



Queer Again? Power, Politics and Ethics

23.-25. September 2010

International Conference of the Department of English and American Studies and the Research Training Group "Gender as a Category of Knowledge"

The concept of queer is volatile and, at times, difficult to grasp. As a result, we need a continuous review of the fields and debates within Queer Theory. 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. However, in debates following the publication of Edelman's book (as for instance, in the *Social Text* issue of 2005 with the programmatic title *What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?*) the ethical impetus of queer criticism confronted and challenged the dominance of the so-called *antisocial thesis*. This ongoing debate and the regular recurrence of the antisocial thesis in its different manifestations reveals a pressing need to reflect anew the relationship between queer and 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 provide a space to further the debate about sexuality and gender and their multiple interconnections in fields of power.

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.

Possible topics to be addressed include:

- queer strategies and practices in art/visual culture and literature
- conditions and possibilities of political activism
- normativity, citizenship and recognition
- queer utopias/imagination
- political and ethical implications of sexual dissidence
- rethinking concepts of temporality and space, generation or community
- varying meanings of queer in different geographical and temporal contexts

The second strand, **Limits and Boundary Crossings**, takes up current theoretical debates with regard to disciplinary and other boundaries and crossings of these boundaries.

Possible questions to be discussed include:

- Which limits and/or transgressions of these limits occur when different theoretical fields interact (e.g. queer theory and transgender theory or postcolonial theory or crip theory/disability studies)?
- What are the limitations of queer? What are the inclusions and queer produces in specific contexts that demand new critical/queer interventions?
- 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?

Keynote speakers include Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, Roderick Ferguson, Judith Halberstam, José Esteban Muñoz and Susan Stryker.

We invite abstracts for 20-minute papers. Abstracts should be in English and not exceed 500 words. They should be accompanied by a short biographical sketch of about 250 words and sent to queer.conference@hu-berlin.de by **March 31st 2010**.

The conference language will be English. The conference location is wheelchair accessible. We will try to provide sign language interpreters as well as child care in case of need. We kindly ask participants to let us know about applicable requirements or other special needs by **April 30th 2010**.

Please note that travel funds can only be granted in exceptional cases and we ask participants to apply in time for travel funding at their home institutions.

For more information please look at our website:
<http://www.anl.hu-berlin.de/confslecs/queeragain>

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