

Queer again?

Power,
Politics
and Ethics

Organised by the “Queer Research Group”

Eveline Kilian | Maja Figge | Vojin Saša Vukadinovic |
Jens Borcharding | Elahe Haschemi Yekani |
Adrian de Silva | Beatrice Michaelis

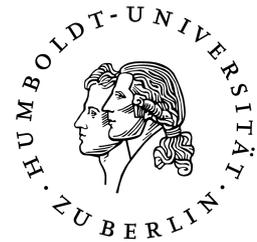


DFG



**of the PhD Research Training Group “Gender as a Category of Knowledge” and the
Department of English and American Studies**

HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITÄT ZU BERLIN



Queer Again? Power, Politics and Ethics

The concept of queer is volatile and, at times, difficult to grasp. As a result, we need a continuous review of the fields and directions of Queer Studies (as for instance, in the *Social Text* issue of 2005 with the programmatic title *What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?*). In recent debates the ethical impetus of queer criticism has been confronted and challenged by the dominance of the so-called antisocial thesis. In his 2004 study *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, Lee Edelman manoeuvred queer theory into a kind of aporia and thus deep crisis that persists to this day. Subscription to an 'ethics of futility,' as Edelman suggests, signals that the borders of ethical thinking have been reached. This prevalence of the antisocial thesis in its different manifestations reveals a pressing need to reflect anew the relationship between queer, theory, art, ethics and politics.

Taking this as a starting point for the conference, we want to take up the iterative moment that seems inherent in the concept of queer: queer is regularly in a state of crisis that needs to be made productive, and in this way it can be continuously reworked and reshaped. We want to open a space to further the debate about sexuality and gender and their multiple interwoven connections in fields of power in contemporary contexts. Consequently, the following questions will be at the centre of attention: How can queer theory be situated in current academic and activist spheres? What does the focus on interdependent relationships (of sexuality, gender, race, ethnicity, class, age, (dis)ability etc.) mean for the formation of a queer ethics? How can we rethink concepts of temporality and generation or community? And what does queer mean in different geographical and temporal contexts?

The panels will be organised along two thematic strands. The first, *Affect, Space and Temporality*, is concerned with the ethical and political potential of queer and the different political conceptions of queer that arise as a result. The second strand, *Limits and Boundary Crossings*, takes up current theoretical debates with regard to boundaries and crossings of these boundaries. Which limits and/or transgressions of these limits occur when different theoretical fields collide (e.g. queer theory and transgender theory or postcolonial theory or crip theory/disability studies)? In addition, we want to critically examine the limitations of queer and the concurrent inclusions and exclusions with regard to privileges that queer produces in specific contexts and that demand new critical/queer interventions.

Programme

Thursday, 23 September 2010	
from 15:00 h	Registration (between rooms 3038 & 3075)
16:15 h Room: 3038	Welcome
16:30 h Room: 3038	Keynote José Esteban Muñoz (New York) The Impossibility of Gay Politics and the Incalculable Sense of Queerness Commentary: Vojin Saša Vukadinović
18:00 h	Coffee Break
18:30 h KINOSAAL / Room: 1115	Film Programme "queer again? *freaky film club special" Curated by: Karin Michalski Presented by: Renate Lorenz & Karin Michalski (clipclub Berlin) & guests Films/Videos by: Sharon Hayes, High Heel Sisters, Oliver Husain, Klara Liden, Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz, Ulrike Müller, Wu Ingrid Tsang and others Host: Maja Figge
20:30 h	Reception

Programme

Friday, 24 September 2010									
09:30 h Room: 3038	Introduction Eveline Kilian								
10:00 h Room 3038	Keynote Susan Stryker (Bloomington) "Freedom's Just another Word for Nothing Left to Lose": Transgender Theory Covers Punk Rock, Alt-Country, and Queer Futurity Commentary: Adrian de Silva								
11:30 h	Coffee Break								
12:00 – 13:45 h	PANELS								
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16:30 h	Coffee Break								
17:00 – 18:30 h Room 3038	Keynote Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Washington, D.C.) The Sex Life of Stone. Queering Nonhuman Life Commentary: Beatrice Michaelis								
19:00 h	Dinner								

Programme

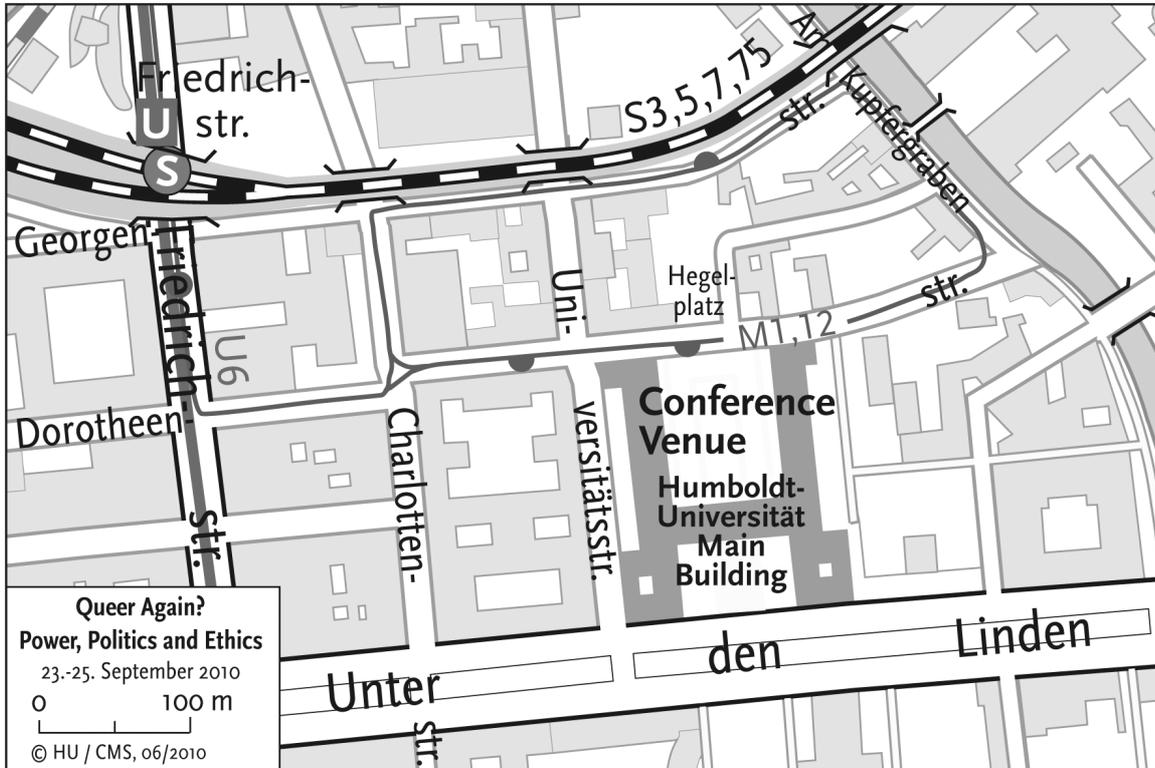
Saturday, 25 September 2010							
9:30 h Room 3038	Keynote Roderick Ferguson (Minneapolis): The Queer Ethic and the Spirit of Normativity Commentary: Elahe Haschemi Yekani						
11:00 h	Coffee Break						
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16:00 – 16:30 h	Coffee Break						

see next page!

Saturday, 25 September 2010 (continued)	
16:30 – 17:45 h	PANELS
	<p>STRAND 1: Affect, Space and Temporality <i>Kinships</i> Chair: Sabine Meyer Room 3075 </p> <p>STRAND 2: Limits and Boundary Crossings <i>Economies</i> Chair: Amy Villarejo Room 3038 </p>
	<p>Léo Perier (Paris): Theory Facing Reality: About Transgressive Relationships</p> <p>Jennifer Moos (Saarbrücken): Queer in Bed?, or: The Dialectics of Sleep</p>
	<p>Susanne Jung (Tübingen): “Gay, But Not- Gay”: Queer Visions of Sexuality and Kinship in Amy Fox’ Heights</p> <p>Kathrin Ganz and Do. Gerbig (Hamburg): Tales of Deconstructing Capitalism</p>
17:45 h	Coffee Break
18:15 h Room 3038	<p>Keynote Judith Jack Halberstam (Los Angeles): “The Killer in Me, Is the Killer in You”: Homosexuality and Fascism</p> <p>Commentary: Jens Borcharding</p>
19:45 h	<p>Closing Remarks</p> <p>Eveline Kilian</p>
20:00 h	End of Conference

Information

Location



Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Unter den Linden 6 (UL 6)

| Room 3038 |

| Room 3075 |

| Kinosaal / Room 1115|

Registration takes place between rooms 3038 and 3075.

The whole conference takes place in the mainbuilding of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin; Strand 1 will take place in room 3075, Strand 2 in room 3038. The Film Programme *queer again? *freaky film club special* on Thursday will take place in the Kinosaal, Room 1115.

The *conference office* as well as the coffee breaks are between rooms 3075 & 3038.

Public Transport

S1, S2, S5, S7, S9 (Friedrichstraße)

U6 (Friedrichstraße)

Bus 100, 147, 200, TXL (Staatsoper)

Tram M1, 12 (Am Kupfergraben)

Restaurants

Cum Laude (German/French/Mediterranean)

Universitätsstraße 4 (entrance at the North-Western corner of the university building)

Tel.: 030 2082883

Mo-Fr 8:30 to 23:00 h, Sat 12:00 to 23:00h, Sun 11:00 to 23:00 h, Sunday - Brunch 11:00-14:00 h

Via Nova (Italian)

Universitätsstraße 2-3a

Tel.: 030 20214861

Daily 9:00 to 24:00h

Café Chagall (Russian)

Georgenstraße 4 (leave through back entrance of the university building, go straight one block until you reach the trains, turn right)

Tel.: 030 2041813

Daily 9:00 to 24:00 h

12 Apostel (Italian)

Georgenstraße 2 (just right of Café Chagall)

Tel. 030 2010222

Weekdays 10:30-24:00 h, Weekends 12:00-1:00 h

Mensa/Student Restaurant/Mensa Cafeteria

At the main building in the inner courtyard, ground floor

Restaurant: Mo-Fr 11:15-14:30 h, Cafeteria: Mo-Fr 8:00-15:30 h

Email/Printing/Copying

“Copyhaus”

Corner of Georgen-/Universitätsstraße

Mo-Fr. 9:00-20:00 h

Post Office

Postamt Mitte

Georgenstr. 12

10117 Berlin

Mo-Fr 6:00 to 22:00 h, Sa and Sun 8:00 to 22:00 h

(also has an ATM-Machine)

S-Bahn/U-Bahn-Tickets and Late Shopping

Friedrichstraße Station/Bahnhof Friedrichstraße

WiFi

There are WiFi areas in all the major coffee shops (Meyerbeer, Universitätsstr. 2/3a and Starbucks, Friedrichstr. 96). Unfortunately, those are not for free and you will have to pay for your online time.

Abstracts Speakers & Keynotes in order of appearance

Thursday, 23 September 2010

José Esteban Muñoz (New York)

The Impossibility of Gay Politics and the Incalculable Sense of Queerness

Keynote

In his book *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* J. E. Muñoz argues that queerness does yet not exist. Instead he offers the proposition that queerness is an ideality or a figuration of a mode of being in the world that is not yet here. If queerness does not exist how can we have queer politics? In this presentation J. E. Muñoz takes the opportunity to revisit this question of what the relationship between queerness and politics may be. He begins by reconsidering the role of politics and its relation to the lived experience of social inequality and economic asymmetry that people who understand their sexuality as marked by sexual alterity often share.

