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Queer Theory

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Introduction

Queer Theory emerged from departments of literature, film, rhetoric, and critical studies in universities in the United States, United Kingdom, and Europe during the early 1990s, exemplified and inspired by the publication of two paradigm-shifting books: Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Butler 1990) and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* (Sedgwick 2008) (both cited under Theory). Drawing upon the social constructionist views prominent in the work of French philosopher-historian Michel Foucault, Butler argued that gender is neither a natural nor a stable element of biological or social identity, but rather is constantly brought into existence through a series of performative activities: everyday gestures and actions that have the potential to reconstitute notions and practices of masculinity and femininity and thus resist normativity. Sedgwick similarly attacked foundational models of sexual identity, exploring the closet as more than merely a metaphor and revealing its omnipresence in American culture as a duplicitous social practice (the open secret) and juridical double bind (with a legal system that demands the simultaneous erasure and production of homosexuality). Sedgwick characterized two contradictory and pervasive views of homosexuality, "minoritizing" and "universalizing" discourses. Whereas the former defines homosexuals as a distinct minority, the universalizing view holds that queerness subtends all forms of sexual desire and practice, including heterosexuality. An important antecedent to this flurry of queer scholarly activity was the publication of Foucault's three-volume work *The History of Sexuality*, published in English between 1977 and 1984. In it, Foucault rejected the "repressive hypothesis," which considers sexuality to be a "natural" expression of human identity and treats culture as a repressive force that constrains sexuality. Foucault argued instead that a science of sexuality emerged as one element within the analytic of biopower—a set of 19th-century medical and social technologies that nation-states employed to control their populations. In Foucault's view, cultural sanctions have not repressed sexual practices but, on the contrary, have produced a modern discourse of sexuality that forces subjects to speak about their sexual practices and desires continually. In addition to Foucault's work, historical events contributed to the development of Queer Theory. Most important among these was the AIDS epidemic, which decimated queer communities in the United States during the 1980s. The Reagan administration's refusal to acknowledge the health crisis spurred the formation of activist groups such as ACT UP and Queer Nation. These organizations brought media attention to the disease and to the homophobic practices that slowed progress toward treatment and cure. One key feature of the political theatrics of AIDS activism was an unapologetic and assertive stance regarding queer sexualities, as exemplified in the now-famous mantra, "we're here; we're queer; get used to it." That defiant attitude became the defining sensibility of Queer Theory, queer politics, and queer aesthetics. Indeed, the rebellious repurposing of existing cultural artifacts—a strategy long associated with camp—was made explicit in the reclamation of the term "queer." A combination of pointed anger, sophisticated academic theorizing, and pleasure in perversity informed Queer Theory, art, performance, writing, and the New Queer Cinema that emerged in the early 1990s from this same potent political and intellectual environment.

Theory

Queer Theory was, and remains, first and foremost a scholarly enterprise, although its adherents often explore the relationship between theory and practice by acknowledging the power relations inherent in the production of knowledge. Engaging with the works of queer theorists typically requires some knowledge of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, the work of Michel Foucault, and possibly a passing familiarity with Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, not to mention Jürgen Habermas, among other important modern and postmodern critical thinkers. One central debate within queer theory revolves around the very definition of the term "queer" and focuses upon its theoretical import and potential political usefulness. While political activism energized the notion of queerness as a diverse category comprising sexual dissidents who embrace the subversion of heterosexual normativity (Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's minoritizing view), for many theorists, queerness provides an opportunity for deconstructing identity norms altogether (a position more akin to the universalizing view of Sedgwick 2008). For Butler 1990, Butler 1993, Bersani 2009, Halperin 1997, and Halperin and Traub

2009, for example, “queer” signifies not an identity around which to organize an oppositional politics but a refusal of coherent identities as defined under (neo)liberalism and practiced through identity politics. Queer theorizing, for many, aims at disrupting and politicizing all presumed relations between and among sex, gender, bodies, sexuality, and desire.

Bersani, Leo. *Is the Rectum a Grave? And Other Essays*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.

The titular essay in this collection of Bersani’s work is a seminal tract within Queer Theory. In “Is the Rectum a Grave?” Bersani diagnoses the profound heterosexual anxiety embedded in 1980s representations of gay sex as infection and gay subjects as killers. He seeks to redefine sex as a practice that shatters the experience of the self rather than reinforcing it.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

One of the most important early works of Queer Theory, Butler’s book proposes that gender is something that people do, not something that they are. From this standpoint, gender can productively be detached from the biological distinction between the sexes. Furthermore, enacting gender is a performative process: invoking gender through acts, behavior, and style produces gender discursively.

Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Butler extends her discussion of gender performativity by challenging the notion that the body (and, specifically, anatomical sex) functions as a material limit constraining performances of gender and race. Instead, she contends, the body is discursively produced as well.

Fuss, Diana, ed. *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Seminal collection of essays demonstrating queer theoretical approaches to popular culture, literature, film, and history. Many of the essays became Queer Theory classics, including those by D. A. Miller, Patricia White, and Richard Meyer.

Halperin, David. *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

This controversial book seeks to secure Foucault’s central place in queer politics. Halperin explores the reasons why gay activists have been inspired by Foucault’s intellectual work and personal history. Some Foucault scholars denounce the work, arguing that Foucault would have rejected the use of his ideas for political organizing.

