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## Queer Studies Is Not Queer Enough

Yes, queer studies is not queer enough now. From what I see in real-life scenarios of queer politics, it sometimes can be 'not queer at all'. — In such a semantically contradictory, awkward position, queer politics has failed to adhere to what Lauretis raised up (if taken as the origin), nor has it been effectively working for what Butler actually wanted to advocate in their theoretical works. For now, most queer theories and practices are so inclined to exclusive politics rather than the politics of difference that they do not amply commit to the authentic legacy of 'queer', if at all.

1 The dilemma of inequality in queer studies as part of the unspoken class issue in higher education, manifesting disparities in the accessibility to and capacity of academic literacy, is short of compelling reflection (Dews and Law, 1995; Brim, 2020). By class, I mean the ongoing production of knowledge and social relations in queer theories rather than simply as class background in queer studies. Even academics from humble backgrounds themselves feel much harder to talk about class than sexuality at universities (Oldfield and Johnson, 2008). When queer studies are introduced to college students in courses from gender studies departments at the stage of higher education with its demanding literacy and terminology, the education is not inclusive and emancipatory as this discipline thought to be – if queer theories have ever claimed such traditions (Brim, 2020). The notion of 'intersectionality' did introduce a more sophisticated manner to consider sexuality with consciousness of class, race, and other systemic struggles, but still not sufficient for the epistemological predicament ingrained in education. The unsolved question brought up by her 'can subalterns talk?' always arises whenever academics use a language to speak for those who lack the access to it. The fact that queer politics aiming for equity, inclusiveness and social justice has become a closed loop connotate that academia may be no other than reinforcement of oppressive power.

2 Queers' critical stance against discursive normative/regulative power is one of its most significant values. Hence queer studies, if consistent, should've had potentiality for decentring (selected reading texts, conventional assessment methods, restricted forms of academic research, etc.), denaturalizing (the power stratification in class, the usage of terminologies, etc.) and even deschooling (the governance of institutions, the extant schooling systems, the social imagination of education, etc.). Nevertheless, the reality makes quite a stark contrast: queer studies is not queer enough. Too often, queer studies count on elaborate approaches to privileged literacy, which ambivalently collude with the neoliberal power play of knowledge and consolidate the symbiotic repression. The obsessive standardisation of linguistics, methodologies, and theories, fixes queer studies onto institutionalised normalcy (Warner, 2012). Furthermore, the anti-normativity convention in queer theories has formed another hegemonic discourse that will hinder understanding (Wiegman and Wilson, 2015).

3 The default social science frame overarching education of queer theories should be interrogated in teaching/learning and especially in academic research – a key element of higher education. Due to the distinction of 'sexuality' (as it involves not only intimate somatic experiences but also body-mind crossovers, which level it up to metaphysical thinking), the taken-for-granted one-dimensional scientific methods are far too limited. Students learn to dive right into social-cultural registers and produce a 'scalable' report of data's uses, derivation, or production. Scalable research projects 'admit only data that's already fit the research frame.' Scalability requires that project elements overlook indeterminacies of encounters and thus banishes meaningful diversity of knowledge (Tsing, 2015: 38). They avoid thick descriptions because it is too subjective and not scientific enough, instead, they deal with texts logically (sometimes mechanically) by coding. Research deploying innovative creative methods (e.g., co-creation, archive, auto-ethnography and other art-based methods) is marginalised and the poetics of sexuality lacks validation, accordingly, relevant readings and learning resources are undervalued and underused in queer studies. Extensive knowledge of sexuality is then omitted when queer studies takes it purely as a business of social science. Research will herein offer insightful critiques of the logo-centricism of the pedagogy of queer studies, which may enable rich discussions around working-class queer studies suggested above, as well as some indigenous perspectives (Kulpa and Mizielinska, 2016) and the trend of increasing attentions to narratives and art in queer studies.

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4 Queer pedagogy, with its socioculturally-informed theories, has been applied to multiple areas of teaching, learning, assessment, and curriculum in different subjects (Yep, 2014). But gets paralysed in the education (and public dissemination) of queer studies per se. So an ultimate question is: If educators have to adopt teaching methods that contradict the spirit of the subject they are teaching, for institutions and socio-economic social milieux they rely on, how can they find a way to make a difference under such limitation? One thought is that academia can be a site of 'smuggling in' alternative ideas (Young, 2016). Even when incorporated into those institutions, they have chances to invert the system as they occupy some space to produce and spread alternative knowledge. In doing so, they can twist it from the inside of the present structure, even if it is still difficult to disrupt from the outside. But having said that, it is dubious how they can deliver their messages effectively, because they have to go through and perhaps internalise the scrutiny and regulation of the institutional power, because they reproduce the Tyranny of Merit (Sandel, 2020) in educational assessment, when they smuggle into classrooms their awareness that is deconstructive to and different from institutional norms/ neoliberalist ideologies/ other hegemonic discourses.

When queerness only takes up a cursory introductory part in syllabi of elitist higher education, what can it do for us?

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## Other recommended readings

(Article) - "The Politics of LGBTQ Scholarship" by Jacqueline Stevens

(Book Chapters) - <Queer Palestine and the Empire of Critique> by Sa'ed Anshan

- Introduction: "there is no hierarchy of oppressions"
- 1 LGBTQ Palestinians and the Politics of the Ordinary
- 2 Global Solidarity and the Politics of Pinkwashing
- 3 Transnational Activism and the Politics of Boycotts
- 4 Media, Film, and the Politics of Representation
- 5 Critique of Empire and the Politics of Academia
- Conclusion: "we were never meant to survive"

This piece is deeply inspired by talks with 77

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