J. E. Muñoz contends that the call for rights and the questions of value and devaluation that gets named queer politics might be more akin to a homonationalist formation that he will call "gay politics." Muñoz then considers what he sees as the inefficacy or even impossibility of these gay politics insofar as they are a politics of an ends and not a means, based on a notion of value as equivalences. But queerness, he argues, is about the incommensurable and most graspable to us as a sense rather than a politics.

To illustrate this point further J. E. Muñoz discusses a challenging and often ignored moment in the work of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. He considers a form of sharing (out) that helps us grasp the collaborative scene between Sedgwick and queer writer Gary Fisher. His focus is on her editing and afterword of Gary Fisher's posthumously published notebooks, *Gary in Your Pocket*. J. E. Muñoz looks at the erotics of racial humiliation and other pleasure giving forms of sexual debasement that both writers engage as productive sites of theorization. In this instance he wants to describe a dynamic that partially transpires under the sign of queer of color that is misread by the lens of a politics of equivalence but becomes newly accessible as a sharing (out) of a nonequivalent, incommensurable and incalculable sense of queerness.

Biographical Note

Education

Ph.D., 1994; Comparative Literature, Duke University

B.A., 1989; Comparative Literature, Sarah Lawrence College

Major Interests: Latino studies; queer theory; critical race theory; global mass cultures; performance art; film and video.

Latest Books: *Feeling Brown: Ethnicity, Affect and Performance*. Durham: Duke University Press, Forthcoming, *Cruising Utopia: The Politics and Performance of Queer Futurity*. New York: NYU Press, 2009, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Contact: jose.munoz@nyu.edu

Karin Michalski (Berlin) & Renate Lorenz (Berlin)

queer again? *freaky film club special

Film Programme

Freak figures do not allow any definition of a norm from which they deviate. They may be shown as dysfunctional or incompatible with social and economic requirements. On the other hand, they may have skills that are somehow strange and do not always get recognition but still have a certain value and may pay. They may speak without authorization to do so. A freak image may show embodiments that cannot be described in gender or ethnic categories (Radical Drag). It may be involved in Chronopolitics and produce interventions into capitalist, postcolonial and heteronormative temporalities (Transtemporal Drag). Or it may represent bodies without actually showing them (Abstract Drag). A freaky theory and production may be able to refer critically to the history of coercion and enforcement in the displaying of bodies, of 'staring' as a constitutive moment of a modern visual regime, and of practices of categorization – in knowledge production as well as in the organisation of the social. But by focusing on the emphasis that the historic usage of the term freak puts on 'strangeness' and the decisive production of 'space for difference,' these productions may as well get away from homogenization, normalisation and desexualisation of queer practices and open up for queer becomings.

Biographical Note: Karin Michalski

Karin Michalski lives and works as independent film maker, artist and curator in Berlin. She studied Film Directing- and Production at German Film and Television Academy Berlin (dfbb) as well as Journalism in Mainz and Berlin. With her films and videos such as *WORKING ON IT* (50 min., 2008, Co-Director: Sabina Baumann), *Monika M.* (15 min., 2004), *Paske und Sofia* (30 min., 2003) and *women videoletters – a second text on war and globalization* (80 min., 2004, international group video project) she has been invited to several festivals and exhibitions. Further she works as Film and Video Art curator and since 2001 in cooperation with Renate Lorenz she has been organising the queer-feminist Film and Video Art Programme series *clipclub*.

Contact: karinmichalski@yahoo.de

Biographical Note: Renate Lorenz

Renate Lorenz is an independent author and artist, mostly in the fields of Queer and Gender Art/Theory. She currently holds the position of a researcher in the field of *Cultures of Performativity* (FU Berlin) and she is designated as professor for art and research at the Academy of Art in Vienna. Since the beginning of the 1990s Renate Lorenz has been working at the intersection of visual culture, theory and politics. She is the co-editor and author of a foundational publication about art and politics in the German-speaking area, *Copyshop – Practices of Art and Counterpublic* (1993) and of many other books such as *Aufwändige Durchquerungen. Subjektivität als Sexuelle Arbeit* (Laborious Crossings, Subjectivity as Sexual Labor, 2009). Her most recent works are the conference *freaky. queer art conference* (2009, www.freaktheory.de), the film installations *N.O. Body* (2008), *Salomania* (2009) and *Contagious* (2010) as well as the exhibition *Contagieux! Rapports contre la normalité* (CAC Genf 2010), in collaboration with Pauline Boudry (www.boudry-lorenz.de). At the moment she is working on a book on queer art / theory (*a freak theory of contemporary art*).

Contact: renate@snafu.de

Friday, 24 September 2010

Susan Stryker (Bloomington)

“Freedom’s Just another Word for Nothing Left to Lose”: Transgender Theory Covers Punk Rock, Alt-Country, and Queer Futurity

Keynote

The convergence of several trends in queer critical-theoretical engagements with the political crises of the early 21st century recently has begun to compel a re-examination of the 1970s. In this talk, S. Stryker explores the relationship between queer and transgender frames of reference for addressing our contemporary crisis by means of reevaluating the cultural politics of that period. In particular, she discusses the way that punk rock has been aligned with queer politics, both in terms of affect as well as visual style and oppositional stance. In her reading, the queer valorization of punk’s “aggressive passivity” is structurally aligned with a homonormative sense of gender identity as that which must be accepted because it cannot be changed, its aggressive affect motivated by complex disidentifications with and transformations of the “melancholy and mourning” attached to this experience of gendering. In contrast, to highlight some of the productive tensions between queer and trans frames of reference, S. Stryker reads another form of American popular music of the 1970s, country rock, to suggest how transgender practices and theories can be generative of new political imaginaries (“alternative countries”) through an “active receptivity” that dissolves and mobilizes the very rigidities that give structure and direction to non-transgendered queer critique.

Biographical Note

Susan Stryker is Associate Professor of Gender Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington. She earned her Ph.D. in United States History at UC Berkeley, and has held visiting positions at Stanford University, Harvard University, University of California-Santa Cruz, Simon Fraser University, and Macquarie University. Between 1999 and 2003, she served as Executive Director of the GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco. She won an Emmy Award for her public television documentary *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton’s Cafeteria* (Frameline/ITVS, 2005), and a Lambda Literary Award for *The Transgender Studies Reader* (Routledge 2006). Her most recent book is *Transgender History* (Seal Press, 2008), and she is also the author or editor of numerous articles, journal special issues, and anthologies. Current projects include an experimental film on the cinematic career of transsexual celebrity Christine Jorgensen, and on-going research into the history of transgender community formation in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Contact: stryksus@indiana.edu

Sally Hines (Leeds)

Stirring it Up – Again: Politics of Difference in the New Millennium

Equality and Diversity Politics | STRAND 1: Affect, Space and Temporality

Over the last decade a wave of critical sexualities citizenship scholarship has emerged (Richardson, 1998; Stychin, 1998; Bell and Binnie, 2000; Monr.; 2003; Hines, 2007c), which highlights how citizenship is dependent upon sexual and gendered normativity. A common thread running through the literature is the regulation of queer practices as assimilation becomes a pre-requisite of sexual and gendered rights; giving rise to homonormative (Duggan, 2002) sexual values and practices. Central to a neo-liberal sexual assimilationist agenda is law and policy around 'equalities and diversity'. Thus, in recent years, there has been a proliferation of sexual and gendered equalities policy in the UK. Moreover, rights-based discourse culminated in the UK *Civil Partnership Act* (CPA, 2004) and the *Gender Recognition Act* (GRA, 2004), both of which sought to enhance citizenship for sexual and gendered 'minorities', and both of which have been subject to critique for the normative conditions attached to their framework of rights. From this backdrop, then, it is reasonable to lament the demise of 'queer times'; to position the 1990s as a golden age of queer activism against a new millennium of sexual conservatism. This paper seeks to question such a linear reading by addressing emerging movements against the CPA and the GRA. In this way, the paper considers individual and collective resistance to the normative underpinnings of equalities and diversity law and policy. S. Hines will suggest that this rising tide of legislative refusal signposts a renewed queer politics in which sexual and gender dissidents are stirring it up – again.

Biographical Note

Sally Hines is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Leeds. She works in the areas of gender, sexuality, intimacy and the body; addressing transformations in these identity practices and looking at how these shifts feed into theoretical debates around citizenship, recognition and social movements. The intersections – and disconnections – between gender and sexuality are brought together in her body of work on transgender. Sally Hines has recently finished working on an ESRC grant, which explored the impact of the UK Gender Recognition Act on formations and practices of gender diversity. The project will form a forthcoming book *Gender Diversity, Recognition and Citizenship: Towards a Politics of Difference* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). Sally's current research interests lay in developing European comparative research around the 'recognition' of gender and sexual diversity.

Contact: s.hines@leeds.ac.uk

Moritz Konradi (Berlin)

The Sexuality of Justice. Reconsidering Drucilla Cornell's Queer Liberalism

Equality and Diversity Politics | STRAND 1: Affect, Space and Temporality

Political theories of justice and queer studies or sexuality and gender usually present themselves as largely unconnected academic fields: On the one hand, post-Rawls'ian theories of justice have been dominated by moral accounts of the principles that should guide a just society, and sexuality seldom figures prominently in these theories. On the other hand, Queer Theory's accounts of sexual and gender deviance have mostly relied on deconstructive and psychoanalytical archives, favoring critical over normative registers. As a consequence, political scientists have hardly recognized Queer Theory as a field of discourses generating normative visions of a good society, and recently some debates within Queer Theory may be read as suggesting that making claims on (sexual) justice inevitably re-inscribes a heteronormative version of futurity. M. Konradi will explore potential relationships between moral accounts of justice and a queer critique of heteronormativity through a reading of Drucilla Cornell's work in feminist philosophy. Cornell interweaves Rawls'ian moral philosophy, deconstructive feminism and Lacan'ian psychoanalysis to produce an account of sexual justice centered on the moral defense of persons as singular 'sexuate beings' with an inalienable right to self-representation. She establishes sexuality and the development of a sexuate being as central for our individual projects to become persons – and thus as a core issue of reflections on justice. The paper sketches out Cornell's take on sexual justice and aims to position it within current debates on the political and ethical implications of sexual dissidence in Queer Theory. It turns to current examples of equality and antidiscrimination politics to show how Cornell's work provides a moral critique of heteronormativity and identitarian forms of LGBT politics.

Biographical Note

Moritz Konradi studies political science and gender studies at the Freie Universität, Berlin and Uniwersytet Warszawski, Warsaw (Poland). His academic interests are in modern political theory, feminist and queer theory, and LGBT politics in central Europe. He has recently completed his diploma thesis which deploys moral theories of sexual justice for a critical reading of recent German LGBT politics. He has been active as a member or the organizing committees of the feminist exchange program *Gender and Emancipation - Perspectives from East and West* and is a volunteer at MANEO, a community project working with gay male victims of homophobic violence. He currently works as a publications assistant at a political science research institution.