Halperin, David, and Valerie Traub, eds. *Gay Shame*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Turning gay pride on its end, this essay collection, which originated with a conference at the University of Michigan, seeks to reclaim emotion, embarrassment, and dissidence as central elements of queer practice.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.

In this seminal work of queer studies, Sedgwick analyzes and deconstructs the heterosexual/homosexual binary, exposing its contradictions through examinations of legal discourse and literature. Emphasizing the performative nature of speech acts—that is, the way language brings ideologies and practices into being—the author argues that hetero- and homosexualities are mutually constructed entities that subtend a homophobic culture. Originally published in 1990.

Feminism and Queer Theory

Despite a common intellectual and political project related to the interrogation of gender, sex, and sexualities, feminist theory and queer theory are often at odds, particularly in terms of their differing views on gender difference. Weed and Schor 1997 offers a

comprehensive look at the points of commonality, but also notes that feminism's interest in exposing and resisting, and in some cases upholding, notions and practices of gender difference is often seen as a problematic reification of those differences by queer theorists. Similarly Straayer 1996 reappraises feminist film theory by analyzing the production of queer bodies in film and video that defy the biological and psychoanalytical assumptions of feminism.

Straayer, Chris. *Deviant Eyes, Deviant Bodies: Sexual Re-orientation in Film and Video*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

Straayer brings Queer Theory to feminist film theory to argue that a variety of deviant practices of spectatorship flourish outside the limits of binary concepts of gender and sexuality.

Weed, Elizabeth, and Naomi Schor, eds. *Feminism Meets Queer Theory*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.

This essay collection includes work by scholars such as Judith Butler, Bidy Martin, Carole-Anne Tyler, and Elizabeth Grosz, all investigating the intersections as well as divergences in feminist, lesbian, and queer theories.

Bisexual Theory

Theorizing bisexuality often begins with the assertion that bisexuality has been neglected within the field of queer studies because gay, lesbian, and queer theorists refuse to acknowledge its very existence. Writers on bisexuality often argue that the political and personal implications of bisexuality threaten the sexual status quo of monosexuality (which encompasses both heterosexuality and homosexuality) and that bisexuality undermines the significance of object choice for sexual identity, desire, and practice. Hall and Pramaggiore 1996 claims that bisexuality is in itself plural, associated with desires, acts, performances, and modes of reading cultural texts, rather than presenting a coherent subject for identity politics. Hemmings 2002 takes up this subject as well, focusing on the metaphor of spatialization to move beyond binary models. Merl Storr's important anthology (Storr 1999) excerpts and organizes key theoretical writings on bisexuality in the past century.

Hall, Donald E., and Maria Pramaggiore, eds. *Representing Bisexualities: Subjects and Cultures of Fluid Desire*. New York: New York University Press, 1996.

This early collection of essays theorizes bisexuality beyond its familiar status as an erased and denied social identity within queer communities and argues for the intellectual and political productivity of multiple and unstable readings and practices of bisexualities.

Hemmings, Clare. *Bisexual Spaces: A Geography of Sexuality and Gender*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Hemmings addresses the confluence of feminist theory, queer theory, and post-structuralism and its impact on theorizing bisexuality. She identifies competing strands of thinking, one that views bisexuality as an identity and another that considers bisexuality a challenge to sexual identity.

Storr, Merl, ed. *Bisexuality: A Critical Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

The collection brings together primary sources on bisexuality from the 19th through the 20th century, revealing a vast array of definitions and deployments of bisexuality.

Queer Utopias and Dystopias

The relationships between queernesses—which for Edelman 2004 are based in nonreproductive sexuality—and futurity has become a provocative question within theory and politics in the last several decades. What is at stake when Edelman proposes a queer ethics not based on future generations? Whereas Edelman sees the future orientation of queerness as negativity, Muñoz 2009 links queer performance to utopian futures and Freeman 2010 broadly examines the productive possibilities of a nonlinear queer temporality.

Edelman, Lee. *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004.

This provocative work forwards the notion that queer ethics should embrace, not temper, its threatening “negativity,” which is based in a lack of participation in reproduction. A queer refusal to invest in heterosexual “reproductive futurism” would revolutionize a politics based on sentimental claims that we should work to improve the future for our children.

Freeman, Elizabeth. *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

Analyzing literature, photography, and performance, Freeman analyzes the pleasures associated with queer time as an alternative to the “heterosexually gendered double time of stasis and progress, intimacy and generation” (p. 23). Queer artists whose work changes tempos and foreground the affective and immediacy of sex, Freeman argues, can lead to the unbinding of time.

Muñoz, José Esteban. *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. New York: New York University Press, 2009.

Celebrating the work of contemporary queer performers and artists, Muñoz rejects assimilation-driven politics (e.g., the gay marriage movement) and presents the challenge and promise of the future as the construction of queer utopia.

