THE ANARCHY OF QUEER

RETHINKING POSTSTRUCTURALIST POSSIBILITIES AND THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY

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Jamie Heckert
Napier University
Jamie.Heckert@gmail.com
http://sexualorientation.info/

Queer, as a tradition of theory and practice (and increasingly a marketing tool), faces serious criticism in terms of its political viability and transformative potential. First, queer politics have been criticised, especially by Marxist and materialist feminists, for promoting individualistic sexual transgression that is consistent with capitalism. Second, queer theory has been charged with monopolising sexuality as its domain of study and thus neglecting feminist theories of sexuality and displacing the importance of gender. Third, queer politics is at risk of maintaining a degree of homocentrism if built around the lesbian and gay identities it had sought to deconstruct. And finally, queer stands accused of romanticising textual deconstruction and a cultural politics of knowledge to the neglect of institutional and material engagement.

This paper argues that these criticisms can largely be addressed through a return to the anarchistic genealogical roots of queer - lesbian feminism,   direct action & poststructuralism. Consistently anarchist queer projects might then prioritise prefiguration over transgression, horizontal networks over territorialisation, a practical politics of difference over a return to identity, and a tradition of radically egalitarian political action (including thought) which embraces cultural, material, institutional and individual transformation.

Queer theory exploded on to the academic scene in early 1990s. Promoting (and inspired by) radical politics of difference, queer was critical of the preceding forms of sexual politics-- feminist, lesbian and gay - from which it developed. Born of feminist debates over sexuality and difference, the direct action tactics of gay liberation and HIV/AIDS activism and the political philosophy of French poststructuralist thought (particularly the work of Michel Foucault), queer has a radically anti-authoritarian heritage[1] . My argument here is that this anti-authoritarian heritage is the source of many criticisms applied to queer theory/politics over the past decade as well as a resource for addressing them. Much of the confusion concerning the practical potential of queer theory, I suggest, is a result of queer's affinities with anarchism and its incompatibility with liberal state-centred politics. At the same time, many critics of queer are concerned by the potential (or actuality) of its co-optation for state, market and other individualistic hierarchical social relations. Before engaging with these criticisms, I offer a brief explanation of anarchism and its importance in understanding the development of queer.

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1 One could also acknowledge the anti-authoritarian elements of black liberation, psychoanalysis, postcolonialism and other social movements upon which queer theory has drawn.

The Anarchy of Queer

Anarchism is a broad label incorporating a diverse range of political theory and practice. These diverse traditions share in common a belief that it is both possible and desirable to live without rulers, unquestionable authority or other relationships of domination. The word 'anarchy', popularly used to describe chaotic situations, is derived from the Greek *anarkhia*, meaning 'without authority'. Often seen as a political and ethical philosophy that advances ideas of human nature, anarchism can also be understood as a theory of organisation that offers alternatives to bureaucratic and capitalist standards (Ward, 1982). Anarchist historian Rudolph Rocker suggests that anarchism should be understood as a 'definite trend in the historic development of [hu]mankind' to strive for freedom (cited in Chomsky, 1970). Without contradicting either Ward or Rocker, I suggest that anarchism is usefully recognised as an ongoing practice of an ethics of relationships. This argument is continuous with elements of 'classical' anarchism; German anarchist Gustav Landauer, a contemporary of Bakunin, declared that:

> The state is not something which can be destroyed by a revolution, but is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of human behaviour; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently (quoted in Ward, 2004:8).

It is with this understanding of the state and of anarchism that the queer's affinity with anarchism. Like anarchist critiques of the state, queer politics are resistant to sexual identity. Both sexual identity and the state are ongoing productions - the effects of relationships characterised by enclosure, normalisation and discipline. Both anarchism and queer ask in various ways: what possibilities for desire, for individual subjectivity, for social relations are excluded by policing? Perhaps the ultimate question for both is: how can relationships characterised by discipline etc be challenged without producing similarly problematic effects? Resources for addressing this question, I suggest, can be found within the anarchist elements of queer's feminist, activist and poststructuralist heritage.

Feminism

The connections between anarchism and feminism are diverse and variable as are each of these traditions. Much of liberal feminism, for example, offers criticisms of neither State nor capitalist forms of organisation (e.g., Friedan, 1974). Likewise, some Marxist feminists see value in seizing the State (e.g., Ebert, 1995; MacKinnnon, 1989). Peggy Kornegger (2002) has made explicit the connection between US second wave feminist organisation and anarchist politics.

> In rebellion against the competitive power games, impersonal hierarchy, and mass organisation tactics of male politics, women broke off into small, leaderless, consciousness-raising groups, which dealt with personal issues in our daily lives. Face-to-face, we attempted to get at the root cause of our oppression by sharing our hitherto unvalued perceptions and experiences. We learned from each other that politics is not 'out there' but in our minds and bodies and between individuals. [...] the structure of women's groups bore a striking resemblance to that of anarchist affinity groups within anarcho-syndicalist unions in Spain, France, and many other countries. Yet, we had not called ourselves anarchists and consciously organised around anarchist principles (p27).

While much feminist energy has been drawn into hierarchical politics, anarchic elements carry on.

In particular, criticisms of women as a singular phenomena and sexism as a singular oppression by working-class and lesbian women, women of colour, and Marxist and anarchist feminists provided fertile ground for the criticism of hierarchy and representation and the birth of queer.