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Jan Hutta (Milton Keynes)

Paradoxes of Governmentality and Micropolitics in Brazilian Anti-Homophobic Politics

Equality and Diversity Politics | STRAND 1: Affect, Space and Temporality

With her work on homonationalism Jasbir Puar has opened up new pathways for interrogating sexual and gender politics by calling attention to the biopolitical (and simultaneously 'necropolitical') dynamics that foster what she sees as a disaggregation of queer liberal subjects from queer deviant populations. Puar's interrogation is targeted at US American and, to a lesser extent, Western European politics that have been marked by colonialist and orientalist projects of sovereignty and geopolitical domination. In the presentation, J. Hutta wants to shift the focus to the Brazilian context, and simultaneously to a somewhat differently oriented biopolitical dynamic – which seems, however, to be of relevance with respect to Northern sexual and gender politics as well. Recent anti-homophobic enactments in Brazilian LGBT activism have been entangled in a different kind of 'nationalist' project that, under the banner of 'democratisation', sets out to furnish a modern and well-ordered state that provides for generalised conditions of citizenship. More specifically, these enactments hook up to a reformist project of modernising the police and further public security systems so as to render them more 'citizen-oriented'. While in its entanglement with this national modernisation project anti-homophobic activism comes to enact a biopolitical logic that fosters new forms of subjectivation, control and exclusion, it simultaneously, and in some ways paradoxically, enables desires for fundamental social change to materialise. Such paradoxical processes unfold on what with Félix Guattari can be termed a 'micropolitical' level. Using material from his PhD research with activists and queer people in Brazil he will call attention to some of the productive ways in which paradoxes of governmental and micropolitical enactments unfold.

Biographical Note

Jan Simon Hutta is based in Berlin, where he is in the process of completing his PhD thesis. He is affiliated with the Geography Department of The Open University, Milton Keynes, UK. Before, he studied psychology and cultural studies at the Free University Berlin and the University of California, Santa Cruz. His work has been published in the journals *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* and *The Graduate Journal of Social Sciences* as well as in the edited book *Rethinking the Public* (Policy Press). He has been involved in queer activisms and co-organised the 'Talking About a Revolution?' *How Academics Not Only Chat to Make a Difference* (The Open University, June 09) and *Sexualities in/of the Global South* (Manchester University, August 09).

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Heike Raab (Innsbruck)

Disability as Queer Culture (Politics)

Queer Body Politics | STRAND 2: Limits and Boundary Crossings

In this lecture H. Raab wants to connect the perspectives from Queer Theory with the direction of research from Crip Theory/ Disability Studies and questions their reciprocal exclusions as well as attaching points and intersections.

In particular the raised critique to body-, sexuality- and gender-norms into Queer Theory offers similarities with Crip Theory/ Disability Studies. Accordingly, both approaches criticize body-norms and normative body-images. In this respect links between Queer Theory and Crip Theory are mainly to find at body-theoretical realms: Queer Theory is focusing on cultural modes of differentiation of marginalized sexual and gendered bodies while Crip Theory is stressing cultural modes of problematization from so-called (dis)abled bodies.

On the conceptual-historical level Queer has an analogical background of emergence like Crip or Cripple. Both terms were in the past negatively coded swearwords which get transformed and reinterpreted in the sense of a positive self-empowerment through their particular social movements. In this way of thinking (Dis)Ability, Cripple or Queer are developed as a norm-critical, resistant cultural notion. Cripness and Queerness as a political practice accentuate the high importance of the body and of embodiment to undermine prevalent sociocultural beliefs, values and opinions about (dis)ability, heteronormativity and gender. With regard to this, she wants to discuss in her lecture the epistemological benefit of Queer (Crip) Disability Studies from a body-theoretical viewpoint.

Starting point is an analysis of the visual strategies from minoritized bodies within the realm of culture and here especially the embodiment of the visual at Christopher Street Parades (CSD). At the center of her explanations are body-political practices of visibility and the novel presence of lesbian and gays with (dis)ability at Christopher Street Day (CSD). Based on the thesis that the body is intertwined with cultural systems of knowledge, bodily practices of visibility shall be discussed. This means that bodily acts in motion shall be disputed in which cultural, individual and social dimensions are interwoven and which refer in a specific way to (dis)ability, heteronormativity, and gender as sociocultural codes. In the framework of that it will be discussed to what extent an intervention in the production of body knowledge, body images and body norms through visual practices of embodiment is possible. The ways in which knowledge, images and norms, which are attached to the body and materialized through it, can be reworked and how in doing so social power relations get influenced, shall be reflected as well.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Dr. phil. Heike Raab, has studied political science, sociology, history and educational science in Giessen and Frankfurt (Germany). She did her PhD at the Department of Political Science of the University of Vienna (Austria). At the moment she researches and teaches feminist and queer disability studies at the University of Innsbruck (Austria). Her scientific key activities are Feminist Theory, Discourse Theory, State Theory, Queer Studies, Body Theory, New Social Movements plus Cultural Studies.

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Rachel White (London)

No Fat Future?: The Uses of Anti-Social Queer Theory for Fat Activism

Queer Body Politics | STRAND 2: Limits and Boundary Crossings

This paper will examine the possible connections between anti-social queer theory and fat politics, and the consequences for activism. Intersections between fat and queer identities, particularly in terms of their potential to be reclaimed politically, have previously been explored within fat studies (LeBesco, 2001, 2004). However, as an emerging locus of activism, fat politics, like queer, may be able to move beyond both liberal individualist and resignificatory politics via a turn to the anti-social as suggested by Edelman (2004) and Halberstam (2008).

Fat politics fit this turn in queer theory because contemporary discourses of the obesity 'epidemic' in the West are engaged in the construction of fat not only as an individual moral failure, but as profoundly anti-social. The fat subject is being made knowable through its proximity to death, disease and sterility and the strain it places on collective resources. Anti-obesity discourse envisions not only a fat free future, but attempts to restore subjects to a position inside the heteronormatively gendered, fully reproductive social order. It is not just fat, but the fat subject's queerness that is under threat of erasure.

This paper will read the discourse of the obesity epidemic in terms of its production of the fat subject as a figure with 'no future', and argue that, like Edelman's queer subject, the fat subject is conjured to embody the death drive and to stand as the other of a foundational logic of reproductive futurity. R. White will explore Edelman's embrace of negativity in terms of the possibilities it opens for fat activism using *The Chubsters*, a UK-based fat/queer activist project (www.chubstergang.com), as a case study. *The Chubsters*' style of political engagement precisely revels in the abjection fat/queer subjects are cast in. They appear to embody the 'turn away from the comfort zone of polite exchange' Halberstam (2008:154) proposes for a successful anti-social politics. However, can *The Chubsters* 'fuck the future', or are they implicitly invested in creating liveable lives for future fat/queer subjects? In a cultural climate that calls for the erasure of a fat future, is celebrating anti-futurity a productive option for fat activism?

Biographical Note

Rachel White is a lecturer in Women's Studies and Sociology at the University of Westminster, London. Her research interests are in gender and queer theory, media discourse, popular culture and subcultural formations. Her recent research has been in the area of fat studies and has been published as, *Undesirable Consequences? Resignifying Discursive Constructions of Fatness in the Obesity 'Epidemic'* in the collection *Fat Studies in the UK* (2009, eds C. Tomrley & A. Kaloski Naylor. Raw Nerve Books). She is also interested in the challenges the fat body presents to heteronormative formations of gender and is involved in several queer fat activist projects in London including the disco *Unskinny Bop*, the zine *Big Bums*, *the Fat of the Land queer harvest festival*, and *The Chubsters*.

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Lena Eckert (Berlin)

Countering Intersexualization with Queer Activism?

Queer Body Politics | STRAND 2: Limits and Boundary Crossings

In this paper L. Eckert discusses the possibility of countering intersexualization with queer theory and queer activism. She will first outline the process of intersexualization since the 1950s that has occurred in the USA and demonstrate the workings of this process as embedded in the heteronormative matrix. Since the 1990s intersex activism has tried to counter medicalization and pathologization. However, the multiple social movement groups have taken on different strategies in this endeavour. Her aim in this paper is to highlight the merits of a specific critique of culture, medicine, the body and desire in order to champion a possible alliance between intersex activism and anti-identitarian and possibly anarchist queer theory. In doing so she will look into the promises of (post-)anarchist theory which could be interlinked with queer theory/politics and intersex activism. Her paper will address the question of how to tackle the concepts of sexuality and identity which are the foundation for the sexualization of every body. Starting out from a critique of intersexualization and those manifestations of queer politics that despite promises to the contrary reify identity, she proposes a concept of affinity based on choice and solidarity as opposed to identity for a queer-intersex-transgender-(and-possibly-anarchist) project. Furthermore, L. Eckert will ask for possibilities of a collaborative approach of queer-anarchist social movements that can challenge hierarchical societal structures and counter intersexualization.

Biographical Note

Lena Eckert is currently working on the project on Gender in Academic Teaching at Bauhaus University Weimar in Germany where she also teaches on Media and Diversity. She recently received her PhD from Utrecht University in the Netherlands with the dissertation on *Intervening in Intersexualization: The Clinic and the Colony* (2010). Eckert's research interests are queer theory, gender studies, postcolonial studies and psychoanalysis. She co-edited the online journal *Liminalis. Journal for gender emancipation and resistance* and the edited collection *Gender Bound and Unbound* (CSP). Recent publications include 'Diagnosticism' *Three Cases of Anthropological Research into Intersexuality* in: *Critical Intersex* (Ashgate 2009) and *Postanarchism and the contrasexual practices of the cyborg in dildotopia* or 'The War on the Phallus' in: *Anarchism & Sexuality* (Routledge, forthcoming).

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Sara Davidmann (London)

Queer Conceptions: Procreation Beyond Gender - A Photographic Essay

(Artistic) Interventions | STRAND 1: Affect, Space and Temporality

The acts of conceiving and giving birth beyond socially sanctioned binary gender roles arguably represents the ultimate challenge to heteronormative beliefs on sex and gender, propelling assumptions about essentialism, biology and gender dynamically to the fore.

Taken from a larger photographic project depicting personal experiences of 'queer' births and parenting, this photographic essay presents Jason's story (*The Birth of LJ*), in a series of photographs of a queer pregnancy and the weeks following birth.

In the photographs the ostensibly conflicting signifiers of sex and gender contest widely held views on gender and biology. Through a heteronormative lens, pregnant = female = woman while moustached = male = man. Nonetheless, Jason is depicted occupying a space beyond these boundaries and moving freely between them. The social expectations of photography, which are that photography reproduces reality, underline and reinforce the dynamics of these images.

With regard to mainstream beliefs on sex, gender and giving birth, in 2008 Thomas Beatie, a trans man, became pregnant and took his story to the press. The media frenzy surrounding the idea of "a pregnant man" and the public uproar that followed demonstrates the powerful threat that transgression of the 'man impregnates and woman conceives' equation poses to the two-sexes/two-genders system. Beatie became the recipient of hate mail and death threats and he was described as "a freak", "a monster" and "sick" on Internet chat forums.

By presenting Jason's perspective, this photographic essay counters and refutes the media's account of what it means to be queer and pregnant.

Further, Queer Conceptions arose in response to the increasing number of people who, while self-identifying as queer, are having children, becoming parents and raising families. These photographs capture the emergence of a new generation, that by the very nature of their birth, challenge preconceptions of sex, gender and procreation. Following this, S. Davidmann argues that procreation seen through a queer lens may represent the ultimate challenge to the binary sex and gender systems

Biographical Note

Sara Davidmann is a photographer and Arts and Humanities Research Council Fellow at University of the Arts London. She is the author of *Crossing the Line*, a monograph published by Dewi Lewis 2003; *Beyond Borders, Transgender Identities: Towards a Social Analysis of Gender Diversity*, Routledge 2010; *Border Trouble*, SCAN: Journal of Media, Arts, Culture 2006 and *trans agenda: trans portraits*, Source 2004. Exhibitions include: *Paris Photo*, *Basel Art Fair*, *Somatechnics Sydney*, *Transfabulous London*, *MOMA Oxford*. Previous awards include a Fulbright Hays scholarship, an Association of Commonwealth Universities Fellowship, three further Arts and Humanities Research Council awards and a Promising Researcher Fellowship awarded by Wimbledon College of Art.