History

Many queer historians designate the 1969 Stonewall Riots in New York as the event that gave rise to the modern gay rights liberation movement and generated many of the ideas that would emerge in the Queer Theory of the 1990s. While acknowledging the importance of Stonewall for political organizing, other queer historians and historiographers question whether emphasizing this dramatic moment of visibility in queer history too often obfuscates complex questions of how queer subjects negotiated their identities and communities in earlier eras. A number of historians, beginning with John D’Emilio and his critical early work on the postwar United States (D’Emilio 1998), seek to explore queer subjectivities in “other” places and times, recognizing that different historical eras and cultural locations produce sexual and social identities that are not necessarily amenable to contemporary concepts and terminology (gay, lesbian, queer, transsexual, transgender, bisexual). Several historians establish broad linkages to sexuality in ancient cultures, including Halperin 1989 and Laqueur 1990, whereas the modern urban environment is positioned as the source of organizing for 20th-century gay communities in Chauncey 1995, on New York City, and Faderman and Timmons 2006, on Los Angeles. Although it is becoming increasingly difficult to narrate a single queer history, given the diversity of experiences across nations, regions, and eras—made evident by Susan Stryker’s path-breaking work on transgender history (Stryker 2008)—Black 2001 surveys major political issues related to queer identities, whereas Gross 2002 focuses explicitly on queerness and media representation.

Black, Allida M. *Modern American Queer History*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001.

Wide-ranging essay collection that encompasses a variety of subjects and eras, including the romantic friendship of the 19th century, the Harlem Renaissance, civil rights, immigration, and gays in the military.

Chauncey, George. *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940*. New York: Basic Books, 1995.

This important historical study balances the emphasis on Stonewall and post–World War II gay life with a look at thriving gay communities in New York in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

D’Emilio, John. *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940–1970*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Considered by most queer historians to offer the definitive history of homophile movements in the United States since World War II, D’Emilio’s book pays particular attention to two organizations, the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis.

Faderman, Lillian, and Stuart Timmons, eds. *Gay L.A.: A History of Sexual Outlaws, Power Politics, and Lipstick Lesbians*. New York: Basic, 2006.

Reaching as far back as the 16th century to establish a cultural history of Los Angeles, Faderman and Timmons discuss the European conquest and the Spanish suppression of Native American culture and its traditions of sexual fluidity as well as the 20th-century influence of Hollywood and its stars on the discourses and practices of gay and lesbian identities in this major American metropolis.

Gross, Larry. *Up from Invisibility: Lesbians, Gay Men, and the Media in America*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.

Gross provides a historical overview of gay and lesbian media representation in the latter half of the 20th century, from newspapers to television and film.

Halperin, David. *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality: And Other Essays on Greek Love*. New York: Routledge, 1989.

In arguing that classical Greek erotic practices cannot be assessed using contemporary models of sexuality, Halperin laid the groundwork for queer historiography with this work, which takes issue with classical historians and their politically biased treatment of homosexuality in ancient Greece.

Laqueur, Thomas. *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990.

By proposing the historical and cultural malleability of models of human sexuality—documenting the Greek one-sex ideal (wherein females were imperfect males), which gave way to the two-sex model of the 18th century—Laqueur makes tangible the Foucauldian notion that sex and gender are constructed discursively.

Stryker, Susan. *Transgender History*. Berkeley, CA: Seal, 2008.

In this introduction to the history of transgender politics in the United States from World War II to the present, Stryker includes a glossary of transgender terms and concepts as well as a discussion of the complex relationship among transgender political movements and feminist and gay and lesbian theory and activism.

Textbooks

The advent of gay and lesbian studies and Queer Theory courses and programs in some universities has been accompanied by the publication of broad introductory works aimed at establishing and clarifying the terminology, theoretical presuppositions, and historical context for Queer Theory. These include Annamarie Jagose's practical and accessible introduction to the basic concepts and debates in the field (Jagose 1997), along with Giffney and O'Rourke 2009, a compilation of essays that traces the evolution of scholarly debates. Whereas several texts privilege the historical emergence of academic queer theory, including Turner 2000 and Wilchins 2004, others emphasize the critical relationship between academic theory and queer politics, including Sullivan 2003 and Morland and Willox 2005.

Giffney, Noreen, and Michael O'Rourke. *The Ashgate Research Companion to Queer Theory*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009.

This collection of thirty essays spans four major areas within Queer Theory: identity, discourse, normativity, and relationality.

Jagose, Annamarie. *Queer Theory: An Introduction*. New York: New York University Press, 1997.

This comprehensive overview pays particular attention to the historical roots of queer theorizing and scholarship and focuses on debates regarding the political efficacy of a program that aims to deconstruct the coherent self.

Morland, Iain, and Annabelle Willox, eds. *Queer Theory*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Collection of fifteen essays that attempts to tease out, without resolving, the problematic relationship between theory and politics.

Sullivan, Nikki. *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*. New York: New York University Press, 2003.

A broad introduction to the field, with chapters that address the debate between political assimilation versus liberation, sadomasochism as resistance, queerness and race, and transsexual/transgender issues.

Turner, William Benjamin. *A Genealogy of Queer Theory*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000.

Turner historicizes the development of Queer Theory, tracing key concepts to the work of Foucault and Habermas, feminist and lesbian theorists, and psychoanalysis.

Wilchins, Riki. *Queer Theory/Gender Theory: An Instant Primer*. Los Angeles: Alyson, 2004.