In particular, queer's radical commitment to politics of difference stems in part from it's birth in the aftermath of the so-called 'feminist sex wars.' The earliest efforts to recognise the political nature of 'sexual orientation', central to queer theory, came out of 1970s revolutionary lesbian feminist networks. *The Furies* (based in Washington, D.C.) the *Leeds Revolutionary Feminist Group* were perhaps the first to challenge the natural status of heterosexuality, arguing that it is a 'political institution' rather than an essential sexual orientation of women (Rust, 1995). For many radical and lesbian feminisms, male domination of women, and thus compulsory heterosexuality, is rejected as inherently authoritarian, and providing a model for all forms of domination (e.g., French, 1985; Rich, 1999 [1979]). For Adrienne Rich, lesbianism was not a 'sexual orientation' but a continuum of women's resistance to male authoritarianism (i.e. patriarchy). However, all too often feminist critiques of heterosexuality as political institution crystallised into state-like practices of policing women's identities and desires. The libertarian impulse behind the statement 'No woman is free unless she is free to be a lesbian' (Alison, 1995) somehow became the dogma of slogans such as 'feminism is the theory, lesbianism is the practice'. The lesbian continuum came to be wielded as a lesbian hierarchy (e.g. some feminists are more woman-identified than others). By defining certain human characteristics, relationships, gender expressions and sexual practices as either man-identified or woman-identified, some feminists claimed authority to judge and police other women, acting, in effect, as an unofficial feminist state. These positions of authority were justified because, as women separate from institutionalised heterosexuality, lesbians have a privileged perspective as outsiders. This perspective is necessary to recognise the extent of male power and to develop a revolutionary consciousness (Frye, 1983). Women other than lesbians could also develop this consciousness by learning to identify with women instead of men (Radicalesbians, 1970 cited in Rust, 1995). Such arguments frequently depended on essentialist understandings of women (and their sexuality) as caring, relationally oriented and benign and of men (and their sexuality) as authoritarian, individualistic and potentially deadly (Echols, 1984; Faderman, 1981). Women who know themselves, who have freed themselves from patriarchal false consciousness, can work together to build a feminist movement and overthrow patriarchy. In these terms, lesbian women will find the project of 'developing feminist self-knowledge and self-love' (Rust, 1995: 133) easier than their heterosexual identified counterparts.

This authority-claim, and the resultant forms of domination, did not go uncontested. Women of colour resisted the demand that gender be recognised as the primary source of oppression, and criticised white, middle-class women who claimed to represent the oppression of all women (e.g., hooks, 1981; Moraga, 1981). Furthermore, women who worked with men to challenge racism resented the efforts of feminist governance to dictate to which struggle they should devote their energies, or indeed that these struggles were separate. Many women felt betrayed by this police state form of feminism.

> What drew me to politics was my love of women, that agony I felt in observing the straitjackets of poverty and repression I saw people in my family in. But the deepest political tragedy I've experienced is how with such grace, such blind faith, this commitment to women in the feminist movement grew to be exclusive and reactionary. (Moraga, cited in Allison, 1995:101).

Similarly, lesbian feminist critiques of butch/femme relationships and sexual desire have been criticised as classist. Butch/femme was an integral part of US working-class lesbian bar culture (Davis and Kennedy, 1993; Feinberg, 1993), while lesbian feminist politics were primarily

developed by middle-class university educated women.

Failure to recognise inequalities of race and class were not the only sources of discontent among women. Sex-radical feminists, along with working-class and ethnic minority women, contested the authority-claims of a particular strand of lesbian feminism to define feminist politics. The so-called 'feminist sex wars' developed from a radical rejection of feminist sex policing. Butch/femme, BD/SM (bondage and discipline, domination and subordination, & sadomasochism), pornography, penetrative sex (by penis or dildo), casual sex and sex with men had all been reviled as male-identified forms of sexual practice (Johnston, 1973; Dworkin, 1988; Daly, 1988, 1992). One influential response to feminist sex policing was Gayle Rubin's (1999 [1984]) 'Thinking Sex: Notes for Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality'. Central to Rubin's conception of a radical politics of sexuality is the development of new sexual ethics. She argues that 'a democratic morality should judge sexual acts by the way partners treat one another, the level of mutual consideration, the presence or absence of coercion, and the quantity and quality of the pleasures they provide' (p 283). Other aspects of sexual behaviour, she argues, should not be of ethical concern. In other words, Rubin, influenced by Foucault and in turn influential in the development of queer theory, proposed and antiauthoritarian ethic of (sexual) relationships as a way of challenging the domination of compulsory heterosexuality without producing new forms of sexual normativity and the policing they necessarily entail.

