

inQueery 2021

Queer Abolition

InQueery Symposium Overview

[Registration link](#)

4:00-4:10	Welcome Remarks and Introduction (Nishant Shahani)
4:15-5:45	Concurrent Panels/Breakout Rooms
5:45-6:00	Break (Zoom meeting ends; return to same meeting ID)
6:00-7:00	Keynote: Emily Thuma “The Queer Politics of Abolitionist Feminism”

Concurrent Session Panels

Panel/Breakout Room #1, Moderated by Justine Trinh

Feminist and Queer Theories in Material Contexts

- *Who is Deserving of Justice?: A Critique on the Oppression of Black Motherhood—Arin Mitchell
- *Phenomenological Critiques of Compulsory Heterosexuality – Melanie Bell
- *The Deradicalization of Black Feminist Thought—Nejat Kedir

Panel/Breakout Room #2, Moderated by Gavin Doyle

Theorizing Queer Justice Beyond Carcerality: Local and Transnational Contexts

- *Gender-biased Policing and the Disparities Transgender People Face in the Prison System—Alecia Burgett
- * Trans Homelessness: Causes, Solutions, and Interventions that Work—Milo Edwards
- * Pursuing Prison Abolition through Queer Palestinian Liberation—Eman Ahmed

Panel/Breakout Room #3, Moderated by Kyle Serrott

(Trans)Gender Politics in the 21st Century: Texts and Contexts

- *Feminist Challenges to Neoliberalism: Beyond “Leaning in” and “Girl Bosses” —Lesli Napoles
- * Biohacking Queer Fertility: Using Social Media to Form Communities of Knowledge
Shain Wright
- * Hail Paimon, Trans King of *Hereditary!* – Elena Skibicki



Presentation Descriptions

Panel/Breakout Room #1, Moderated by Justine Trinh

Feminist and Queer Theories in Material Contexts

Who is Deserving of Justice?: A Critique on the Oppression of Black Motherhood—Arin Mitchell

It is the contention of this paper that desertism is a latent framework used in distributive theories of justice, and the resulting effect is veiled injustice which pushes the blame on the oppressed rather than their oppressors or the institutional structures which aid them. This argument draws from the feminist political theorist Iris Marion Young and her critique of distributive theories of justice. The paper begins with an overview of desertism and a critique of the theory. Then I expand on Young's existing theory of justice and her five forms of oppression. In the final part, I express how the theory of desert facilitates oppression for Black mothers, particularly those on social welfare. Challenging the oppression of social groups, such as Black mothers, necessitates that one deconstructs the false narratives, based in desertism, about what these groups "deserve."

Phenomenological Critiques of Compulsory Heterosexuality – Melanie Bell

Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology* places society on a vertical axis of which heterosexual, white, and cis men serve as a basis for neutrality. Her use of the word "queer," in this sense, is both directional and sexual in nature, addressing not only queer women but also their slantwise move away from the vertical axis on which these men and the nuclear family is situated. How can a turn away from the repressive state apparatus, and in turn its neoliberal ideologies, create a space devoid of compulsory heterosexuality and internalized homophobia? What role could other influential structures situated within the Apparatuses change their orientation to one that supports queer women on the vertical axis and within the nuclear family?

The Deradicalization of Black Feminist Thought—Nejat Kedir

In this essay I offer my own reading of Kimberle Crenshaw's essay "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color". In my reading I prioritize the ambivalent parts of the essay where Crenshaw demonstrates the function of intersectionality as being a gesture towards an aporia in American legal discourse. I argue that intersectionality does not provide redress for the violated black female body; highlighting the inseparable link between state violence (domestic and international) and the non-recognition of black female injury. I put Crenshaw's work in conversation with recent works in Black studies that carefully theorize blackness to shed new light on the neglected aspects of the essay. In part II of this paper I stage a brief reflection on value, biological logics of racialized gender. I give a historical overview of how blackness and black gender are tethered to logics of the slave ship. Last but not least I draw parallels between how intersectionality has been turned into a "buzzword" and how abolitionism is also becoming a "buzzword". I argue that this has more to do with the commodification of radical black feminist politics rather than a deep engagement with the works of black feminist thinkers and writers.

Panel/Breakout Room #2, Moderated by Gavin Doyle

Theorizing Queer Justice Beyond Carcerality: Local and Transnational Contexts

Gender-biased Policing and the Disparities Transgender People Face in the Prison System—Alecia Burgett

Although transgender people's visibility is becoming more socially accepted, the violence sustained at the hands of misguided policies in the prison system has an urgent need for improvement. The widespread violence against trans people will not change until we can change the inept carceral state. Layleen Polanco, a trans woman of color, paid the ultimate price – death– showing how the criminal justice system ensnares trans people with violence and discrimination. Michelle Kailani Calvin, another trans woman, inappropriately housed in a men's prison for 15 years. The National Center for Transgender Equality is just one group that supports and advocates for policy reform and better treatment of transgender people, beginning with housing assignments. In this presentation, I will look at the discriminatory policies towards trans people within the prison system and address changes in progress or toward the future.