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Anthony Clair Wagner (Vienna)

Monster, or Messenger? – Queer Interventions as a Beast and an Elf

Beyond the Human? | STRAND 2: Limits and Boundary Crossings

The Elf and the Beast are the artistic alter egos which A. C. Wagner employs in order to make visible certain aspects of, and reflections on, their trans-experience and -identity by means of video, photography and performance.

A. C. Wagner began developing these non-human identities in their art, while living isolated in the rural Austrian countryside, to reflect on the queerness of his existence. Only later on, when they (covering the alter egos of the Beast and the Elf) learned about the many fields of existing transgender discourse, they did start to realize how my figurations eerily reflect certain aspects of Donna Haraway's work (e.g. *Promises of Monsters*), and Susan Stryker's use of *Frankenstein's Monster* as their voice.

In this presentation A. C. Wagner will talk about how adopting non-human somatechnics and embodying the resulting creatures allows them to distance themselves from the restrictions of our social understanding of what the human is. Further they will speak about how it allows them to contemplate their situation in reference to the binary gender system. They will also talk about the use of non-human somatechnics as opening up options of accessing and expressing transpower: the power that inhabits transgressions of physical, mental, and other ensuing restrictions.

A. C. Wagner's alter egos might entice us into practicing joyful resistances against categorizations within the cultural norms linked to gender, sex and sexuality.

Biographical Note

Born a girl (Claire Bastienne), on January 27th 1980, in Linz, Austria. Started to live as a boy around 1993, diagnosed as transsexual by 1995. Educated as a Master of Visual Media Design – Video, at the University for Art and Industrial Design, in Linz. Reflections on the experience of being transgendered in art and film, via the alter egos of the Beast and the Elf. Sex reassignment surgery by 2000. Exhibitions and performances in Austria, Italy, and the USA since 2005. Name change by 2007. Doctorate studies of Philosophy at the Academy of Fine Arts, in Vienna, since 2007.

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Theodora Danylevich (Washington, D.C.)

Lady Gaga, the Queer Fame Monster

Beyond the Human | STRAND 2: Limits and Boundary Crossings

In a 20/20 interview with Barbara Walters on January 22nd, 2010, Lady Gaga (or “just Gaga,” as she requests that Walters address her) expresses a singularly fan-oriented mission that drives her work. “I aspire to try to be a teacher to my young fans,” she tells Walters, “who feel just like I felt when I was younger.” When Walters asks her how she felt when she was younger, Gaga replies, “like a freak [...] what I’m trying to say is that I want to liberate them... free them of their fears and make them feel that they can create their own space in the world.” This statement captures several critical aspects of what this paper will theorize as Lady Gaga’s very contemporary Queer Fame Monster persona (“The Fame Monster” being the title of her most recent album) as a collectively determined and performed poetic/queer-world-making subjectivity. Gaga’s work is always-already affectively and pedagogically oriented toward her fans, and is geared towards enabling them to embrace their queerness as “little monsters,” creating “their own space in the world.” An aspect of today’s young adult fan subjectivities impossible to ignore is that of social networking via mobile technologies; namely, the camera-equipped cell phone with internet access. Understanding mobile social networking technology to be most urgently relevant to Gaga’s persona and to contemporary, liberatory queer world-making, this paper will take up this techno-sociality as a central heuristic towards understanding Gaga’s Fame Monster persona as a collectively-determined, performance oriented, and queerly (re)productive spawn of technology and queer love and art. With the key words “Queer,” “Fame,” and “Monster” as the conceptual guides, Theodora Danylevich will analyze recent interviews, performances, and Lady Gaga fan productions on youtube and fan sites with an eye toward understanding Gaga’s persona and “Fame Factory” as uniquely shaped by the dynamics of mobile social networking and its inherent collectivism. She considers “Fame” in this case via Gaga’s cybernetically-oriented productive queer epistemology as offering a mode of unlimited and impersonal intimacy, inspired by the way that Tim Dean’s *Unlimited Intimacy* explores a productive and caring impersonal ethics. She also considers Warhol scholarship that deals with queering fame and the notion of the collective factory. “Monster” in this project becomes thus a showy queer collectivity as a viral techno-monster-organism-without-body and, at the same time, a performative, visceral and embodied, culturally disavowed gesture, such as Gaga’s freakish desire for women. Here Butler’s *Bodies That Matter* and Jeffrey Jerome Cohen’s edited volume *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* will inform this conceptual framework. Ultimately, the paper will seek to intervene in contemporary conversations regarding (1) the legitimacy of Gaga’s queerness and/or her comparability to Warhol, (2) the relationality of queerness as such, and thus also (3) the world-making potential of queer collective practices.

Biographical Notes

Theodora Danylevich holds an MA in Communication, Culture and Technology from Georgetown University and a BA in Comparative Literature and Society from Columbia University. She is currently in her first year as a PhD student in English at the George Washington University, concentrating in American Literature and Culture. Her research interests include queer theory, mental illness and disability studies, systems/technology and the body.

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Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Washington, D.C.)

The Sex Life of Stone. Queering Nonhuman Life

Keynote

Inhuman and immobile, the material of weighty civic architectures and memorials to the dead, stone could only through the queerest of reckonings possess desires, let alone a sexuality. In those moments when stone touches the erotic (a statue springs to life for enamored Pygmalion, a diamond band surrounds the fiancée's finger), the lithic too often becomes the merely anthropocentric, the drearily heteronormative: idol-become-animate Galatea, compounded of idealized feminine features, pulls Pygmalion from his lack of feminine interest to conjugal bliss; the engagement ring is the expected sanctifier of the nuptial couple's beauty, endurance, superlativeness. Despite these severe and rather unimaginative circumscriptions, can stone be queered? Is there a nonhuman queer?

De Beers has ruined the diamond, transforming a rare and enchanted rock into a prop in the most clichéd of love stories. Taking as the point of departure a medieval account of diamonds as living, multiplicative, and licentious organisms (*Mandeville's Travels*), J.J. Cohen will map geological desires: how the lithic elicits and insinuates itself within human ardor, how stone is an actant possessed of its own possibilities, impulses, sensuality. Nonhuman eroticism renders what seems the most inert of substances a material forever on the move, challenging the divide we assume between human and nonhuman, organic and inorganic. His emphasis is upon lithic life in the Middle Ages: the ways in which rocks and gems act as if they are biological organisms, possessed of a radiative virtue that makes them the protagonists of their own narratives, that propels them into queer relations, a lithic promiscuity that suggests the limits of the human as a category, bringing our queer loves outside anthropocentric confinement, extending our ethics to include the world of objects that coinhabit our fragile ecologies.

Biographical Note

Jeffrey J. Cohen is Professor of English and Director of the Medieval and Early Modern Studies Institute at the George Washington University. His work examines the intersections of posthuman, queer and other challenges to stable identities with early texts and cultures. His books and edited collections include *Monster Theory; Of Giants; Medieval Identity Machines; The Postcolonial Middle Ages; Hybridity, Identity, and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain, Becoming Male in the Middle Ages; and Thinking the Limits of the Body.*

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Saturday, 25 September 2010

Roderick Ferguson (Minneapolis)

The Queer Ethic and the Spirit of Normativity

Keynote

This talk attempts to interrogate the various iterations and meanings of queer identity in the moment of marriage and adoption rights. To do so the talk attempts to situate the maneuvers of queer sexuality within power's 'latest' mode, a mode developed as a response to the student movements of the nineteen sixties in the U.S. and abroad, a mode that sought to find ways to affirm and manage minority difference and culture rather than suppress it outright. The talk looks at the ways in which queerness is the most recent item in a universe of affirmation constellated by rights-based agitation around domesticity. As a way to imagine the effects of this particular affirmation, the talk reads the University of California's 1997 domestic partnership policy alongside a short story written by South Asian queer and U.S. based writer Mohan Sikka. In that short story entitled *Ripe*, an anonymous queer man wrestles with the costs of queer domesticity in the context of an "extra-marital" affair that recalls for him the forms of sociality that existed before the advent of queer conjugality. The short story, thus, worries over the ways in which queerness is affirmed and managed as a species of normativity. The talk hence juxtaposes the domestic partnership memo alongside the short story as a way to allegorize power's management of this version of minority difference, demonstrating the ways in which ethical development and agency for queers is measured more and more in terms of rights and domesticity.

Biographical Note

Roderick A. Ferguson is associate professor of race and critical theory and chair of the Department of American Studies at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. In the year 2000, he received the Modern Language Association's Crompton-Noll Award for *best essay in lesbian, gay, and queer studies in the modern languages* for his article *The Parvenu Baldwin and the Other Side of Redemption*. From 2007 to 2010, he was associate editor of *American Quarterly: The Journal of the American Studies Association*. He is the author of *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique* and is completing a manuscript entitled *The Reorder of Things: On the Institutionalization of Difference*.

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Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez (Manchester)

How To “Queer” feminized Racialized Labour – On Decolonial Ethics and The Politics of Affect

Queer Postcolonial Space | STRAND 1: Affect, Space and Temporality

Working on the feminization of labour implies a critique of gender relations. However, very often we forget that such relations are based on heteronormativity. This could be one of the aspects to consider, when we approach the field of the feminization of labour through queer theory. But, maybe we need to raise a different question, is the “feminization of labour” a topic in queer theory and politics? And, if yes, how has it been addressed? What new dimensions have these perspectives added to the understanding of ‘feminization’? How have they dealt with the experience of racialized feminized labour? How have they approached the ontological effects of the persistent coloniality of labour?

Is the queer answer one that captures the fluidity of social configuration as ‘assemblages’? Or is it the focus on ‘affect’ which opens up the angle to queering racialized feminized labour? Still how far can we capture the historical legacies and geo-political context in which this value codification takes place if we presuppose a queer analysis of it? In other words, how far can queer theory capture ‘coloniality’ and the ‘colonial difference’? What implications might this perspective have for decolonial ethics (Maldonado-Torres) and the politics of affects (Sedgwick)?

Biographical Note

Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez studied Sociology, Political Sciences and Romance Studies at the University of Frankfurt, Germany, Université Lumière II, Lyon and Quito, Ecuador. She is Senior Lecturer in Transcultural Studies in the School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures and co-director of the Migration and Diaspora Cultural Studies Network at the University of Manchester. Her research is concerned with questions of global inequalities, decolonial epistemology and critical approaches to migration studies. In her more recent work on Latin American ‘undocumented’ domestic workers in Western Europe she has explored the interface between coloniality and migration policies, affective labour, biopolitics and racialization, decolonial ethics of responsibility and the Creolization of Human Rights.

She is the author of *Migration, Domestic Work and Affect* (2010) and *Intellektuelle Migrantinnen* (1999), for which she received the Augsburg Research Prize of Intercultural Studies, and co-editor of *Decolonizing European Sociology* (2010, with M. Boatcă and S. Costa), *Borders, Homes and Migration* (2004, with L. Caixeta, S. Tate and C. Vega Solís), *Spricht die Subalterne Deutsch?* (with H. Steyerl) and *Gouvernementalität* (with M. Pieper). Further, she has co-edited journal issues on Foucault’s Discourse Analysis (*FQS*) and Gender and Globalisation (*Feminist Europa*). She has published widely in international journals such as *Feminist Review*, *Frontiers*, *Política y Sociedad*, *Das Argument* and *Polylog*. Some of her work has been funded by the DFG, Humboldt, AHRC, British Academy, EU and Ford Foundation. She has worked in an individual capacity and with colleagues at various institutions in the UK, Spain, Germany, Austria, Brazil, Finland, Sweden, Portugal and the USA.