Queer Direct Action

While respectable gay and lesbian identity politics have focused on identity-based strategies of citizenship and inclusion with little or no critique of capitalism or racism, queer efforts recall that Stonewall was a riot. ACT UP, cited by queer theorists as an inspiration (e.g., Butler, 1993 and Halberstam, 1993), uses anarchist forms of organisation and political tactics. ACT UP is a network of non-hierarchical autonomous groups practising direct action and civil disobedience. Actions are organised not by a centralised command structure, but through self-organising affinity groups[2]. Decisions within affinity groups and larger regional networks are made through consensus, a non-hierarchical form of decision-making process. Through an emphasis on civil disobedience, ACT UP explicitly criticises the legitimacy of the prison and 'justice' systems as helping to maintain relationships of domination. Finally, ACT UP emphasises the importance of solidarity, especially with those imprisoned by the State apparatus. Again, despite the much higher visibility of the pink pound and LG(BT) lobbying groups, queer anarchist activism continues. The 1980s and 90s saw queer anarchist zines including AQUA (Anarcha Queers Undermining Authority) (Dye, 1989) in the US and the Passion Brigade (date unknown) in the UK. Also in the UK, HOMOCULT (1992) combined an aggressive sexualised class analysis and transgressive language (e.g., 'common queer nigger bitch' and 'shitstabbers'), with a radical critique of more mainstream sexual activist groups in a creative collection of direct propaganda: flyposters, stickers and graffiti. They argued against identity-based lobbying groups. Concerning the direct action group Outrage, they write, 'Outrage is a cosy sham. You can only be outraged by what surprises you. It's no surprise to common queers that there is no justice for us. We are not outraged --we are defiant' (p 4). Angry at a politics that emphasise sexual orientation oppression in isolation from other forms of hierarchy, especially capitalism, activists have organised alternatives. Gay Shame, founded in San Francisco and spreading, and La Di Dah (not Mardis Gras) in London mock the profiteering and power games of mainstream lesbian and gay politics.

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2 Grupos de Affinidades were originally developed by anarchist forces in the Spanish Civil War and have been taken as inspiration by a wide variety social movements including anarchist elements in contemporary globalisation struggles.

GAY SHAME is a virus in the system. [...] We will not be satisfied with a commercialized gay identity that denies the intrinsic links between queer struggle and challenging power. We seek nothing less than a new queer activism that foregrounds race, class, gender and sexuality, to counter the self-serving 'values' of gay consumerism and the increasingly hypocritical left. We are dedicated to fighting the rabid assimilationist monster with a devastating mobilization of queer brilliance. Gay Shame is a celebration of resistance: all are welcome (Gay Shame, 2004).

Queer anarchist action is not limited to Europe, North America and Australia/New Zealand. British anarcho-queer spoof paper, *The Pink Pauper*, reports other examples (Anonymous, 2004). In Israel, Black Laundry challenges the leftist status quo which argues that the occupation is the primary political issue, and challenges all forms of hierarchy. In Buenos Aires, an anti-capitalist radical queer group have created a social centre and support a variety of non-hierarchical events. Mujeres Creando ('Women Creating'), an anarcha-feminist group in Bolivia, includes challenging homophobia as a crucial part of its revolutionary politics. These examples, from ACT UP to Mujeres Creando, demonstrate an ongoing, though not inherent, relationship between anarchism and queer politics.

Poststructuralism

Intertwined with debates in feminist sexual politics and the direct action in inspiring the development of queer theory are the writings of French theorists later dubbed 'poststructuralist', particularly Foucault's work on sexuality (1978, 1985) and governmentality (1980). While Foucault refused to aline himself with any political identity or tradition, he did acknowledge that his efforts to understand power and the state were anarchistic:

I'm not saying that all forms of power are unacceptable but that's no power is necessarily acceptable or unacceptable. This is anarchism. But since anarchism is not acceptable these days, I will call it anarchaeology, the method that takes no power as necessarily acceptable (1980 cited in Day, 2005).

The anti-authoritarian nature of Foucault's work has led to a number of commentators claiming him (along with Deleuze, Guattari and others) as a new type of anarchist. Todd May (1989, 1994, 1995), Saul Newman (2001) and Lewis Call (2003) have argued that poststructuralist philosophy should be seen as a new stage in anarchist politics, respectively dubbed 'poststructuralist anarchism', 'postanarchism' and 'postmodern anarchism'. Their work has been taken up by activists and intellectuals. The growing examination of intersections of poststructuralism and anarchism is visible in active online networks, fora and listserves (see e.g. Adams, 2003) as well as academic and activist writing on the anarchism and poststructuralism of the alternative globalisation movement (e.g., Carter and Morland, 2004; Chesters, 2003; Epstein, 2001; Graeber, 2002; Notes from Nowhere, 2003; Sheehan, 2003; Tormey, 2004). The trend to see the poststructuralist writings of Deleuze and Foucault, among others, as a new form of anarchism has not gone without criticism for constructing a poststructuralism as 'the new anarchism' in opposition to an out-of-date and philosophically naive 'classical anarchism' (Day, 2005; Cohn, 2002; Cohn and Wilbur, 2003). Despite the limitations of postanarchism, anarchist readings of 'poststructuralism' are invaluable for understanding the practical possibilities of queer theory, an argument I aim to justify to an exploration of criticisms of queer.

One of the challenging claims of poststructuralist theorising is that subjectivity itself is an effect of relationships of power. This fundamentally destabilises the liberal social contract theory which imagines a pre-social subjects who agrees to particular social arrangements rather than subjectivities produced by those arrangements. In queer theory, this has been popularised in Butler's formulation of gender performativity and a general commitment to anti-essentialism. Indeed, this provides the core to rejecting not only identity politics, but more the nuanced theoretical development of sexual citizenship. For these politics depend upon a belief, or at least a pretence, that there are gays and lesbians, rather than gay and lesbian subjectivities that are constituted through particular relations of power. Although the deployment of power is inextricable from ongoing productions of knowledge, the social significance of discursive production is not limited to the intellectual - subjectivities are embodied. Recent developments in feminist poststructuralist theory (e.g., Butler 1990, 1993; Gatens, 1996; Grosz, 1994, 1995; Rafanell, 2003), in particular, argue that human bodies are themselves, in a very important sense, constructed.