Wilchins draws on discussions of Queer Theory along with civil rights histories to make theory accessible to queer activists without diluting its intellectual heft or academic history.

Trans Theory

With the burgeoning of a queer political movement that embraced a wide variety of non-normative sexual identities and practices came a growing recognition that transgender and transsexual individuals could provide unique perspectives on the fraught relation between gender and sexuality. Garber 1997 examines the long-standing cross-cultural practice of cross-dressing through the lens of gender rather than sexuality. Like much queer theorizing, Trans Theory has been written by individuals whose transgender and/or transsexual experiences inform their lives, their politics, and their work, including Bornstein 1995, Feinberg 1999, Halberstam 2005, and Halberstam 2006. Salamon 2010 builds on the work of these writers and on Butler 1993 (cited under Theory) to theorize the way that trans identities, which presuppose the detachment of biological sex and gender, offer new perspectives on the cultural experience of the body's materiality. In Nestle, et al. 2002 and in Stryker and Whittle 2006, personal testimonies lay the groundwork for theorizing about the significance of trans culture and the seemingly insurmountable cultural attachment to gender normativity.

Bornstein, Kate. *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women and the Rest of Us*. New York: Vintage, 1995.

Bornstein was born a man and completed gender reassignment surgery to become a lesbian. Drawing upon research as well as personal experience, Bornstein argues not only for a more complex understanding of gender that is divorced from anatomical sex, but also for the importance of recognizing that multiple genders exist alongside of and in between the two culturally sanctioned genders.

Feinberg, Leslie. *Trans Liberation: Beyond Pink or Blue*. Boston: Beacon, 1999.

This collection of writer/activist Feinberg's speeches, supplemented by short pieces from other trans writers, connects the fear and hatred surrounding trans identities to racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and other systems of social oppression.

Garber, Marjorie. *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*. New York: Routledge, 1997.

This wide-ranging study examines practices of cross-dressing from medieval Britain to the contemporary United States, noting that cross-dressing is invariably related to specific historical anxieties about women's power and economic status.

Halberstam, Judith. *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York: New York University Press, 2005.

This comprehensive analysis of the representation of the transgender body in popular culture and film includes a thorough discussion of the documentary and feature films that depict the life of Brandon Teena.

Halberstam, Judith. *Female Masculinity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.

Detaching masculinity from the male body, Halberstam examines the relationship between masculinity and power by exploring the lives and performances of butch women, lesbians, and drag kings. Originally published in 1998.

Nestle, Joan, Riki Wilchins, and Clare Howell. *GenderQueer: Voices from Beyond the Sexual Binary*. Los Angeles: Alyson, 2002.

This collection offers first-person essays and narratives that give voice to the great variety of gender positions and practices, including pieces by and on femmes, queens, a woman poppa, drag kings, and translesbians.

Salamon, Gayle. *Assuming a Body: Transgender and Rhetorics of Materiality*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.

This work draws upon phenomenology and psychoanalysis to consider the ways that materiality, or the “felt sense” of the body, is culturally produced and argues that transsexual and transgender bodies offer a way of understanding the way the relation between the material body and the imagined body can be lived out.

Stryker, Susan, and Stephen Whittle, eds. *The Transgender Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

A collection of fifty essays by transgender individuals as well as academics, physicians, and psychologists, covering transgender experiences, histories, and practices from the 19th century to the present.

Sex and Science

One of the most important scientific discussions to emerge from queer theorizing centers on the question of the genetic origins of homosexuality. As with many subjects within queer studies, Foucault’s analytics of biopower and the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s were catalyst for theorists, who began to analyze the sexual politics that imbue myriad social and intellectual enterprises, including the culture of science. Patton 1990 looks at the politicization of science in the context of the public health crisis that AIDS produced. Neuroscientist Simon LeVay (LeVay 1997) more pointedly takes on the culture of scientific research, arguing that the study of the biological causes of homosexuality is by definition a political, and potentially homophobic, project. Fausto-Sterling 2000 specifically attributes scientific bias to the gender ideologies of scientists, whereas Lancaster 2003 points to the inherent homophobia of scientific claims, which, Lancaster proposes, are a specific response to recent political gains. Ordover 2003 links the science on queerness to the pseudoscience of eugenics in the United States, arguing that early- and late-20th-century social and scientific practices designed to regulate “unfit” members of a society, whether immigrants, racial minorities, or queers, have a common political lineage. While some members of gay, lesbian, and queer communities applauded the fact that science might confirm that queer individuals were “born that way” (in the words of the 2011 Lady Gaga song), others lament the search for the “gay gene” as intrinsically homophobic and potentially dangerous for queer individuals and communities.

Fausto-Sterling, Anne. *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*. New York: Basic Books, 2000.

Groundbreaking work on the biases within science that produce rigid definitions of sex and gender when, in fact, ambiguity abounds. According to Fausto-Sterling, anxieties about gender confusion inform the work of research scientists. In her view, culture and biology together construct gender and sexual identity.

Lancaster, Roger. *The Trouble with Nature: Sex in Science and Popular Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Through an exploration of science writing in the American media, Lancaster argues that the recent surge of biological explanations for sexuality and sexual behavior (including evolutionary biology) are rooted in homophobic politics, part of a backlash against the advances made in gay and lesbian politics.