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Vanessa Agard-Jones

(New York)

What the Sands Remember: Revisiting Tropes of Queer Invisibility in Martinique

Queer Postcolonial Space | STRAND 1: Affect, Space and Temporality

Saint Pierre and Sainte Anne sit on opposite shores – both territorially and symbolically – of Martinique, a non-independent island in the Caribbean Sea. During the 19th century the western town of Saint Pierre was known as both the “Paris” and the “Sodom” of the Antilles, as a cosmopolitan city where decadence and liberal sexual mores were at the heart of bourgeois and elite culture. In 1902 Mount Pélé, the volcano that sits just above the city, erupted – killing its population of over 30,000 within 5 seconds. Today, visitors to Saint Pierre are reminded of the city that once was by the black, volcanic sand beaches that line its coast.

Far to the east, Sainte Anne is a town with a far different reputation. During the 1950s it was known as a refuge for rebels, for people who contested the continued dominance of white and mulatto elites in the lives of ordinary (mostly black) Martinicans, and was the center of the island’s small cultural nationalist movement. Nearly 50 years later, the town retains that reputation. After local activist Garcin Malsa was elected mayor of the commune he removed all of the tricolores (red, white and blue French flags) from their official perches and replaced them with a red, black, and green flag, meant to declare Martinican independence from France. Today, if you drive into Sainte Anne from the island’s major highway, the first thing you will see as you cross the boundary from Marin (its nearest neighbor) is a roundabout where the red, black, and green waves. Sainte Anne is known for another reason too, for it is home to one of Martinique’s few meeting spaces for gay men, a secluded section at the end of the commune’s most popular beach, Les Salines.

This paper seeks to cross temporal, scalar, and disciplinary boundaries in its revisiting of tropes of queer invisibility that mark representations of same-sex desire in the Caribbean. Cycling from the world described in the 1901 erotic novel *Une Nuit d’Orgie à Saint Pierre* (Géache 1901) to fieldnotes taken in 2010 among men who frequent Les Salines, this paper seeks, in a provisional way, to forge a scattered archive of same sex desire in Martinique. Making use of fragments, V. Agard-Jones thinks simultaneously through the sexual politics of memory and landscape, linking queer presence to the sands of both Saint Pierre and Sainte Anne.

Biographical Note

Vanessa Agard-Jones is a Ph.D. candidate in the joint program in Anthropology and French Studies at New York University. Her dissertation project focuses on sexual politics and ideas about “local values” in Martinique, a non-independent territory of France located in the Caribbean. Outside of academia, Vanessa is a former Board Chair and continued supporter of the *Audre Lorde Project: A Community Organizing Center for Queer People of Color* in New York City.

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Katrina Roen (Oslo)

Viable Lives? Gender Variant Youth, Suicide, and Self-Harm

Queer Generations | STRAND 2: Limits and Boundary Crossings

Under what conditions are queer-embodied lives viable? LGBTIQ youth suicide and self harm have been receiving increasing attention in recent years, but there continues to be a lack of research directly into these phenomena among gender variant and trans youth. Suicide appears repeatedly in literature relating to gender variant and trans youth: it appears as a reported act, as a stated threat, and as an implicit risk. Furthermore, the risks of both self harm and suicide are cited in clinical literature as key reasons supporting the use of puberty suppression among some gender variant youth. In the present paper, K. Roen examines the ways in which suicidal and self harming possibilities feature in literature relating to gender variant and trans youth. K. Roen asks questions about the viability of gender variant lives, the role that suicidal possibilities play in constructing adolescent distress, and the pathologising potential of presenting clinically as both gender variant and suicidal. K. Roen examines the extent to which queer theorising may offer a more respectful and productive understanding of gender variant and suicidal youth than psycho-medical approaches.

Biographical Note

Associate Professor in Societal Psychology, University of Oslo, Norway.

Katrina Roen's work has focused variously on transsexuality, intersex, self harm, and youth suicide. Approaching these topics from a critical psychological perspective, Roen draws on queer and poststructuralist feminist understandings to investigate questions about sexed embodiment and gendering possibilities. Roen is particularly interested in the discursive possibilities and lived realities that are brought into being at the interface between psycho-medical practices and politicised, queer interventions. Roen's work appears in *Signs*; *GLQ: Journal of Gender Studies*; *Social Science & Medicine*; *Culture, Health & Sexuality*; *Body & Society*; and *The Transgender Studies Reader*. Roen has recently been a Visiting Fellow at GEXcel: Centre of Gender Excellence (Linköping University, Sweden), but currently works within the University of Oslo's Department of Psychology.

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Irina Schmitt (Lund)

How Childish! Queering 'Youth' and some other of the Mutual Challenges of Queer and Education Research

Queer Generations | STRAND 2: Limits and Boundary Crossings

Queer/ed children and young people inhabit a space that seems nicely delineated by shamed biographies, fearful prospects and ignorance. In mainstream accounts, queer/ed children and young people are often un/represented through invisibility or drama, between exoticism and pity. 'Children' and notions of 'the best interest of the child' are used to dramatize and limit societal negotiations of sexuality (Pellegrini, 2009). Similarly, the riskiness of 'youth' offers space for reflection (Rasmussen, 2006). Within schools, young people are constructed entirely as students and as citizens-to-be, in the future tense (Edelman, 2004; Pellegrini, 2008), as well as in need of protection (Rofes, 2005). Yet it is the 'universal' child who is inscribed in this future (Muñoz, 2007; Pellegrini, 2008). In the societies I. Schmitt is most familiar with, Sweden, Germany and Canada, young people are not full subjects 'right now', but can only wait for 'the future' to fully participate in the society they are trained for.

Within queer research, children and young people have for a long time played a minor part (Driver, 2008; Epstein, O'Flynn, & Telford, 2009; Halberstam, 2008; Kosofsky Sedgwick, 1991). With this paper, I. Schmitt will engage the (no) future debate with queer youth and education research, by problematizing the discrepancy between responsibility and solidarity and the task to question our own assumptions of a queer political project (Halberstam, 2008). How is it possible to balance the obvious need for remedial intervention and the equally important need to question stabilizing notions of 'children' and 'youth'?

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Working at the Centre for Gender Studies, Lund University, Sweden, Irina Schmitt is interested in queer-feminist and anti-racist thinking, both at the desk, in the seminar room, and in workshops with teachers. Currently, she analyzes school policies in Sweden, Canada and Germany for their representations of sexuality. Schools are interesting spaces where people negotiate belonging, and where nationally specific notions of 'who we are' are re-created (Schmitt 2008). Irina Schmitt also co-operates with researchers in Lund, Berlin and Ljubljana in the project *Homophobic motivated violence as experience of children growing up with homosexual parents in the context of school*, financed by the EU program DAPHNE. For more information and publications see <http://www.genus.lu.se/o.o.i.s/23560>.

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Janne C.H. Bromseth and Fanny Ambjörnsson (Stockholm)

“When you are married and have children...” Elderly LBT-Women and Queer Youth Negotiating Heteronormative Life Scripts, Gender and Age

Queer Generations | STRAND 2: Limits and Boundary Crossings

This presentation builds upon a three-year funded research project, looking into the life conditions and resistance strategies amongst younger and older lesbian, bisexual, trans- women and queers in Sweden. By using individual and group interviews, as well as field notes from participant observation, J.C.H. Bromseth and F. Ambjörnsson will look into the multi-faceted co-constructions of age, gender and sexuality norms in stories from queer lives today, as experienced from two different age positions; younger (approximately 18-30 years old) and elder (approximately 60-80).

Over the last years, several queer scholars have contributed with developing theoretical concepts within which they look into the intersections between time, space and sexuality in late capitalist societies (Halberstam 2005, Butler 2004, Ahmed 2006). How does a particular kind of heterosexuality regulate norms for what a valued and morally legitimate life should look like? What are the specific cultural expectations of what life should look like in a particular age, or ‘life phase’, in the Western world? Halberstam describes ‘reproductive time’ as the overall concept regulating time on all levels, where having biological children within a heterosexual couple, and eventually grandchildren, is the most important event. Ahmed describes the normative life script as ‘the straight line’, and argues that deviating from the straight line also implies a consciousness of the privileges that are lost in ‘being astray’ (2006: 79).

In this paper J.C.H. Bromseth and F. Ambjörnsson will use the concept of heteronormative life scripts as a point of departure for analyzing how norms of age, sexuality and gender intersect, and how they are experienced by elderly lbt-women and queer youth in Sweden. How do these scripts frame experiences of living non-normative lives at different ages, as women and transpersons? How do the informants resist and negotiate age- and sexuality norms, in relation to both hetero- and homo-normativity? How are alternative life scripts formulated, and normative concepts of age, generation and valuable lives filled with new meanings by the two generations non-heterosexual women and queers?

Biographical Note: Fanny Ambjörnsson

Fanny Ambjörnsson received her PhD in social anthropology 2004, Stockholm University, on a thesis about constructions of gender, class and sexuality amongst Swedish high school girls. She is also author of the book *Vad är queer* (What is queer?), 2006.

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Biographical Note: Janne Bromseth

Janne Bromseth defended her PhD thesis in 2006, NTNU, Trondheim, on constructions of gender, sexuality and community on a Scandinavian mailing list community for lesbian and bisexual women. She co-edited *Body Claims*, 2009 with Lisa Käll and Katarina Mattson.

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The authors are currently working as researchers and teachers at Centre for gender studies, Stockholm university. They are funded from 2009 – 2011 on the research project *Queerkids, baby-butches and lesbians. Life conditions and resistances strategies amongst two generations lesbian, bisexual, trans-women and queers.*

Dominique Grisard (Basel)

Pink Prisons, Rosy Future? An Alternative Genealogy of the Color Pink

Time and Affect | STRAND 1: Affect, Space and Temporality

Can pink make strong men weak? Do pink jail cells sooth their inmates? When Sheriff Clint Low, in Mason County, Texas, was looking to reduce the number of repeat offenders in his small-town jail, not only did he put all inmates in pink jumpsuits, he put them in pink shoes, pink underwear and pink socks. Not just in US prisons, all over Europe the color pink is used for its allegedly tranquilizing effects on aggressive male prisoners. Most recently, solitary confinement cells in Swiss prisons were painted a Cool Down Pink. In this paper, D. Grisard explores an alternative genealogy of the color pink by tracing the powers attributed to the color in 20th century prison history: from pink triangle prisoners in National-socialist Germany, 1970s biosocial experiments in prisons by Alexander Schauss, and 1970s and 80s gay and lesbian prison activism to the use of the color in prisons today, D. Grisard's aim is to point to possible continuities as well as ruptures in the entangled – sexualized, gendered and racialized – history of pink in prison and prison activism. Choosing not to choose between a rosy future and no future at all, her reading attempts to show how reassembling the past allows us to reassess critically the here and now.

Biographical Note

Dominique Grisard is a historian and gender theorist at the Center for Gender Studies at the University of Basel, Switzerland. In her dissertation *Gendering Terror* she analyzed terrorist and counterterrorist discourses in 1970s Switzerland (to be published by Campus in fall 2010). She is currently working on two projects: a cultural history of the color pink as well as a history on intimacies and sexualities in European prisons. Recent publications include *Die Femme als Doppelagentin. Ein Plädoyer für Tarnung und Täuschung*, in: Fuchs, Sabine (Ed.): *Femme! Radikal – Queer – Feminin*, Berlin: Querverlag 2009, p. 127- 140, *Female Hunger Strikers and Suicide Bombers in Western Media. A Transversal Genealogy of Discursive Strategies of Resistance*, in: *Cultural Studies Now Conference Journal* (March 2008), and the anthology *Gender in Motion. Die Konstruktion von Geschlecht in Raum und Erzählung* Frankfurt a. M.: Campus, 2007 (with Jana Häberlein, Anelis Kaiser and Sibylle Saxer).