Feminist theorising has long assumed a sex/gender distinction where the former is a fact of nature and the latter is a social product (Harrison and Hood-Williams, 2002). Indeed, feminism as identity politics benefits from the category of 'women' having an unquestioned, if not *quite* essential, ontological status; the 'naturalness' of the material body has been called upon to provide this. But, asks Judith Butler (1993), what puts the body outside the realm of that which is constructed? Indeed, isn't the very discursive act of *placing* the body outside an aspect of its construction as natural? More importantly, she asks, what relations of power, what social exclusions are hidden from investigation if the 'truth' of bodies is beyond question?

The supposed truth of sex, which can be imagined to be read off of bodies, Butler argues, is better read as the effect of 'regulatory schemas that produce intelligible morphological possibilities' (p14). In her formulation, 'sex' is produced through the continuous discursive reiteration of its supposedly pre-discursive existence. In this sense, she argues, 'sex' is very much like law. In challenging the 'truth' of sexed bodies, and simultaneously the truth of law, Butler provides an invaluable resource for both queer/feminist challenges to naturalised heterosexism and anarchist challenges to legal authority.

> The presumption that the symbolic law of sex enjoys separate ontology prior and autonomonous to its assumption is contravened by the notion that the citation of the law is the very mechanism of its production and articulation. What is "forced" by the symbolic, then, is a citation of its law that reiterates and consolidates the ruse of its own force. What would it means to "cite" the law to produce it differently, to "cite" the law in order to reinterpret and coopt its power, to expose the heterosexual matrix and to displace the effect of its necessity? (p15)

In other words, sex, like law, is a process rather than an accomplished fact (whether imagined to be natural or social). Indeed, neither can be fully accomplished. The power of either to demand obedience and conformity is dependent upon claims of authority, of truth, being continuously produced through reiterated citation (e.g., 'because it's the law, ma'am'). Therein lies the possibility for resistance, for nothing *requires* us to reiterate or cite the law (of sex or otherwise) obediently. Rather, we may feel capable, in particular contexts, of citing selectively and creatively a number of sources to produce reality differently. However, the first act of the law is to create bodies afraid to resist. 'There must be a body trembling before the law, a body whose fear can be compelled by the law, a law that produces the trembling body prepared for its inscription, a law that marks the body *first* with fear only then to mark it again with the symbolic stamp of sex' (p101).

Fearful and obedient embodied subjectivities are produced, in part, through the discursive construction of a dualist hierarchy of mind over body. This division has been influential in the development of sociology, with its critique of biological determinism, perhaps disguising a fear of corporeality, resulting in a neglect of the body in sociological theory until recently (Turner, 1996). This neglect may also be understood as an effect of hierarchies of men and masculinity (associated with mind) over women and femininity (associated with body) as well as hierarchies of sexuality where particular practices and desires are constructed as irrational or out-of-control (uncivilised bodies). As these concerns are essential to queer and feminist interventions in academia and elsewhere, the importance of the body has increasingly been acknowledged in sociological work. Anarchism must share these concerns, not only because of its critique of hierarchy in general, but also because of the ways in which gendered and sexualised constructions of the body are used to produce fearful and obedient subjectivities.

> Can it be that in the West, in our time, the female body has been constructed not only as a lack or absence but with more complexity, as a leaking, uncontrollable, seeping liquid; as formless flow; as viscosity, entrapping, secreting; as lacking not so much or simply the phallus but self-containment -- not a cracked or porous vessel, like a leaking ship, but a formlessness that engulfs all form, *a disorder that threatens all order*? [...] The metaphorics of uncontrollability, the ambivalence between desperate, fatal attraction and strong revulsion, the deep-seated fear of absorption, the association of femininity with contagion and disorder, the undecidability of the limits of the female body (particularly, but not only, with the onset of puberty and in the case of pregnancy), its powers of cynical seduction and allure are all common themes in literary and cultural representations of women. But these may well be a function of the projection outward of their own corporealities, the liquidities that men seem to want to cast out of their own self-representations (Grosz, 1994:203; emphasis added).

Does not this construction of the female body indicate a desire for and fear of anarchy - a disorder that threatens all order? Does that anarchy of (women's) bodies threaten all order, or merely those authoritarian forms of order that depend upon fantasies of intellectual certainty and truth, fantasies of controllable and controlled bodies/desires/intimacies? These are the authoritarian fantasies Judith Butler challenges when she questions the very nature of bodies. 'To problematised the matter of bodies may entail an initial loss of epistemological certainty, but a loss of certainty is not the same as political nihilism. On the contrary, such a loss may well indicate a significant and promising shift in political thinking. This unsettling of "matter" can be understood as initiating new possibilities, new ways for bodies to matter' (1993:30).

It is no wonder that recent developments in queer, feminist and poststructuralist work provoke strong emotion - whether fear, desire, both or otherwise. Not only do they challenge dominant understandings of the political, but simultaneously and necessarily they challenge are very understanding of our bodies, ourselves. The extent of this challenge, I suggest, is difficult to take on board if one assumes the necessity of the State. Arguing that subjectivity, including to a significant degree our very embodiment, is produced through relationships of power is not simply a 'theoretical' problem, but an ethical one. But, as many have asked, how can this translate into practical politics?