LeVay, Simon. *Queer Science: The Use and Abuse of Research into Homosexuality*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997.

LeVay, a neuroscientist who conducted much-publicized research on the difference between the brains of straight and gay men, surveys a century of scientific research that attempts to discern a biological explanation for homosexuality. The book makes clear the politicization of scientific hypothesis and conclusions.

Ordoover, Nancy. *American Eugenics: Race, Queer Anatomy, and the Science of Nationalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

Ordoover examines the relationship between science and politics in this work on the “science of nationalism,” a body of pseudoscience based upon biological theories of race, gender, and sexuality. The author links campaigns of discrimination and genocide against immigrants to those against women, people of color, and queer bodies in the United States in the 20th century.

Patton, Cindy. *Inventing AIDS*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Powerful personal and political essay collection on the politicization of science and public health policy during the early years of the AIDS epidemic. A central point Patton makes is that when medical science is imbued with homophobia and ignorance, health policy is inadequate at best and harmful at worst, and human beings suffer.

Queer Cinema Studies, Anthologies

Queer cinema studies blends the theoretical interests of queer theory with the analytical methods and concepts of film studies, producing work that ranges from focused aesthetic examinations of individual texts to historical accounts of cinema as a cross-cultural and political theater of desire. Queer cinema studies predates the development of New Queer Cinema (NQC), which incubated within the crucible of academic theorizing and political activism of the 1980s, but it developed rapidly during that era, as filmmakers and films brought new questions to the debates on queer visibility. Prominent NQC directors Tom Kalin, Todd Haynes, and Greg Araki, for example, studied post-structuralism and Queer Theory and incorporated anti-essentialist (social constructionist) concepts of gender and sexuality into their films. Reflecting the importance of the connection between theory and practice in queer cinema, Gevertz, et al. 1993 exclusively features the work of practicing filmmakers and visual artists. Creekmur and Doty 1995 and Hanson 1999 were two of the first works to merge queer studies and film studies by collecting criticism and commentary from writers working across academic and artistic contexts; the former takes a broader view of the forms of popular culture that have proven ripe for appreciation and appropriation in queer communities. In 2004, two collections on American cinema simultaneously called attention to the importance of the contemporary New Queer film scene (Aaron 2004) and referenced the longer history of thinking and writing about queerness in cinema (Benshoff and Griffin 2004).

Aaron, Michelle. *New Queer Cinema: A Critical Reader*. New York: Rutgers, 2004.

Collection of essays on the Queer Cinema of the 1990s, including B. Ruby Rich's 1992 *Sight & Sound* article, “New Queer Cinema,” which articulated the movement in broad terms as one that married queer sexual content to experimental style.

Benshoff, Harry M., and Sean Griffin, eds. *Queer Cinema: The Film Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Essays on queer cinema, new and old, organized by four subject areas: authorship, film form, camp, and reception theory.

Creekmur, Corey K., and Alexander Doty, eds. *Out in Culture: Gay, Lesbian, and Queer Essays on Popular Culture*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995.

Featuring writings from many seminal queer theorists, including Al LaValley, Robin Wood, Richard Dyer, and Danae Clark, this wide-ranging essay collection treats subjects from Hitchcock to pornography and from disco to drag as sites of queer cultural production and resistance.

Gever, Martha, Pratibha Prammar, and John Greyson, eds. *Queer Looks: Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Film and Video*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Essays by queer film video artists, visual artists, and critics on the global explosion in queer image culture.

Hanson, Ellis, ed. *Out Takes: Essays on Queer Theory and Film*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999.

This essay collection combines work by scholars and filmmakers, with particular emphasis on queer spectatorship and queer filmmaking.

Queer Cinema Studies, History

Whereas the academic field of queer cinema studies was inaugurated by the publication of Vito Russo's *The Celluloid Closet* (Russo 1987, 1st ed. 1981) and Richard Dyer's *Now You See It: Historical Studies on Lesbian and Gay Film* (Dyer 1990), representations of queerness in cinema date back to the earliest years of the medium, with films such as *Anders als die Andern / Different from the Others* (1919), and have flourished within underground practices in the United States with mid-20th-century avant-garde works such as Kenneth Anger's *Fireworks* (1947) and *Scorpio Rising* (1963), Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures* (1963), and Barbara Hammer's *A Gay Day* (1973) and *Dyketactics* (1974). Scholars working in queer cinema have adopted a host of methodological approaches and generated numerous internal debates since the early 1990s; some focus on explicitly gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and/or queer (film) texts and directors, while others, including Dyer 1990, Doty 1993, and Doty 2000, employ queer reading practices to decode the closeted rhetoric of classical Hollywood, popular television, and censored cinemas. Benschhoff and Griffin 2005 traces the social and aesthetic histories of cinematic representations of sexual alterity, and Griffiths 2006 focuses on British national identity and the evocation of queerness in relation to history and genre. White 1999 reconsiders the classical Hollywood cinema not as a mode of suppression but rather as a precursor to contemporary lesbian cinema and a source for numerous continuing tropes of lesbian representability.

Benschhoff, Harry M., and Sean Griffin. *Queer Images: A History of Gay and Lesbian Film in America*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005.

