion. Also, they are so in tune with one another that they do not need to say a word to communicate their feelings. Since *ONE* described respectability as stemming from the noble emotion, love, homosexuals became agents of their own salvation.

To affirm one's sexuality meant celebrating the emotional attachments between two human beings rather than their sexual attraction. This also meant passionately rejecting the role of "we tender secret ones."[79] Rage set the tone for a poem as the poet Saul K. rejected the tragic life that accompanied being a homosexual.[80] Saul K. recognized that despite the fact that homosexuals lived painful experiences, "agony must be given meaning by the agonized."[81] If they did not, homosexuals had to hide and "kiss in dark doorways/pulling down the shades" and feel like strangers in their country. [82] Individually, homosexuals could evolve into an army "crowned with confidence, rein invisible."[83] By fighting, homophiles created their own strongholds against injustice. *ONE* aimed at creating a solid foundation "out of rock and granite/where no waves can/wash it over/no wind blow it to dust."[84] Although humans have feeble hands, they must build a base for equality and recognition. The contributors of *ONE* wanted homosexuals to

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[78] Ibid.
[79] Saul K., "Blanked-Off Verse," *ONE Magazine*, May 1953, 20-21.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid, 20.
[82] Geraldine Jackson, "[Untitled]," *ONE Magazine*, March 1953, 6.
[83] John Myron Patrick, "The Temporary Tiger," *ONE Magazine*, November 1955, 6.
[84] Noel H Bustard, "I Built a Castle," *ONE Magazine*, February 1954, 23.

take a stand and reject tragic lamentations. Their pain must inspire them to take charge over their own salvation.

ONE imagined the act of "coming out" as a way to sooth the souls of homosexuals and allow them to know the self. The magazines's portrayal of self-acceptance transformed sexual desire to a sexual identity. *ONE*'s militancy connected identity and sexuality, laying the groundwork for Stonewall. For example, one short story portrayed a young man named Kenneth Hibben, a British royal guard, facing inner turmoil as he tried to understand his sexuality.[85] He found it hard to understand the intimacy that he felt around his fellow homosexual officers and why this uneasy feeling never went away. By clinging to his girlfriend as a lifeline, Hibben tried to retreat into the confines of heterosexuality. He attempted to rationalize his conflicting emotions by piecing together fragmented memories. While guarding the royal palace, a homosexual couple stands in front of him and breaks his serious expression as Hibben smiles when one of the men refers to him as "cute."[86] In this moment, everything comes together. His defenses go down, and he realizes his true nature, as if the comment exposed an inner truth about his identity. Hibben then becomes fearless toward the punishments that the world about him would throw out.

> For that was the price of non-conformity. But he could face it, for at last those fragments of torturous thoughts, the disconnected memories, assembled themselves. They would become united, the unity of self. He would know the self and knowing, would dare to be Kenneth Hibben.[87]

Coming out enabled homosexuals to understand the self and view their sexual desires as an identity. For *ONE*, this identity set homosexuals apart from mainstream society and even equal to heterosexuals. In the picture story of "Gaylord Pedestrian,"

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[85] MKH, "Coming Out Party," *ONE Magazine*, December 1954, 18-23.
[86] Ibid., 22.
[87] Ibid., 23.