> Part of the dilemma of Queer activism is created by the institutionalised procedures of democratic engagement and the need therein for some form of representative identity and ... [that] this need for essential political identity is a central dilemma for any politics of social oppression (Rahman, 2000: 128).

The answer may lie in politics where individuals are supported and encouraged to speak for themselves.

Criticisms of Queer

While anarchism must necessarily challenge hierarchies of gender and sexuality in order to be consistent with a critique of all forms of domination, 'queer' need not necessarily be anarchist. Queer politics have been criticised on numerous fronts and their congruence with anarchist ideals has been challenged. Firstly, queer politics have been criticised, especially by Marxist and materialist feminists (see e.g., Ebert, 1995, 1996; Glick, 2000; Hennessy, 2000; Jackson, 2001), for promoting individualistic sexual transgression that is consistent with capitalism. Secondly, queer theory has been charged with monopolising sexuality as its domain of study and thus neglecting feminist theories of sexuality and displacing the importance of gender. Thirdly, queer politics can maintain a degree of homocentrism if built around the lesbian and gay identities it had sought to deconstruct. And finally, queer stands accused of romanticising textual deconstruction and a cultural politics of knowledge to the neglect of institutional (Seidman, 1997) and material engagement (Ebert, 1995, 1996; Glick, 2000; Hennessy, 2000). While these criticisms are of course intertwined, I look at each in turn.

Transgressive or Prefigurative?

Queer theory and politics are often seen as promoting transgressive practices, particularly 'queer' sexual practices, rather than addressing systematic inequalities. Strategies focused on transgression may ultimately reinforce the rule that they attempt to disrupt. As Wilson argues, 'just as the only true blasphemer is the individual who really believes in God, so transgression depends on, and may even reinforce, conventional understandings of what it is that is to be transgressed' (1993: 109). Neither citizenship nor transgression offers a basis for the production of a radically different social order as both depend on an acknowledgement of the legitimacy of dominant contemporary order(s). Elisa Glick criticises sex-positive feminist and queer theories for encouraging us 'to fuck our way to freedom' (p 19). She suggests that influential writers such as Gayle Rubin and Judith Butler valourise transgressive sexual practices as performative 'subversive repetitions' that challenge discursive productions of normal. Sadomasochism, drag and butch/femme, Glick argues, are promoted as a form of sexual vanguardism. In addition to the problems of promoting particular sexual practices as revolutionary, each of these is taken out of its economic context. Queer constructions of butch/femme as a performative critique of heterogender rarely acknowledge the working-class and racialised historical constructions of these identities and their perceived essential nature. Likewise, sadomasochism, particularly in the form of sex work, is produced within a capitalist context. Finally, camp and drag arguably embody particular racialised and classed constructions of gender (hooks, 1992). To what extent does individual play with power or gender challenge the dominant organisation of either? Indeed, as Glick asks, 'how do sexually dissident styles reproduce relationships of domination' (p 28)? Perhaps queer politics share more with the right-wing libertarianism of *Playboy* than with an anti-capitalist analysis. Similarly, Teresa Ebert (1995) advocates a red feminism in response to 'ludic feminists' such as Judith Butler whose discursive politics, she argues, neglect the material. While Ebert considers the theories of Butler, Foucault, and others to be anarchist, her understanding of anarchism as compatible with capitalism is grounded in the definition of US right-wing academics who defend the 'libertarian' individualism of the 'free' market (e.g., Friedman, 1975; Nozick, 1974; Rothbard, 1978) rather than the libertarian socialist tradition of anarchism described above.

The post-al [sic] politics being put forth by Lyotard, Cornell and other ludic theorists and feminists, such as Judith Butler, is basically an anarchic notion of politics. Its primary goal is individual freedom from *authority* rather than emancipation from socio-economic *exploitation*. [...] Liberation is seen as freedom from authority, from regulation, from any constraints on the free play of the possibilities of (sexual) differences. [...] Such a post-al freedom (post-authority, post-state, post-class, post-production) is disturbingly close to the demands (desires) of the 'new' aggressive entrepreneurial anarchism of late capitalism that is so evident in the backlash against health care reform and affirmative action in the U.S. and the increasing strength of right-wing politics and racism both in the U.S. and in Europe. This entrepreneurial anarchism is passionately, even violently, committed to a completely unfettered freedom for the individual to pursue profit unconstrained by the state and any obligation to the social good. [... T]he post-al politics of [...] ludic feminists, is quite unable to challenge the effects of entrepreneurial anarchism. Instead, the *effects* of ludic claims for the unrestricted play of (sexual) differences, for the unrestricted freedom of individual desires, reinforce this aggressive individualism. There is very little difference -- in their effects -- between ethical feminists and free market entrepreneurs in late capitalism (Ebert, 1995).

Although I contend that Ebert and Glick misread Butler, Rubin and Foucault, the fact that such a reading is possible demanded that queer theories be explicit in their critique of capitalism (Butler, 1997). Indeed, as Rosemary Hennessy (2000) argues, recognising the ways in which capitalist social relations are instrumental in the production of identity categories is not to replace a politics of sexuality with politics of class, but to extend 'queer politics to queer-y feelings between sexual identity and exploitation' (p 68).

The argument that queer promotes an individualistic politics compatible with neoliberalism are only comprehensible if one fails to recognise the possibility of (communist) anarchism. Teresa Ebert (1995) clearly recognises that the work of Butler and Foucault is opposed to State authority while she insists upon the 'revolutionary necessity of appropriating [State] power'. But one need not be committed to the Marxist ideal of State socialism to fail to take seriously the anarchism of queer theory. Steven Seidman is also confused by the radical individuality promoted by queer theory.