Intended as an update of, and somewhat more complicated rejoinder to, Russo's *The Celluloid Closet* (Russo 1987), this history of queer images in American cinema contextualizes screen queerness in relation to social, legal, and historical events in Hollywood and the United States.

Doty, Alexander. *Making Things Perfectly Queer: Interpreting Mass Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

Doty argues not for the essential queerness of texts but for the queerness of particular reading positions and strategies. Through readings of popular film and television programs, he demonstrates how viewers deftly extract queer value from moments of textual dissidence or elision.

Doty, Alexander. *Flaming Classics: Queering the Film Canon*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Taking six ostensibly mainstream films, including *Psycho* (1962), *The Women* (1939), and *The Red Shoes* (1948), Doty performs queer deconstructive readings, demonstrating the ways that queerness can be produced by the interaction of text and reader.

Dyer, Richard. *Now You See It: Studies in Lesbian and Gay Film*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

The first edition of this book was a groundbreaking reference for scholars of queer cinema history. Dyer looks back at representations of gay men and lesbians in international cinema throughout the 20th century, from *Mädchen in Uniform* (1931) to *Anders Als die Andern* (1919) to *Flaming Creatures* (1963). The second edition, released in 2003, includes material on film culture since 1990.

Griffiths, Robin, ed. *British Queer Cinema*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Collection of essays on “Queer Britannia,” a third of which consider early- to mid-20th-century films. Distinctive British genre films, from the kitchen-sink drama to the Heritage film, are addressed in several essays.

Russo, Vito. *The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies*. 2d ed. New York: Harper and Row, 1987.

Originally published in 1981, gay activist Vito Russo’s book instantly became the definitive study of gay cinema. The book identifies homophobic stereotypes of the sissy and the predatory dyke that prevailed in representations of homosexual characters from the 1920s through the 1970s. The last chapter discusses the advent of independent cinema in the 1980s—the precursor to New Queer Cinema.

White, Patricia. *Uninvited: Classical Hollywood Cinema and Lesbian Representability*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.

White argues for the importance of studio-era Hollywood cinema for establishing codes and constructing signifiers of lesbianism that persist into the contemporary era. The specific features of the Motion Picture Production Code’s prohibition of overt representations of “deviant” sexualities, White contends, encoded lesbian desire in specific ways; thus censorship practices themselves produced images of lesbians for female audiences, particularly through the genre of the woman’s film.

Queer Cinema Studies, Genres

Two genres frequently are associated with queer representation: the horror cinema, where the monster’s ambiguity, otherness, and resistance align it with figures of queerness, and the musical, long associated with gay male involvement in production and consumption. Halberstam 1995 and Benshoff 1997 explore the horror genre in terms of form, style, and history, concluding that the subject matter of monstrosity bears critical connections to the social and psychological dynamics of queer otherness. Weiss 1993 traces the long cinematic history of the sexualized vamp and her importance to lesbian spectators. Cohan 2005 argues for the centrality of camp to the musical in its heyday and in more contemporary eras, whereas Wolf 2002 directs the discussion of the musical away from gay representation and argues for the importance of the genre to lesbians as well.

Benshoff, Harry M. *Monsters in the Closet: Homosexuality and the Horror Film*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1997.

Citing hundreds of examples from Hollywood horror films, Benshoff argues that there is a peculiar connection between queerness and horror (a genre that addresses deep-seated cultural fears). He historicizes this relationship by marking changes over time in cultural attitudes toward monsters and queers.

Cohan, Steven. *Incongruous Entertainment: Camp, Cultural Value, and the MGM Musical*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.

Cohan focuses on the MGM musical during its heyday in the 1940s as a vehicle for mass entertainment. He argues that, paradoxically, the camp elements at work in these films established the broad popular appeal of the genre and its stars in that era. Increasingly, the public has recognized and embraced the camp value of these films as historical and nostalgic artifacts.

Halberstam, Judith. *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995.

Examining the gothic genre as a technology for purveying images and dynamics of otherness and difference, Halberstam looks at literature and films that speak to their specific moment in time as well as to deep-seated cultural fears.

Weiss, Andrea. *Vampires and Violets: Lesbians in Film*. New York: Penguin, 1993.

One of the first books to thoroughly investigate a century of lesbian film images, from early cinema's vamps and schoolgirls to Hollywood stars like Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich. Weiss identifies the predominantly negative attributes ascribed to screen lesbians and makes the important observation that lesbian viewers have long identified with this iconography.

Wolf, Stacy Ellen. *A Problem Like Maria: Gender and Sexuality in the American Musical*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002.

Arguing against the commonplace assumptions that musical theater and films are the exclusive purview of gay men and that they are essentially conservative, Wolf presents the case that the funny women and tomboys of the musical genre offer performances that evoke queer-tinged resistance to gender and sexual norms.

Queer Cinema Studies, Directors

The queerness of a film is not dependent upon the sexual identity of its director—a fact that allows for the scholarly examination of a broad range of films that implicitly or explicitly convey queer content, or that embed silences and aporias that invite queer reading strategies. Auteurism meets sexual ambiguity in Gutiérrez-Albilla 2008 on Luis Buñuel, whereas Morrison 2007 on Todd Haynes and Richardson 2008 on Derek Jarman explicitly situate their directors within the historical moment of New Queer Cinema. Crimp 2012 examines the somewhat neglected catalog of Andy Warhol's films and argues that Warhol's filmmaking practice remains as important as the product of these Factory-made films.