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Ingeborg Svensson (Umeå)

Love and Death – On Queer Resistance and Strategies of Resistance on Queer Funerals

Time and Affect | STRAND 1: Affect, Space and Temporality

A salient theme at the funerals of gay identified men in the wake of aids in Sweden was what could be summed up as love. In almost all funerals love was addressed in one way or another. What does it mean to say that homosexuality is love? In this paper I. Svensson describes and considers different meanings and resistances expressed through discourses of love. She draws on the work of Lee Edelman who in his book “No future” makes an argument on behalf of the radical negativity and unassimilability of queerness. In Edelman's work queer functions differentially to uphold for heteronormativity a fantasy of imaginary wholeness represented by the Child, a fantasy compulsively repeated and forever deferred in history. Love, in this context, is just another name of this totalizing fantasy. Instead of claiming an affirmative social role for homosexuality, like love, and thereby reproducing the logic of what he calls “reproductive futurism”, Edelman suggests to challenge heteronormative narrative by representing the surplus signification associated with the death drive. Instead queers ought to embrace the negativity that clings to them. But what does this imply when it comes to mourning and the loss of life? Is it a viable strategy, are there no other ways to work through a heteronormative narrative and must love necessarily be heteronormative?

Biographical Note

Ingeborg Svensson holds a PhD in Ethnology. At present she is employed as a postdoctoral researcher at Umeå Center for Gender Studies, Sweden. In her dissertation *Liket i garderoben ? En studie av sexualitet, livsstil och begravning* (2007) [The Corpse in the Closet: sexuality, lifestyle and funerals] she examines how notions of sexuality condition understandings of death, mourning and kinship. In her postdoctoral research she continues the thread of mourning, looking into how national mourning constitutes citizenship in Sweden (2009). In an upcoming project *Sexuality in the brain? Neuroscience, media and knowledge production* she aims to explore the formation of contemporary notions of sexuality in the interaction between biological research and other cultural contexts.

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Robert Kulpa and Joanna Mizieleńska (London/Warsaw)

Con-Temporal Peripheries: Disjunctions in Space and Time, Knowledge and Activism, between Central-Eastern European and Western Sexualities

Limits of Queer | STRAND 2: Limits and Boundary Crossings

Recently, R. Kulpa and J. Mizieleńska observe the proliferation of works about non-Western sexualities. However, queer studies by embracing these margins and outskirts, continues to focus on post-colonial regions, “forgetting” about the “neighbouring” Central and Eastern Europe. In their presentation, based on their edited book, R. Kulpa and J. Mizieleńska will problematize the notion of Western sexuality and indicate its “con-temporal peripheries” – i.e. mechanisms of “othering” CEE by rendering it as “permanently transitional”/“post-communist”.

After 1989, without questioning, Western-style politics was adopted across CEE. When LGBT activism emerged in the CEE, the West was already at the ‘queer’ stage, with a long history and plurality of forms of activism. Conversely, the communist past of CEE built different social structures and modalities. This could be represented as two separate geopolitical-temporal modalities running parallel, where in 1989 one of them finishes, and the other one becomes universal for both. Indeed, as we will demonstrate, it should be even more complicated, and represented as “knotting” and “looping” of time(s).

When in 1989 “the communist time” ended and the physical borders began to dismantle, the flow and exchange of material products and ideas really took over. The protuberance of clutching ideas, which CEE was “thrown into”, was far from the linear and progressively accumulative vision of time, dominating “Western” reality. Sexual politics in CEE may serve as an example. The strong assimilationist model of activism present in CEE could be read as “stepping back in time” into “Western homophile times” of the 1950s and 1960s. Yet this “going backward” is actually “stepping forward” for lesbian and gay activists in CEE, if only because they can self-organise, which was not possible before 1989. Additionally, these “homophile-like” claims of acceptance and assimilation may be attempted by “jumping into 1970s” and using some contestation strategies predominant at the time. At the same time, other groups may label themselves “queer” and draw directly on 1990s Queer Nation events, like “kiss-ins” in public spaces. However, what R. Kulpa and J. Mizieleńska have just presented is already an attempt at “untie the knot” and “linearise” the present “here and now” reality of CEE. It is done by categorising various activities and approaches as belonging to a certain historical narrative. Thus organising the “knotted temporality of CEE” into familiar stages and inscribing it into a particular history (here: into the Western history of LGBTQ movements), we already simplify it in order to make sense of it. But do we actually succeed? Does such “unknotting” make sense? For whom? And what are the prerequisites to be able to understand it in either form? In other words, R. Kulpa and J. Mizieleńska feel it is important to ask, why certain models are familiar to “all”? And why “local” narrations of lesbian and gay emancipation will be seen as, precisely, “local” and not “universally” recognised?

They will undertake the task of questioning the power relations between “West” and “CEE”, between western queer academic scholarship and CEE theoretical insights, calling for not only for “de-centralisation of queer theory”, but also for greater attentiveness to spatial and temporal choices in doing so.

Biographical Note: Joanna Mizielińska

Dr hab. Joanna Mizielińska is an associate professor at the Institute of Sociology at the Warsaw School of Social Science and Humanities, PL. In 2004 she published her book *(De)Constructions of femininity*. In 2007 her second book was published, titled *Gender/ Body/ Sexuality. From feminism to queer theory*. Academic interests: sex, gender and sexuality in culture, social construction of sexualities/genders/bodies, gender performativity; the problem of exclusion of the Other in culture, society and feminist thoughts; new concepts/models of family, "families we choose"; representation of femininity and masculinity in global culture; feminist philosophy, queer theory.

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Biographical Note: Robert Kulpa

Robert Kulpa is a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Psychosocial Studies, Birkbeck College, London, UK. He is interested in queer studies, post-communist transformations, non-normative identities and nationalism. His publications include articles in journals: *Europe-Asia Studies*, *Slavonic and East European Review*, and books: *Sage Encyclopaedia of Gender and Society*, and *The EU and Central& Eastern Europe. Successes and Failures...* He is a Guest Editor of the *Queer Studies: Methodological Approaches* Special Issue of the *Graduate Journal of Social Science*, Amsterdam University Press. He co-organised *Queering Central and Eastern Europe* Symposium (UCL SSEES, 11.04.2008) and *Beyond Pink Curtain? Central and East European Sexualities And Western Eyes* (Birkbeck, 21.01.2010).

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Both Joanna and Robert are editors of a forthcoming book *De-Centering Western Sexualities: Central and East European Perspectives* (Ashgate: London and New York).

Aidan T. A. Varney (London)

The Sociopolitical (Un)intelligibility of Barebackers' Bodies

Limits of Queer | STRAND 2: Limits and Boundary Crossings

A. T. A. Varney's paper takes as its starting point the recently published book by queer theorist Tim Dean (English, SUNY at Buffalo, USA; book published 2009 by the University of Chicago Press) entitled *Unlimited Intimacy: Reflections on the Subculture of Barebacking*, a quasi-ethnographic study of sexual subcultures between men, mostly in San Francisco. "Barebacking" is understood as sex between men where condoms are deliberately not used; in certain cases this is because of a desire to give and receive HIV as a "gift".

Dean's research claims to understand this practice on the terms of barebackers themselves in order to overcome the opprobrium and hostility that the practice so often generates. To this extent, barebackers' bodies may be regarded as transgressive in that they are proscribed by prevailing public discourse as well as that of health authorities. However, A. T. A. Varney argues that they possess other dimensions forgotten in Dean's discourse – the economy and provision of the antiretroviral drugs needed to sustain barebackers' bodies if HIV is contracted, the materiality of life with HIV and, given the provision of such drugs through socialized medical systems, the implications of the practice of barebacking for any ethics of social democracy. It is in this way that Dean fails to examine the potential success or failure of barebacking as a transgressive practice.

A. T. A. Varney understands a barebacker's body as embracing a particular kind of risk, that of the mediation of the State in its very survival. His paper will ask what is at stake not only when such a biopolitical economy emerges, but also when queer theory forgets the material in favour of the supposedly transgressive and the psychic as a causal factor in the forms of life it describes and investigates. A. T. A. Varney thereby proposes that if queer theory is to have any continued effectiveness as a radical socio-cultural tool, it must engage with neo-Marxian attempts to critique and destabilize the workings and effects of late, or neoliberal, capitalism.

Biographical Note

Aidan T. A. Varney is an MA candidate in the School of English and Humanities, Birkbeck, University of London, and has accepted a PhD place in the Centre for Critical and Cultural Theory, School of English, Communication and Philosophy, Cardiff University, Wales. He recently completed an PGDip in Gender, Sexuality and Society at Birkbeck, which he funded by working as a postman. He took his BA (Hons) in French and German (but mainly French) from the University of Cambridge (Girton College) in 2005.

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Léo Perier (Paris)

Theory Facing Reality: About Transgressive Relationships

Kinships | STRAND 1: Affect, Space and Temporality

This communication will question the effectivity of the links between queer theory and social realities. To do this, L. Perier will discuss the subject of 'intimate' relationships, trying to understand which one can be labelled 'queer' or not. Queer relationships raise the question of identity: Who is a man who has a relationship with an MtF woman? How can a self-identified gay man feel desire for an FtM trans? By mixing identities and bodies, we can shed light on the epistemological impossibility of these relationships. The relationships L. Perier would use as an example are those between gay cisgendered men and gay transmen. They question the relationship between desire and identity. If we all agree that sex and gender are historically constructed, then why is there such trouble with having desires that you're not supposed to have? Why can having desire for a man that was born a woman be such a threat to identity?

Although such examples can be analyzed and understood within the field of queer theory, it should be asked if this theory is really useful to think them, understand them and make them visible in an effective way, outside of a theoretical field. Or do such relationships call for a rethinking of queer theory, in order to find a way to give account of such non-understandable relationships?

Biographical Note

Léo Perier earned his Master in Cultural Studies at Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, in 2009. His current work focuses on identity, desire, relationships between gay FTM and gay cisgendered men, HIV prevention, and trans issues.

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Susanne Jung (Tübingen)

“Gay, But Not- Gay”: Queer Visions of Sexuality and Kinship in Amy Fox’ Heights

Kinships | STRAND 1: Affect, Space and Temporality

In Amy Fox’ one-act play *Heights* (2000), three characters find themselves trapped on a Manhattan rooftop: Jonathan, a lawyer, his fiancée Isabel and his lover Alec, all of whom currently find themselves stuck in various aspects of their lives. Viewed through the eyes of Alec, an out-gay man, Jonathan – who throughout the play seems to be unwilling or unable to choose between his lover and his fiancée – appears to be a closeted gay man who fails to own up to his true gay identity. However, a different picture emerges from Jonathan’s own utterances and from those moments in the play when his words fail him. As S. Jung will argue, Jonathan finds himself unable to voice his desires because he has hit a dead end in discourse. His ‘stuckness’, if you will, is an epistemological stuckness of the symbolic order through which Jonathan’s subjectivity constitutes itself. There is no room in neither Alec’s nor Isabel’s – nor Jonathan’s – imaginary which follows late 20th century binarisms of gay and straight identities and a heteronormative understanding of kinship relations, for the conception of shifting, bisexual, or queer identities and desires, or for a polyamorous or any other form of queer system of kinship ties. This paper furthermore proposes a comparison between the play and its movie adaptation (*Heights* 2005). Themes of queer identities and kinship ties are explored in greater detail in the film adaptation; but maybe more radically, in its climactic scenes the movie surprisingly turns its focus away from bonds of sexual and romantic love, foregrounding instead other forms of kinship relations such as bonds of friendship and intergenerational bonds. Like the play, the movie in the end upholds the ability to nurture oneself as the most redeeming quality for a subject inevitably riven by abjection and loss.