Despite its critique of methodological individualism or the view of the individual as the source and centre of knowledge, society, and history, much queer theory, at least its deconstructive currents, is wedded to a social vision whose ultimate value lies in promoting individuality and tolerance of difference; where queer theory does not edge into an anarchistic social ideal it gestures towards a democratic pluralistic ideal (Seidman, 1997: 157).

Although describing queer as anarchistic, he does not acknowledge anarchist traditions as offering political possibilities. This mistake is repeated by queer theorists and leaves them open to charges of promoting a politics compatible with capitalism. Similarly, while most of the queer activisms described above proclaim an anti-capitalist politics, it is not always entirely clear how their actions aim to produce alternative forms of production, consumption and exchange or to ameliorate poverty and alienation.

Queer does not necessarily have to be understood as transgressive. It does necessarily promote breaking the rules that produce the hetero/homo division. Breaking rules for the sake of

breaking rules is merely transgressive. Breaking rules while producing new realities is prefigurative. 'Prefiguration, the demonstration or rehearsal or sample of how life can be in a better world is usually but not always transgressive' (Greenway, 1997: 175). Prefigurative politics are central to both anarchism and poststructuralism (May 1994, 1995), which refuses to construct a division between ends and means (i.e. consequentialism). Bookchin noted 'it is plain that the goal of revolution today must be the liberation of daily life. ...there *can be no separation of the revolutionary process from the revolutionary goal*' (Bookchin 1974: 44-45 original emphasis). Prefigurative queer politics, then, do not simply defy or mock the heter/homo division, but create cultural resources, forms of organisation, relationships and networks, that not only resist normalisation but support and enable antinormalist realities.

More specifically, though, queer politics has been criticised for promoting transgressive sexual practices. These might only be seen as prefigurative in a limited sense of what an individual (or couple or group) would like their sexual life to be like. Thus, Glick's reading of queer politics as a promotion of the possibility of 'fuck[ing] our way to freedom' (2000:15). How, for example, can sadomasochism be understood to be prefigurative rather than transgressive? BDSM can be considered play, both in the theatrical and pleasure-oriented senses of the word. Thus, 'domination' in this context is as much like being queer-bashed as losing at Monopoly is like poverty. What would the workplace be like if we had safewords, or negotiated the conditions of our labour as equals? Liz Highleyman (1997), in an anarchist analysis of BDSM, argued that,

> SM play involves interpersonal power exchange, which is diametrically opposed to real world authoritarian roles, which are typically unidirectional. One participant is always on top, and the other is always on the bottom. Except in rare circumstances, the victim of the cop, soldier, or warden does not have the opportunity to 'exchange' any power whatsoever. Pat Califia has noted that perhaps the reason erotic dominance and submission is so threatening to the established order is because SM roles are so fluid.

Anarchism, much like ethical BDSM, rejects the legitimacy of stable hierarchies that result in real forms of domination for equally negotiated, desired and fluid power relations. As Foucault pointed out, all relationships, and thus all forms of organisation, involve power (1980). While domination (real or play) always involves power, power does not always involve domination. Sadomasochistic sexual practices, along with some other 'transgressive' forms of sex, can thus be seen as prefigurative as they promote an alternative ethic of fluid relationships of power, of active consent, and an ethic of pleasure (see also, Albury, 2002; Warner, 1999). More importantly, in order for queer politics to successfully disrupt the hetero/homo division, it must also disrupt all the hierarchical binaries with which it is intertwined. These hierarchies must be challenged in *all relationships*, not only sexual ones.

Queer Gender

Gayle Rubin (1999 [1984]) influentially argued that feminism is not necessarily the most appropriate framework for understanding sexuality, which should be understood as constituting an axis of oppression not reducible to gender. Rubin's argument was in direct response to the development of a feminist framework constructing women as victims in need of State protection from masculine sexuality (MacKinnon, 1989). In opposing this particular analysis, Rubin was not contending feminism should limit itself to commenting on gender or consider the analysis of sexuality the exclusive preserve of gay, lesbian and queer studies. As Judith Butler argues, 'if sexual relations cannot be reduced to gender positions, which seems true enough, it does not follow that an

analysis of sexual relations apart from an analysis of gender relations is possible' (1994:9). This move on the part of gay and lesbian studies or queer theory as a new academic interdisciplinary realm, Butler suggests, is a dangerous effect of the 'conservative force of institutionalization' that must necessarily be criticised 'in the rush to acquiring new legitimacy' (p 21). Indeed, she argues, the same practices that attempt to fix feminism as the old and queer as the new could result in the 'institutional domestication of queer thinking' which would be 'its sad finish' (p 21). Rather, recognising the complexity of oppression requires a rejection of proper objects of study.

> [B]oth feminist and queer studies need to move beyond and against those
> methodological demands which force separations in the interests of canonisation
> and provisional institutional legitimation. For the analysis of racialisation and
> class is at least equally important in the thinking of sexuality as either gender or
> homosexuality, and these last two are not separable from more complex and
> complicitous formations of power (Butler, 1994:21).