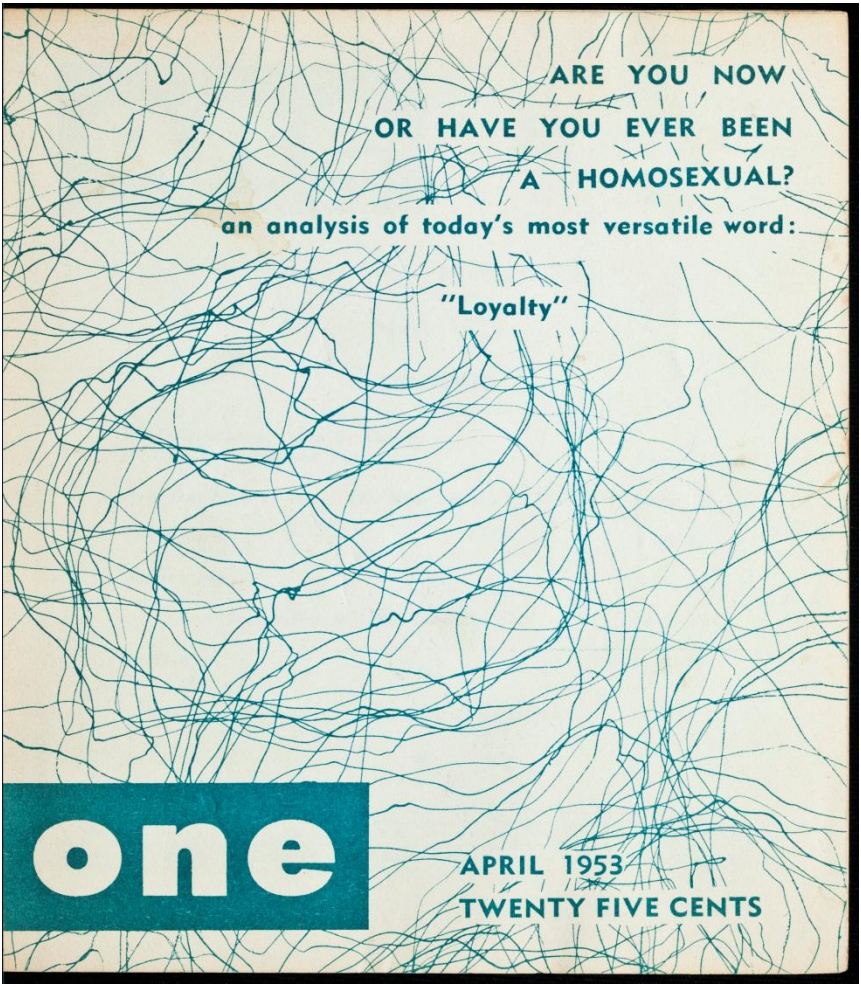


Figure 4. April 1953 cover of *ONE Magazine*.

Gaylord is different for not riding a bicycle in a bicycle-riding town.[88] The town teases him and finds him odd for his inability to ride a bike. This ridicule drives the man mad, yet, it does not lead him to conform as he starts walking on his hands. This eventually catches on and everyone in town eventually starts walking on their hands. Gaylord finds it silly and continues to ride a bicycle around town. Again, the town's people alienated him for not following everyone else. *ONE* promoted homosexuals's "coming out" as a way to stand apart from mainstream society, which even provided them an air of superiority and the courage to accept themselves.

ONE Magazine viewed coming out as a way to reclaim the lives spent in secrecy and social rejection. It meant everything for the magazine to publicly tell the world about homosexuality and defy the stereotypes placed on this group by government institutions and society. Yet, neither the fifties nor the sixties proved to be as welcoming to homosexuals as *ONE* hoped. Most homosexuals stayed "in the closet" and continued to socialize in the dark bars that hid them and their identity so well. In this contradictory environment, having a magazine like *ONE* meant having a life-line for homosexuals to know they were not alone. Even if they could not publicly embrace fellow homosexual men and women, they could at least create a community through artistic expression.

From 1952 until 1955, the fictional stories in *ONE Magazine* painted a dark picture of the troubles surrounding homosexuals. The magazine did so in order to protest the harsh conditions homosexuals faced during this time period. For them, coming out would eradicate all injustices and make their lives anew. Though coming out stayed in the imagination of the magazine's creators and contributors, *ONE*'s fiction provided another story to the history of homosexuality during the Cold War. The fiction in *ONE Magazine* offered a different lens into the psyche of homosexuals, one that wanted to break away from secrecy and live in the open.

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[88] Dale Jennings, "The Story of the Gaylord Pedestrian," *ONE Magazine*, March 1954.