Biographical Note

Susanne Jung is currently writing her MA thesis in English literature at the University of Tübingen on contemporary queer theatre and film. She has published articles on the cultural practice of fan fiction writing as a means of engaging queerly with popular cultural narratives and on online fandom as a queer utopian space, and also on contemporary queer postpornographic works of art such as the movie *Shortbus*, investigating what happens when contemporary artists employ the pornographic as just another, equally valid mode of artistic expression. Her fields of interest include Gender Studies and Queer Studies, Performance Studies, Creative Writing and Narrative Medicine. She also holds a degree in pharmacy from the University of Tübingen. She is one of the co-founders of the *Queere AStA Hochschulgruppe* at the University of Tübingen.

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Jennifer Moos (Saarbrücken)

Queer in Bed?, or: The Dialectics of Sleep

Econo mies | STRAND 2: Limits and Boundary Crossings

In reference to Halberstam's characterization of "queer subjects" (2005: 10) as those who live "outside the logic of capital accumulation" (ibid.) and thus also "(deliberately, accidentally, or of necessity) during the hours when others sleep" (ibid.), J. Moos' reading of late 20th- and early 21st-century narratives discusses the queer potentialities of sleep(ing).

Sleep, when read against the logics of accumulative, (re-)productive capitalist society, at first glance strikes us as utterly passive, unproductive, as a loss of (labor) time. This is exemplified by J. Moos' reading of Jonathan Coe's *The House of Sleep* (1997). In Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore's *So Many Ways to Sleep Badly* (2008), we encounter a drug-addicted hustler suffering from insomnia, who, as we will see, not only works against (capitalist) logics of time, but who also blurs the boundaries between sleep and sleeplessness. Furthermore, sleep in its narcissistic, escapist and non-communicative/-communal dimension is strongly marked by the anti-social. Using the examples of Leslie Feinberg's *Drag King Dreams* (2006) and Shelley Jackson's utopian novel *Half Life* (2006), this paper discusses whether sleep as a supposedly anti-social act may have a reparative function (cf. Sedgwick) which can be made productive for a re-thinking of queer ethics and politics.

Utopianism, and therefore also fiction as a space in which utopian queerness – or a queer utopia – is being performed, is "indispensable for social critique and social change" (2009: 48) as Donald E. Hall argues in *Reading Sexualities*. Embracing Eve K. Sedgwick's meditation on reparative reading strategies and José E. Muñoz's recent (re-)turn to "queer utopianism" (2009: 3), J. Moos will point to the hitherto overlooked political potentialities inherent to sleep(ing) as a queer strategy to disrupt the (hetero-)normative logics of re-productive capitalist society.

Biographical Note

Jennifer Moos, M.A., studied English Philology, Gender Studies and Linguistics in Freiburg and Manchester; has taught courses on feminist, gender, queer and literary theories and now works and teaches at the Department of British, North American and Anglophone Literatures and Cultures at Saarland University; PhD project on *Queer Night Cultures: Reading Night and Sleep in Contemporary Genderqueer Narratives*; co-editor of *queere (t)ex(t)perimente* (2008); member of the editorial team of *Freiburger GeschlechterStudien*; passion for boy bands and multicolored paintings.

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Kathrin Ganz and Do. Gerbig (Hamburg)

Tales of Deconstructing Capitalism

Economies | STRAND 2: Limits and Boundary Crossings

In their talk, K. Ganz and D. Gerbig are going to review experiences they made in the past two years whenever they went to give a talk on queer critiques of capitalism and economy. The reactions of some people in the audience are always strong and strangely repetitive. It's almost like the mentioning of "Warenfetischismus" ("commodity fetishism") or "Wertkritik" ("value criticism") is supposed to be enough to silence them and their suggestion to think things otherwise. People seem to be keen on keeping the grand narrative of a capitalist totality alive. They state/reinstate a no-way-out-situation, unless, of course the revolutionary subject succeeds at deteriorating social conditions and, finally, revolution arises. In the realm of criticism of capitalism, queer theory and deconstruction continue to be pesty troublemakers.

But K. Ganz and D. Gerbig are not to be silenced by that, on the contrary: They still want to cross the boundaries of talking about economy and capitalism and thereby challenge the dominant imaginary of a social theory that is able - almost like magic - to explain everything. What they like to apply for promoting this daring feat is to focus not on the omnipotent figuration of capitalism, but on its contingency, failure, disruption, breaches and its constitutive others. To their estimate, it is the suspicion that alternatives to capitalism are nothing but mere escapism that clutters our imagination. By bringing forward already existing alternatives to the norm and something that they like to call "queer ethics of undecidability", K. Ganz and D. Gerbig aim towards embracing spaces of (new) possibilities.

Leading questions will be: What can a queer ethics do in the field of economy? What are the potentials of a queer-ethical approach to a critique of capitalism and for imagining new/just forms of economy? How is it possible to imagine economy for a queer utopia without giving in to the mysterious power of the almighty capitalism?

Biographical Note: Kathrin Ganz

Kathrin Ganz holds a degree in Political Science, Sociology & Gender and Queer Studies from Hamburg University. She just started working on her dissertation about the social movement evolving around internet politics and culture at Technische Universität Hamburg-Harburg (Arbeitsgruppe Arbeit-Gender-Technik). She worked as a lecturer in Sociology and Gender & Queer Studies at Hamburg University. As a member of the AG Queer Studies, she co-edited *Verqueerte Verhältnisse. Intersektionale, ökonomiekritische und strategische Interventionen* (2009). Her fields of interest are queer/feminist and intersectional thought, internet politics and culture, families within the welfare state and queer-feminist perspectives on neoliberalism and economy. Kathrin blogs at <http://iheartdigitallife.de>.

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Biographical Note: Do. Gerbig

Do. Gerbig gained her Sociology degree in 2007 with a thesis on subjectivity, resistance and agency from a queer-feminist perspective. Her concept of a “processual-strategic agency” is outlined in the article *Das prozessual-strategische Subjekt in Bewegung* (2009). Do. is a member of the AG Queer Studies in Hamburg and currently works as research assistant at the TU Hamburg-Harburg in the workgroup *Arbeit-Gender-Technik*. She also worked as lecturer in Sociology and Gender & Queer Studies at Hamburg University for two semesters. Her main interests are queer-feminist theory and activism. Over the last two years, queer critiques of economy came into focus. On this topic, Do. Gerbig and Kathrin Ganz published the article *Diverser leben, arbeiten und Widerstand leisten. Queerende Perspektiven auf ökonomische Praxen der Transformation* in *Arranca!* 41 (2010).

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Judith Jack Halberstam (Los Angeles)

“The Killer in Me, Is the Killer in You”: Homosexuality and Fascism

Keynote

In Sasha Baron Cohen's most recent camp spoof, Brüno, the very gay and very swish Austrian fashionista compares himself several times to Hitler and jokes that he is “the second most misunderstood Austrian in history.” The intersection of Nazi and homosexual that Cohen invokes has a long and vexed history that stretches from the well-known homosexuality of Nazi storm troopers to eroticized images of Nazi soldiers by Tom of Finland. Leo Bersani notes the glorification of Nazism in the work of Jean Genet, and Dagmar Herzog notes in *Sex After Fascism* that “popular assumptions of Nazism as a homosexual movement have remained remarkably durable.” In this talk, J.J. Halberstam will return to a very important essay by Stuart Marshall from 1991, titled *The Contemporary Political Use of Gay History: The Third Reich* and tries to account for both gay Nazis and the Nazi persecution of homosexuals. At stake is a complex understanding of queer history that neither whitewashes the past nor colludes in homophobic renderings of it.

Biographical Note

Judith Jack Halberstam is Professor of English, Gender Studies and American Studies and Ethnicity at USC. Halberstam is the author of three books: *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Duke UP, 1995), *Female Masculinity* (Duke UP, 1998) and *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (NYU Press, 2005) and the co-author with Del LaGrace Volcano of *The Drag King Book* (Serpent's Tail, 1999). Halberstam also co-edited *Posthuman Bodies* (Indiana UP, 1995) with Ira Livingston and a Special Issue of *Social Text* titled *What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?* (2006) with David Eng and Jose Muñoz. Halberstam is finishing a book on *failure* and beginning two others, one on *Gaga Feminism* and the other on *Bats*.

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Chairs, Commentators and Organizers (in alphabetical order)

Jens Borcharding

Commentary on Judith Halberstam's keynote

Biographical Note

Jens Borcharding studied Scandinavian Studies and Gender Studies at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Ze completed hir studies with a thesis on *AIDS - Conventionalising subject-positions. A discourse-analytic examination of normality in the brochure 'Maintain your health within an HIV/AIDS environment' by the Danish ministry of foreign affairs*. Ze is currently part of the graduate research group "Gender as a Category of Knowledge" at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Jens is working on hir dissertation on Transgender Studies/Theory as an academic field of knowledge-construction and debates of gender-knowledge. Since 2009 ze is part of the research group "Transgender Studies and Theories: Building up the field in a nordic context".

Generally Jens is interested in the analysis of mechanisms of construction and reproduction of normality in regimes of knowledge with a particular emphasis on the formation of the subject and identity. Further interests include electronic music, dj-ing, cinema and macintosh computers.

PS: And by the way, ze did the gorgeous design of the poster and flyer for this conference! In this case also lots of thanks go to L.E. for the help – without you, the whole stuff would have taken even longer!

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Adrian de Silva

Commentary on Susan Stryker's keynote

Biographical Note

Adrian de Silva completed his studies in Sociology, Political Science and English Language and Literature at the Universities of Münster and York, Ont., with an MA thesis on Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony. He is currently a member of the graduate research group "Gender as a Category of Knowledge" at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and is writing his dissertation on the change of gender in the Federal Republic of Germany. His research interests are 20th-century political theory, queer and transgender theory, and the construction of minoritised sexualities and genders in western societies. His publications include articles on ethical, legal and socio-political aspects of homo-, trans- and intersexuality.

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Maja Figge

Host of the Film Programme "queer again? *freaky film club special"
as well as Chair: (Artistic) Interventions | STRAND 1: Affect, Space and Temporality

Biographical Note

Maja Figge, M.A. studied cultural studies, art history and history in Bremen and Berlin and is currently finishing her dissertation *Fading out, Fading in, Cross Fading. (Re-)Production Processes of Germanness in West-German Cinema of the 1950s* at the Institute for Cultural Theory, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. From 2007 until 2010 she was an associate member of the Research Training Group "Gender as a Category of Knowledge" also at Humboldt-Universität. She taught at Humboldt-Universität as well as this winter term at Ruhr-Universität Bochum. She is co-editor of the forthcoming anthology on *shame and guilt in gendered (sub)texts of the Shoah* (transcript 2010; with Konstanze Hanitzsch & Nadine Teuber). Her research interests include: Film and History, German Cinema after 1945, Gender & Media, Postcolonial Theory, Critical Whiteness Studies.

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Elahe Haschemi Yekani

Commentary on Roderick Ferguson's keynote

Biographical Note

Dr. des. Elahe Haschemi Yekani studied English and American Studies as well as Theatre Studies at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and the University of Westminster, London. In 2009, she completed her PhD with a dissertation entitled *The Privilege of Crisis* on narratives of colonial and postcolonial masculinities which received the Britcult Award for the best new monograph (dissertation) in the field of British cultural studies awarded by the German Association for the Study of British Cultures. Currently, she works as a Research Assistant at the Department of English and American Studies at HU Berlin. From 2005-2007 she was a scholarship holder at the Graduate Research Group "Gender as a Category of Knowledge" funded by the German Research Foundation. Her research interests comprise: Queer Studies and Postcolonial Theory, 20th-century British fiction, Gender and Intersectionality. Publications include: *Quer durch die Geisteswissenschaften. Perspektiven der Queer Theory* (ed. with B. Michaelis, Berlin 2005); *Erlöser. Figurationen männlicher Hegemonie* (ed. with S. Glawion and J. Husmann-Kastein, Bielefeld 2007).