Trans Homelessness: Causes, Solutions, and Interventions that Work—Milo Edwards

My presentation examines the topic of homelessness and how it specifically impacts queer and trans youth. I analyze some of the patterns that have led to trans youth experiencing homelessness at a disproportionate rate compared to their cis heterosexual peers. I will also discuss the intersectionality of trans youth of color and survival sex work. Finally, my paper shares intervention practices to end and prevent queer homelessness and offers examples of what does and doesn't work in an accessible, equitable lens including mutual aid, rapid rehousing, health-care access, and peer-to-peer opportunities.

Pursuing Prison Abolition through Queer Palestinian Liberation—Eman Ahmed

To pursue prison abolition without considering the world's largest open-air prison is a violent oversight. This is also true of pursuing Palestinian and queer liberation as though they do not necessitate one another. Yet, the weaponization of queer "solidarity" propaganda by the explicitly homophobic, transphobic, illegitimate, settler-colonial apartheid state of "Israel" exposes a smokescreen (known as *pinkwashing*) that ensures this oversight persists as a distraction from their brutal ongoing occupation of Palestine. It is imperative to also recognize that this is an apartheid regime largely sponsored by the US, another settler-colonial state, famously known as the "land of the free." How do both of these highly revered (and highly policed and armed) "democratic" and "progressive" governments do this under the guise of co-opted rhetoric and reformist policy? This inquiry will be explored through studying queer film and literature that rightfully centers Palestinian liberation and solidarity movements, with an emphasis on the framework of prison abolition and considering historical contexts of colonialism and imperialism. Ultimately, the following is a call for an outcry for Palestinian liberation.

Panel/Breakout Room #3, Moderated by Kyle Serrott

(Trans)Gender Politics in the 21st Century: Texts and Contexts

Feminist Challenges to Neoliberalism: Beyond “Leaning in” and “Girl Bosses” — Lesli Napoles

Neoliberalist and post-feminist philosophy weaponizes misogyny through its failures to recognize the intersectional relationships between power, privilege, and ignorance: Chief Operating Officers (COO) of major companies like Facebook write books on how to climb the corporate ladder as a woman; deodorant commercials capitalize off of misogyny through attempted female empowerment; get rich quick schemes and multi-level marketing “businesses” sell the idea of financial liberation of women through “leadership.” This essay looks at the impacts of neoliberalism and its co-option of feminist discourse.

Biohacking Queer Fertility: Using Social Media to Form Communities of Knowledge— Shain Wright

Building on the differentiation between capitalistic biohacking and biohacking as a form of resistance in community described by Malatino (2017), this paper explores the concept of biohacking queer fertility as a form of hegemonic resistance. Biohacking has traditionally been an avenue for body modifications which challenge Western culture, norms, and expectations. Trans and genderqueer people, who can be seen as outside of heteronormative Western ideals to begin with, find community, share information, and create spaces for themselves through biohacking fertility online. The similarities in online networking and building communities which share knowledge and how-to information for “DIY” biology and queer fertility are examined. Biohacking gender in some ways necessitates biohacking fertility, in addition to the frequent, though not invariable, need that queer families have to biohack fertility when desiring children. Using my own experience biohacking gender and fertility, and my current research on social networking sites, biohacking as a framework is used to understanding trans and queer fertility needs as they are met on social media. Biohacking has also expanded to consider subversive actions that hack the medical industry itself. Specific areas of biohacking fertility will be explored including tracking ovulation, finding donors or using sperm banks, freezing sperm/eggs, at-home inseminations, supplemental nutrition systems, chest-feeding, and inducing lactation in non-pregnant bodies.

Hail Paimon, Trans King of *Hereditary*!—Elena Skibicki

Despite being a horror movie with elements of familial conflict, the 2018 film *Hereditary* can also be read as a trans narrative. The film continuously uses the symbolism of heads and bodies, specifically heads not matching bodies, to illustrate the dilemma in which Paimon (the male demon in the film) finds himself. Given that transgender people have gender identities that do not match the sex they were assigned at birth, the film may be using a head to represent a being’s spirit or identity, which has to find the body that it belongs to, even if that body looks different from the head externally. A text in the film also states that Paimon only uses masculine pronouns and will become angry and vengeful if summoned into a female body. Paimon was initially summoned into a female body by accident, but his host’s grandmother, the leader of his cult, affirms his gender. He feels lost after her death, desperate to escape his host. But when he finally enters the male host’s body, he smiles, and triumphant music plays. The bloodshed may label this film a horror movie, but for Paimon, this is a coming-of-age story with a happy ending.

**The 2021 InQueery Symposium
Keynote Speaker (6:00pm-7:00pm)**

Prof. Emily Thuma

“The Queer Politics of Abolitionist Feminism”

Emily Thuma is an assistant professor of U.S. politics and law at the University of Washington Tacoma where she teaches at the intersection of feminist, queer, and critical race studies. She is the author of the award-winning book, *All Our Trials: Prisons, Policing, and the Feminist Fight to End Violence* (University of Illinois Press, 2019), and a long-time participant in movements for gender and racial justice.



“Abolition...is not (only) the ***absence*** of cops and prisoners. It’s the ***presence*** of everything we need to secure that absence.”

Ruth Gilmore Wilson

“The same systems responsible for our oppression cannot be the same systems responsible for our justice.”

Derecka Purnell