

SPECIAL ISSUE OF GLQ

Queer/Cuir Américas: Translation, Decoloniality, and the Incommensurable

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The imperial reach of mainstream U.S. and European queer studies across North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean has led to a unidirectional flow of queer theories and epistemologies. These approaches have often been associated with metropolitan, modern, cutting edge and/or transgressive ideas and practices with regard to identities, the body, desire, affect, human rights, politics, sovereignty and erotic justice, as well as the twin beasts democracy and neoliberalism. Underscoring this unidirectional flow in no way intends to erase powerful anthropophagic and Calibanesque practices, traditions of dissent and insurgency, or to deny what Antonio Cornejo Polar calls the “contradictory heterogeneity” of the Américas. However, queer theory’s contextual and epistemological differences have yet to be fully reckoned with, despite a growing corpus of work in translation.

This, however, will not be an issue *in* or even *on* translation. Rather, we want to question translation and its politics of (in)visibilizing certain bodies and geographies, and to shed light on queer/cuir histories that have confronted the imperial gaze, or which remain untranslatable. We want to interrogate cultural and academic knowledge brokering, as well as the gaps and untranslatable forms (gestures, looks, tongues) that are the result of viscous *encuentros* across difference. The production, circulation, and transformation of knowledge is political, and politics influences what scholarship accrues value and how. What cultural, disciplinary, or market-based logics serve to highlight or overlook individual, archival, or collective cuir artistic production; what cuir scholarship dwells in the shadows of Anglophone and Francophone queer theory, and why?

This special issue seeks to bring together bodies and forms of knowledge that have been excluded from queer studies as it has been consolidated in universities in the US and Europe, while also asking if particular regional or national (or diasporic) traditions have privileged certain queer/cuir texts in Latin America and the Caribbean. We seek to assemble activists, scholars, and artists working through queer studies, gender and sexuality studies, intersectional feminisms, decolonial approaches, migration studies, and hemispheric American studies.

With this special issue of *GLQ* we ask: how do forms of inquiry involving such a seemingly disparate set of actions, responses, or mobilizations to the challenges of compulsory heterosexuality—what Ochy Curiel calls the *heteronación*—engage with the politics of translation? What texts get translated and why? What is to be done about the vexing and central problem of untranslatability? And, is there anything to be gained by maintaining the queer opacity of the untranslatable?

How do new geopolitical realities enact tropes of marginalization that delegitimize queer/cuir studies? What visual artists, performers, or collaborations cannot be seen by the attention to single authorship and the literary that predominates within area studies and the humanities? How do Black and Indigenous figures and collaborations reside outside of an imperial definition of queerness?

How does the interplay of *activismos*, academic work, artistic engagements, and policy actions clash with analytics of class-based *prejuicios*, linguistic *retos*, and competing erotic *saberes*? How does queer/cuir mobilize (and excite) histories, desires, objects and discourses in a hemispheric American context? What inter- and counter-regional networks of knowledge circulation question hegemonic relations of queer/cuir activism and historiography? What pedagogies and teaching strategies emerge in conditions of limited access to channels of academic and artistic production?

In the case of Latin America, contemporary appraisals of queer theory have asked if it repeats neoliberal and postcolonial expansionist practices that mirror other theoretical interventions, such as second wave feminism, deconstruction, and historical materialism. We want to ask, as well, where do Chicana/x and Latina/x feminisms, queer of color critique, queer migrations, radical Black studies, Black queer studies, and queer Indigenous studies fit in these efforts to contest the homogeneity of queer studies as a field and in a hemispheric context? In addition, we want to ground queer's historicity, the bodies and desires that give it meaning, and to contextualize the mobility of bodies and the mutual imbrication of discourses, affects, and epistemologies; flows, emergences, and becomings. How do we account for transformations of theory and practice, while attending to the dissidences, the nonconformity, of queer's cuir translations?

In approaching these questions, this issue of GLQ seeks to articulate countergenealogies and alternative geopolitical routes of knowledge. We seek scholarly essays, personal essays, and creative work that explore one or more of the following themes:

Decoloniality: To ask what the interface of queer studies and decoloniality can mean as an epistemological horizon, we propose a *contrapunteo* queer, a set of exchanges that position queer studies as a hinge that at once recognizes the political positioning of sexo-dissident subjectivities and ontologies and opens the door to hemispheric thinking capacious enough to critique the enduring inequalities of the present, including what counts as queer studies, and what counts as decolonial.

The Body: Scholars, activists, and artists in this issue will propose ways of thinking with the body and its iterations, language and its translations, proximities and their affects, the racialized other outside the mainstream academia, lived enactments of desire and erotic justice, in order to expand how the social categories that circulate under the sign of queerness relate to the particular contexts in which queerness emerges, contested, in translation, uneven, and yet, familiar.

The Incommensurable: By exploring the encounters of languages, bodies and desires, this special issue is poised to contribute to reshaping what hemispheric dialogues feel and look like. Despite Boaventura de Sousa Santos's proposal that intercultural translation should make explicit the relational demands of translation in order to chart new constellations of meaning as a path toward cognitive justice, is an intercultural translation of queerness possible? Are there

degrees to the commensurability of cognition, embodiment, and desire? Or, moreover, are there potentialities and emergent forms of embodied understanding that posit alternatives to the in/commensurable?

The issue will be prepared in collaboration with a counterpart journal in Latin America. In striving to diversify and disseminate a broad range of voices and to address the hierarchies of knowledge production, we will include academic articles, as well as a forum that engages with different types of activist and artistic expression. The authors of this call come together from a range of disciplinary fields; some have studied and taught in Latin America (the Andean region in particular), as well as the U.S., and Spain. We approach the sources and trajectories behind queer studies in different ways; we also collaborate with non-academic audiences, writers, performers, and organizations in ways that complicate the boundaries of knowledge, as well as its institutionalization and custodianship. Thus, we invite collaborations that foster reflection and engagement from the academe and beyond, across the hemispheric Américas.

Texts may be submitted in Spanish, Portuguese, or English.

Visit www.cuiramericas.org for more information, or email: cuiramericas@gmail.com

Works Cited

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