Crossing institutional boundaries and refusing to claim a proper object of study has been a strength much queer theory. Intersections of queer and feminist thought have provided an antinormalist gender critique and have moved beyond binary divisions of man/woman, gender/sex and mind/body. Queer feminists, among others, have challenged the category of 'woman' as a basis for political activism. Returning to criticism of transgression, queer theory potentially produces its own forms of normalisation and hierarchy.

> Feminist identifications have, at times, intended to enjoin women to be alike by
> being visibly different from conventional norms of femininity, in the direction of
> gender neutrality or nonspecificity, which is also, of course, gendered. Queer
> emphases on antinormative display enjoin us to be different from conventional
> norms of femininity by defiantly cross-identifying. Conceptually, then, as well as
> politically, something called femininity becomes the tacit background in relation
> to which other positions become figural and mobile (Martin, 1994:119).

Like Butler, Biddy Martin is concerned by a queer theory which represents itself as fluid, open and radical in contrast to a feminism (and female body) which is constraining and ultimately conservative. This simultaneously makes sexuality, as the object of queer theory, as 'the means of crossing, and to make gender and race into grounds so indicatively fixed that masculine positions become the emblem again of mobility' (p 110). The academic claim to sexuality as queer territory, criticised by Butler and Martin, which results in the development of hierarchies -- of politics and knowledge (queer over feminist), gender (transgressive over conventional and masculine over feminine), and oppressions with potential for destabilisation (sexuality over gender and race) -- is incompatible with anarchist politics.

Criticisms of queer theory claiming particular territory from feminism are easily addressed. Anarchist politics aims to eliminate all forms of domination and should draw upon whatever tools are consistent with that aim, whatever their label. As relationships of domination are increasingly recognised to be deeply interconnected, reducing the validity of analysis based on class, race, sexuality, gender or other social divisions as independent social formations, it makes sense to turn to anarchist theory to understand relations of domination and other forms of anarchist practice to challenge them. Although certain strains of anarchist politics (i.e., a rigid class struggle anarchism) may prioritise one area of domination over others, contemporary anarchist politics address a wide variety of oppressions and their intersections in particular locations (e.g., Jeppesen, 2004; Notes from Nowhere, 2003). At the same time, queer theory should not be limited to a focus on homosexuality. The homocentrism of activism labelled 'queer' may be more difficult to escape. Like

anarchy, it is a term that should be used tactically with sensitivity to other people's likely assumptions about the meaning of the word and consequently their ability to feel included. A queer politics enacted entirely by 'queers' is as likely to remain as ineffective as an anarchist politics enacted only by 'anarchists', or indeed any politics enacted only by 'activists' (Anonymous 2000a and 2000b). In either case, the aim should not be to recruit people to a particular label, but to encourage critical thought and the practice of ethical relationships with other people and forms of life (see Heckert, 2002).

Queer Homocentrism

Queer theory and politics developed through criticising of the limitations of gay and lesbian identity politics. Whether through identification with or against gay and lesbian, queer is constructed around homosexuality. Thus, queer is something of a contradictory project. Eve Sedgwick writes that, 'Queer can refer to: the open match of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, distances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or can't be made) to signify monolithically'. At the same time, queer also refers to homosexuality, and 'for anyone to disavow those meanings, or to displace them from the term's definitional center, would be to dematerialize any possibility of queerness itself' (Sedgwick, 1993:8). In many discourses, including activist ones, queer is much more likely to refer to the second definition than the first (Gamson, 1996; Halperin, 1995), thus, 'simply reinscribing the exclusive understanding of sexual identities' (Rahman, 2000:127). Judith Butler (1993) questions the possibility of reclaiming a term that has historically produced a subject through shaming and pathologisation. She argues that the history of the word is not erased through 'reclamation', but lingers in any usage. For this reason, 'queer' suffers similar problems to 'gay', enacting what Foucault has referred to as a 'reverse discourse'. The signification of queer as deviant risks the production of a new normalising category, in which all forms of sexualised (and gendered) transgression become understood as variations of a single category. This is realised with the development of queer as an inherently exclusive, albeit broad, identity. Indeed, the capacity to claim the term can be influenced by locations of class, ethnicity, age, religion, sexuality and other aspects of life experience and social practices. Queer theorists provide a valuable critique of identity politics but in emphasising the hetero/homo division and especially gay and lesbian identities,'queer theory' risks acting as a more critical version of gay and lesbian studies. Queer approaches rarely address bisexual (Hemmings, 2002; Young, 1997) and transgender identities, let alone move outside the four boxes of contemporary liberal LGBT identity politics. At the same time, queer theory focuses much more on homosexuality than on heterosexuality. Queer feminist work (especially Butler) provide the major exceptions (see also Thomas, 2000). This emphasis on homosexuality is not simply a problem of queer theory, but is rooted in a sociological tradition where research is focused on deviant or 'marked' social categories rather than those considered 'unmarked' such as heterosexuality (Brekhus, 1998). One of the most important insights of queer theory is that the hetero/homo binary is implicated in all aspects of 'Western' social knowledge and organisation. To limit this insight to a focus on homosexuality would be a great loss.

Queer Culture

Queer theory suggests that the strength of male domination and heterosexism is not simply due to tradition, prejudice or socialisation, 'but a basic way of organising knowledges and fields of daily life which are deeply articulated in the core social practices of Western societies' (Seidman, 1997: 157). Queer emphasises the cultural politics of knowledge and a deconstructionist assault on the hetero/homo dichotomy. 'Although discursive interventions certainly have material effects on the production of the real, how exactly the resignification works towards political and social change

needs to be explained' (Glick, 2000: 33). Even the father of deconstruction suggests that discursive approaches cannot be separated from institutional analysis.