Crimp, Douglas. *"Our Kind of Movie": The Films of Andy Warhol*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012.

Despite his ubiquity in art history and cultural studies, Warhol remains a somewhat neglected figure in film studies, considering the fact that he made more than one hundred films. Crimp explores six films as examples of a new kind of cinema that Warhol pioneered, involving not only new ways of seeing but also new social relationships.

Gutiérrez-Albilla, Julián. *Queering Buñuel: Sexual Dissidence and Psychoanalysis in His Mexican and Spanish Cinema*. London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2008.

Not content to leave Buñuel solely in the hands of those who merely label him a surrealist, Gutiérrez-Albilla argues that queer characters and subtexts and polymorphous sexualities animate the director's Spanish and Mexican films.

Morrison, James, ed. *The Cinema of Todd Haynes: All That Heaven Allows*. London and New York: Wallflower, 2007.

This collection considers Todd Haynes not only as a New Queer Cinema filmmaker but also as a cine-theorist; an intellectual and artist whose work has been influenced by post-structuralist theory, avant-garde cinema, and the films of Rainer Fassbinder; and a director whose work has, in turn, influenced queer and mainstream filmmaking alike.

Richardson, Niall. *The Queer Cinema of Derek Jarman: Critical and Cultural Readings*. London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2008.

One of the most important filmmakers of New Queer Cinema, Jarman is also recognized for his bold and experimental work with film form. Richardson focuses on the way Jarman poses questions of sexual radicalism and alterity through formal and aesthetic elements rather than by adhering to a specific political agenda.

Queer Politics and Communities

Although Queer Theory evolved within the academy, many queer scholars remain committed to exploring the real-world implications of their theorizing for queer individuals and communities. Debates regarding the efficacy of traditional identity/interest politics, as well as the advisability of goals such as legalizing gay marriage, have been informed by Berlant 1997, which critiques the redefinition of the public sphere in American politics, and Dean 2009, which explores the dynamics of subversion, belonging, and politicized sex within subcultural queer communities. Seidman 1997, Warner 1993, and Warner 1999 advocate the queering of political discourse and engagement, rather than simply imagining that queer individuals could be “added” as a minority group to the pluralism of American politics. Walters 2003 offers a cautionary view of the recent visibility of queer identities, suggesting that this is not equivalent to political efficacy, and Puar 2007 situates the mainstreaming of queer politics in the US “homeland” in relation to Islamophobia after September 11.

Berlant, Lauren. *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997.

Berlant’s influential book makes the case that the public sphere has been diminished beyond recognition and has been eclipsed by a notion of citizenship that defines civic behavior through private, and particularly sexual, behavior.

Dean, Tim. *Unlimited Intimacy: Reflections on the Subculture of Barebacking*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.

A careful look at a controversial practice and community of practitioners: gay men who choose not to practice safe sex. Dean examines a subculture whose embrace of pleasure and subversion, in his view, contributes to the creation of new kinship structures.

Puar, Jasbir K. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007.

Homonationalism refers to the growing acceptance of homosexual subjects within the American political community, particularly as married and reproductive subjects. This embrace of hetero and homo patriots, Puar argues, has occurred at the same time that Arabs, Sikhs, and Muslims have been subjected to Islamophobia and defined as perverse terrorists.

Seidman, Steven. *Difference Troubles: Queering Social Theory and Sexual Politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Seidman queers social theory in a deconstructive sense by placing into doubt foundational assumptions regarding which differences matter in social and political theory and by foregrounding the importance of sexual politics within those milieus.

Walters, Suzanne Danuta. *All the Rage: The Story of Gay Visibility in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Using popular culture texts to address the seeming ubiquity of gay people and identities, from Ellen DeGeneres to Matthew Shepard, Walters argues that queer visibility should not be equated with political progress and that a number of contradictions attend the appearance of the social acceptance that accompanies visibility.

Warner, Michael. *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

Early, important compendium of essays by scholars on the forefront of queer theory, including Lauren Berlant, Douglas Crimp, Jonathan Goldberg, Diana Fuss, and Cindy Patton.

Warner, Michael. *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics and the Ethics of Queer Life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Warner argues that sexual shame has animated the movement to legalize same-sex marriage: advocates of gay marriage within gay and lesbian communities, he contends, participate in “sexual McCarthyism” and reject sexuality to win mainstream approval, explicitly rejecting sexual nonconformity and queer difference.

Queer Teens

As Queer Theory brought renewed attention to the nature versus nurture debate, the question of queer kids arose, partly due to the conservative scrutiny of some popular culture figures as insidious queer recruitment devices (*Pee-wee's Playhouse*, *SpongeBob SquarePants*, *Teletubbies*) and partly due to the increasing awareness of bullying of gay children and high rates of suicide and depression among queer youth (which instigated the viral "It Gets Better" Internet campaign in 2010 and garnered widespread attention for the 2012 documentary film *Bully*). Adams 1997, on Canadian popular culture, traces the public and popular culture discourse of heterosexual normalization, whereas Dennis 2006 argues that a contradictory suppression and exploration of queer desire can be found in film and television. Pascoe 2007 brings to life the everyday gestures, language, and social practices that define adolescent masculinity.