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Carsten Junker

Chair: *Limits of Queer* | STRAND 2: Limits and Boundary Crossings

Biographical Note

Dr. Carsten Junker teaches English-speaking Cultures/American Studies and works as a research fellow at the Institute for Postcolonial and Transcultural Studies at the University of Bremen. Research interests: white masculinities, abolition, genre theory. Recent publications: *Frames of Friction: Black Genealogies, White Hegemony, and the Essay as Critical Intervention*, Frankfurt am Main/New York: Campus, 2010, and with Julia Roth: *Weiß sehen. Dekoloniale Blickwechsel mit Zora Neale Hurston und Toni Morrison*, Sulzbach/Taunus: Helmer, 2010.

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Eveline Kilian

Introduction, Closing Remarks

Biographical Note

Eveline Kilian is Professor of English Literature and Culture and Co-Director of the Centre for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Her major research areas are: trans/gender and queer theory, gender and ethics, discourse analysis, the interface between literary discourse and other cultural discourses, the literature and culture of modernism and postmodernism, and metropolitan cultures (emphasis on London).

Her book publications include: *London: Eine literarische Entdeckungsreise* (Darmstadt, 2008) (a cultural and literary history of London); *GeschlechtSverkehr: Theoretische und literarische Perspektiven des gender-bending* (Königstein, 2004) (on gender-bending, transsexuality and transgender and the negotiation of these issues in gender theory and in literary texts); *Momente innerweltlicher Transzendenz: Die Augenblickserfahrung in Dorothy Richardsons Romanzyklus Pilgrimage und ihr ideengeschichtlicher Kontext* (Tübingen, 1997) (on the significant moment in Modernism, its history and its relevance in Dorothy Richardson's Pilgrimage).

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Beatrice Michaelis

Commentary on Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's keynote

Biographical Note

Dr. des. Beatrice Michaelis is Research Coordinator and postdoctoral fellow at the International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture (GCSC) at Justus-Liebig-University Giessen. She also teaches medieval German literature in Giessen and Frankfurt. She studied English and American Studies as well as Medieval German Literature at Humboldt-Universität, Berlin and the University of Westminster, London. In her dissertation (*Dis-)articulations of Desire* she analyses the textual effects of silence in scientific and literary texts on desire, gender and the body in the High and Late Middle Ages. Her postdoctoral research project examines processes of inclusion and exclusion drawing on the intersections of religious beliefs and skin colour in medieval texts. Her research interests include: Literature of the High and Late Middle Ages, Gender Studies/Queer Theory, Postcolonial Studies, Narratology and the History of Science. Publications include: *Geschlecht als Tabu* (ed. with Ute Frietsch, Konstanze Hanitzsch and Jennifer John), Bielefeld 2008; *Quer durch die Geisteswissenschaften. Perspektiven der Queer Theory* (ed. with Elahe Haschemi Yekani), Berlin 2005.

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Sabine Meyer

Chair: Kinships | STRAND 1: Affect, Space and Temporality

Biographical Note

Sabine Meyer is a Ph.D student at the Humboldt-Universität's Department for Northern European Studies in Berlin. As one of the recipients of an Elsa Neumann Scholarship hir current focus is on the staging of so-called 'trans* phenomena' in Danish media between 1930-1960. In addition to hir focus on Scandinavian Studies ze has an academic background in the dramatic arts and business management that has included studies in Germany as well as Denmark. Hir interest in performativity, however, extends far beyond academic discourse.

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Vojin Saša Vukadinović

Commentary on José Esteban Muñoz's keynote

Biographical Note

Vojin Saša Vukadinović, MA. Studied History, German Literature and Gender Studies at the Universities of Freiburg and Basel. PhD candidate in the graduate programme "Gender as a Category of Knowledge", Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Currently finishing a PhD on the relationship between anti-feminism, homophobia, and leftist terrorism in West-Germany in the 1970s. Other fields of interest include: deconstruction + mutant French Theory, Yugoslavia in all its pasts and presents, the history of disbelief and atheism, posthumanist ethics. Publications include essays on the history of leftist terrorism, feminism, and anti-racism in Germany. Staff member of the Berlin-based press & bookshop collective b_books. Also a (former) member of the anti-racist network Kanak Attak.

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About the chairs

Gabriele Dietze

Chair: *Equality and Diversity Politics* | STRAND 1: Affect, Space and Temporality

Biographical Note

Gabriele Dietze studied German and American Studies in Frankfurt (Main) and Berlin. She teaches Cultural Studies, Gender and Media Studies with a focus on race/ethnicity and gender. She held visiting professorships in Austria (Graz 2005, Salzburg 2007 and Klagenfurt 2008) as well as in the US (UVA, Charlottesville 2008 und Columbia, New York 2009). Currently, she is part of the research unit "Cultures of Insanity" at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

Selected Publications: *Weiß – Whiteness – Weisssein. Kritische Studien zu Gender und Rassismus*, ed. with Martina Tissberger, Jana Husmann-Kastein, Daniela Hrzán. Peter Lang, 2006. (2nd ed. 2009); *Gender als interdependente Kategorie. Neue Perspektiven auf Intersektionalität, Diversität und Heterogenität*, co-authored with Katharina Walgenbach, Antje Hornscheidt, Kerstin Palm. Budrich, 2007; *Kritik des Okzidentalismus. Transdisziplinäre Beiträge zu (Neo-)Orientalismus und Geschlecht*, ed. with Claudia Brunner and Edith Wenzel. transcript, 2009; *Weiße Frauen in Bewegung. Genealogien und Konkurrenzen von Race- und Genderpolitiken*, transcript, 2010 (forthcoming).

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Nanna Heidenreich

Chair: Time and Affect | STRAND 1: Affect, Space and Temporality

Biographical Note

Nanna Heidenreich (Berlin) holds a phd in cultural studies and is co-curator of Forum Expanded, a program which investigates the margins of the cinematic within the context of the International Film Festival Berlin (together with Stefanie Schulte Strathaus (director), Anselm Franke and Bettina Steinbrügge). Further involvements with the Arsenal – Institute for Film and Video Art in Berlin in the areas of experimental film and video art (distribution, edition) as well as independent curatorial projects in film & video (most recently the series *Archiv möglicher Zukunft* (archive of possible futures) at Festival Theaterformen, Braunschweig 2010). She also teaches occasionally and works as a translator. Her projects focus mainly on visual culture, politics & art, iconoclasm, migration, anti-racism. Her latest publications include: */Conversation on Locating Conflict./* (mit Nicole Wolf). In: *Sarai Reader No. 8 "Fear"*, Delhi 2010, S. 91-98 (also available as a download via www.sarai.net).

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Julia Roth

Chair: *Queer Postcolonial Space* | STRAND 1: Affect, Space and Temporality

Biographical Note

Julia Roth is a doctoral candidate at the Potsdam Graduate School "Cultures in/of Mobility" and the PhD Research Training Group "Gender as a Category of Knowledge" at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Her dissertation discusses occidental constructions of South American gendered images. She is editor of *polar magazine* and organizes cultural political events, predominantly on the Americas (e.g. *Border Crossers. Women/Images of the Americas in Movement* at the House of World Cultures Berlin in October 2010). Selected publications: 'Stumm, bedeutungslos, gefrorenes Weiss'. *Zum Umgang mit Toni Morrisons Essays im weißen deutschen Kontext*, in *Mythen, Masken und Subjekte. Kritische Weißseinsforschung in Deutschland*, ed. Maisha Eggers, Grada Kilomba Ferreira, Peggy Piesche, Susan Arndt, Unrast Verlag 2005; translation of *Gender Theory. Eine Einführung* by Riki Wilchins (into German), Querverlag 2006; with Carsten Junker, *Weiß sehen. Dekoloniale Blickwechsel mit Zora Neale Hurston und Toni Morrison*, Helmer 2010; *Fantasías sobre Flamenco. Getanzte Carmenbilder zwischen Körperwissen, Punk und Porno*, in *Carmen. Ein Mythos in Literatur, Film und Kunst*, ed. by Kirsten Möller, Inge Stephan, Alexandra Tacke, Böhlau 2010 (forthcoming).

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Marc Siegel

Chair: *Queer Body Politics* | STRAND 2: Limits and Boundary Crossings

Biographical Note

Marc Siegel is a Research Fellow at the Collaborative Research Center 447: Cultures of Performativity at the Freie Universität, Berlin. His research focuses on avant-garde film and queer studies. Recent publications include: *Something More Than Reality: Andy Warhol and Bruce Conner*, in *Painting Real/Screening Real* Ed. Peter Pakesch (Verlag Walter König, 2009) and *Bruce LaBruce. Post-Pornograf wider Willen*, *Montage av 18.2* (2009). He also works as an independent curator. In this capacity, he recently presented George Kuchar's *Weather Diaries* at the Berlin Biennial 2010 and *LIVE FILM! JACK SMITH! Five Flaming Days in a Rented World* (Arsenal/HAU, Berlin 2009, with Susanne Sachsse and Stefanie Schulte Strathaus). He is also a co-founder of the artist collective CHEAP.

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Wibke Straube

Chair: *Queer Youths* | STRAND 2: Limits and Boundary Crossings

Biographical Note

Wibke Straube lives and works in Berlin, Germany and Linköping, Sweden. S/he is a doctoral student at the Gender Studies Department of Linköping University, Sweden, supervised by Nina Lykke and Cecilia Åsberg. Her research project *In-Between the Lines. Representations of Trans Identities in Film Aesthetics and Reception Politics* is concerned with counter-narratives of gender and sexuality beyond the frame of normalisation within films on trans*, gender queerness, and gender ambiguity. Wibke Straube's project is supported by the research group on feminist methodologies initiated by Lann A. Hornscheidt, Professor for Gender Studies at Humboldt Universität, Berlin. Wibke is part of the Queer Visual Culture group of the Institute for Queer Theory in Berlin. In 2007 s/he worked with Renate Lorenz in the organisation of the queerfeminist art exhibition *Normal Love. Precarious Life/Precarious Work* in Berlin.

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Simon Strick

Chair: Beyond the Human? | STRAND 2: Limits and Boundary Crossing

Biographical Note

Simon Strick has been assistant teacher at the Department for American Studies, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. He has been a member of the Graduate Program “Gender as a Category of Knowledge” and done research on questions of biotechnology, the gendered and racialized body and the politicization of life. He is currently finishing up his dissertation on the topic of corporeal pain as an intersection of biopower and sentimentality in 19th-century American literature and science.

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Amy Villarejo

Chair: Economies | STRAND 2: Limits and Boundary Crossings

Biographical Note

Amy Villarejo is professor and chair of the Department of Theatre, Film & Dance at Cornell University, where she also teaches in the Feminist, Gender & Sexuality Studies Program. She is author of *Lesbian Rule: Cultural Criticism and the Value of Desire* (Duke University Press, 2003), *Film Studies: The Basics*, (Routledge, 2007), and a forthcoming book on television, *Ethereal Queer* (also from Duke University Press). Her articles on film, television, and queer theory have appeared in *Social Text*, *New German Critique*, and other journals, and she is co-editing, with Jordana Rosenberg, a forthcoming special issue of *GLQ* on queer Marxisms.

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