> What is somewhat hastily called deconstruction is not ... a specialised set of discursive procedures ... [but] a way of taking a position, in its work of analysis, concerning the political and institutional structures that make possible and govern our practices ... Precisely because it is never concerned only with signified content, deconstruction should not be separable from this politico-institutional problematic (Derrida, quoted in Seidman, 1997: 156).

Clearly, knowledge is an important terrain for political activism. But, if 'sexual orientation' is also integral to the organisation of economic and political systems, action limited to cultural forms is unlikely to bring about the radical social change necessary to eliminate the hetero/homo division at the centre of queer critique.

This does require a cultural politics of knowledge, but cannot be limited to that. Anarchist politics depend upon a combination of cultural critique and alternative knowledge production with prefigurative practices of mutual aid. A cultural politics of knowledge is necessary for enabling people to view (possibilities of) reality differently from the perspectives encouraged through authoritarian discourses of corporate media and State propaganda and the racist, sexist, heterosexist, etc. relationships of domination upon which they depend and which they encourage. In 1950s and 60s France, the Situationists, a group of anti-authoritarian Marxists, argued that capitalism cannot be resisted by seizing the State apparatus but can be subverted through alternative aesthetic practices (Debord, 1971 [1967]; Vaneigem, 1994 [1967]). They advocated détournement, that is the practice of modifying capitalist 'signs', such as advertisements, to change the message and encourage the viewer to recognise the manipulative nature of capitalism. This tactic, now more commonly referred to as 'subvertising', is still popular among anti-capitalist activists (see e.g., Klein, 2000). The slick Canadian magazine Adbusters takes advantage of graphic design software to produce 'subverts' that are indistinguishable from adverts, apart from their content. An anarchist cultural politics of knowledge also involves a more direct production of alternative discourses through film, fiction, news (e.g., Indymedia), and art (see e.g., Antliff, 2003; Jordan, 1998; Moore, 1998). Indeed, the greatest popular experiment in anarchist organisation in recent history, the Spanish revolution of 1936-1939 (see e.g., Acklesberg, 1991; Bookchin, 1997) depended as much upon the 'cultural' as upon anarcho-syndicalist unions which seized the means of production, women's collectives which challenged sexism, and other forms of institutional change (Cleminson, 2003). As important as cultural forms of resistance are, it is not sufficient to write about how the State, the university and the liberal individualism of capitalism depend upon a hetero/homo division or to do queer readings of Shakespeare. A successful queer politics must also engage in direct action to address human needs and desires, inhibit relationships of domination and develop alternatives to authoritarian institutions. As Steven Seidman argues, 'If we are to recover a fuller social critical perspective and a transformative political vision, one fruitful direction is to articulate a politics of knowledge with an institutional social analysis that does not disavow a willingness to spell out its own ethical standpoint' (1997: 161).

Conclusions

Queer theory has been charged with being an impractical politics - it rejects notions of pre-existing liberal subjects recognising that subjectivity is the discursive product of relationships and practices. Critical of the disciplinary natures of heterosexual and homosexual identities, queer theory advocates relationships and forms of social organisation based on minimal disciplinary

structures. For those unwilling or unable to imagine individual freedom within an egalitarian social order, queer theory comes to be read as prescribing individualistic transgression compatible with capitalist social relations rather than inspiration for the prefigurative enactment of social relations which resist hetero/homo divisions and other hierarchical, disciplinary techniques. At the same time, queer has, in my opinion, rightly been criticised for attempting to claim sexuality as its proper object thus enacting a form of academic territorialism against feminism for which only gender has been argued to be a 'proper object'. Similarly, queer theory is easily reduced to a more critical version of gay and lesbian studies, rather than a critical investigation of the role of hetero/homo divisions in the organisation of social life, individuals subjectivity and the production of knowledge. In order to address these important concerns, queer theory could advocate for the development of horizontal networks of theoretically engaged practice examining and challenging the ongoing production of hierarchies, borders, representation and other disciplinary techniques justify through the use of hetero/homo and related divisions. Were queer theory to draw upon the rich heritage of anarchism and acknowledge the anarchistic elements of its own heritage, these criticisms might be more easily addressed.

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The Anarchy of Queer

THE ANARCHY OF QUEER
Jamie Heckert, 2006

Queer, as a tradition of theory and practice (and increasingly a marketing tool), faces serious criticism in terms of its political viability and transformative potential. First, queer politics have been criticised, especially by Marxist and materialist feminists, for promoting individualistic sexual transgression that is consistent with capitalism. Second, queer theory has been charged with monopolising sexuality as its domain of study and thus neglecting feminist theories of sexuality and displacing the importance of gender. Third, queer politics is to risk of maintaining a degree of homocentrism if built around the lesbian and gay identities it had sought to deconstruct. And finally, queer stands accused of romanticising textual deconstruction and a cultural politics of knowledge to the neglect of institutional and material engagement.

This paper argues that these criticisms can largely be addressed through a return to the anarchistic genealogical roots of queer - lesbian feminism, direct action & poststructuralism. Explicitly anarchist queer projects might then prioritise prefiguration over transgression, horizontal networks over territorialisation, a practical politics of difference over a return to identity, and a tradition of radically egalitarian political activism which embraces cultural, material, institutional and individual transformation.