Adams, Mary Louise. *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.

Examines the way books, television, sex education materials, and popular comic books aimed at teenagers in postwar Canada equated heterosexuality with normalcy.

Dennis, Jeffrey P. *Queering Teen Culture: All-American Boys and Same-Sex Desire in Film and Television*. New York: Haworth, 2006.

This book examines an apparent contradiction: the intensity of representations of heterosexual desire by teenage boys in American films between 1955 and 1995 and the films' simultaneous critique of heteronormativity.

Pascoe, C. J. *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.

In this ethnographic study of daily life in high school, Pascoe identifies the rituals and rhetorics that govern the gender definition of high-school-age American boys.

Camp

Susan Sontag defined camp for an audience of American intellectuals in "Notes on Camp" (Sontag 1964); since then, debates have raged regarding camp and the performativity of gender. Esther Newton explored the world of female impersonators in an early book, Newton 1979. Most writers on camp, notably Meyer 1994 and Cleto 1999, seek to resist and also to complicate Sontag's assertion that camp is fundamentally aesthetic, and therefore apolitical. Contributors to these two collections explore whether camp represents an attitude or a practice, whether it is exclusively or primarily homosexual or queer, whether lesbians camp, and whether and how camp offers critique or lays the groundwork for political activism. A great deal of scholarly writing has taken up this question in theoretical terms as well as in relation to specific practices and texts. Tinkcom 2002 pushes the discussion beyond gender to address camp as labor, arguing that camp undermines the commodity form and the capitalist mode of production.

Cleto, Fabio, ed. *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject: A Reader*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999.

Comprehensive collection of important historical and contemporary writings on camp; an essential resource for scholars engaged with camp as a historical, aesthetic, and political practice.

Meyer, Moe, ed. *The Politics and Poetics of Camp*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Collection of essays that redefines camp as a mode of oppositional critique intrinsic to queerness, which itself poses an ontological challenge (emerging from the social constructionist view of subject formation) to a "depth model of identity" (p. 2) that governs identity

categories of class, sex, and gender.

Newton, Esther. *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

An ethnographic approach to the world of drag queens, published more than a decade before the release of Jennie Livingston's documentary film on the same subject, *Paris is Burning* (1990). Newton interviews drag queens, interrogating the meanings of drag, camp, and the work of performance.

Sontag, Susan. "Notes on Camp." *Partisan Review* 31 (1964): 515–530.

In this essay, Sontag identifies the important cultural work performed by homosexuals regarding matters of aesthetics and taste, yet relegates the irony and satire of camp—its attempt to “dethrone” the serious—to the apolitical realm, an assertion that would be taken up by queer theorists and debated for decades.

Tinkcom, Matthew. *Working Like a Homosexual: Camp, Capital, Cinema*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002.

Tinkcom studies Vincente Minnelli, Kenneth Anger, Andy Warhol, and John Waters to reconsider camp not merely as an expression of sexual dissidence but also as an aesthetic and intellectual practice that rejects and redefines capitalist notions of commodity, labor, and value.

Queering Race

A number of scholars argue that queerness is informed and inflected by racial as well as gender identities and sexual performativity, and they have produced work that examines Queer Theory's blind eye toward the racial dimensions of the identities it examines. Barnard 2004 exposes the lack of attention paid to matters of race in queer studies and also investigates critical race studies work that neglects sexuality. Johnson and Henderson 2005 investigates some of the central metaphors and practices of queer studies—for example, drag—by situating them in relation to practices of race and racial othering. Dunning 2009 returns to the powerful nexus of race and otherness represented by the figure of the interracial couple in American culture, reframing the interracial in the context of same-sex desire. Hoad 2007 attends to the global dimension of queer identities by connecting race and homosexuality to African identities in literature. Muñoz 1999 argues that queers of color perform their politics by refusing the identifications offered by mainstream culture.

Barnard, Ian. *Queer Race: Cultural Interventions in the Racial Politics of Queer Theory*. New York: Peter Lang, 2004.

Using theory, porn, popular culture, and literature, Barnard argues that we need to pay greater attention to the racial politics embedded in queer theory and become aware of the presumptions of sexual normativity that generally attend academic analyses of race.

Dunning, Stefanie K. *Queer in Black and White: Interraciality, Same Sex Desire, and Contemporary African American Culture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009.

This book examines the trope of the queer interracial relationship, arguing that the depiction of racial difference functions as mode of foregrounding black authenticity.

Hoad, Neville. *African Intimacies: Race, Homosexuality, and Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.

Hoad points to the need for a global purview for Queer Theory in this examination of homosexuality in African culture and literature under the conditions of globalization.

Johnson, E. Patrick, and Mae G. Henderson, eds. *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.

This collection of sixteen essays explores intersections of racial and sexual identity, examining the racial dimensions of the closet metaphor, brave lesbians and black lesbian visibility, the whiteness of gay ghettos, and racial drag.

Muñoz, José Esteban. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Queer artists of color have adopted a number of strategies of “disidentification”—including camp, drag, and satire—to mark their distance from mainstream culture in order to pose a political critique through aesthetic means.

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