

CALL FOR PAPERS

In-person symposium: “Queer Theory, Marxism, and the Question of Labour”

Centre for Gender Research, University of Oslo

14th–15th February 2025

The past decade has seen an increased attention within queer theory towards questions of labour. From new conceptualisations of the possibilities of queer and trans care by Hil Malatino and Leah Piepzna-Samarasinha to explorations of the form and value of emotional and affective labour by Alva Gotby, queer theory appears to be turning towards the material and the economic as new sites of productive theorisation. Amidst this turn, it is unsurprising that many queer theorists have utilised the economic insights of Marxist theory. But how successful have these application of Marxist accounts of labour been to queer theory’s project? Are there other possibilities of using a Marxist analysis of work to queer theoretical ends? How might Marxist accounts of labour be enriched by queer theory’s insights? This symposium will offer a space for a close exploration of these questions. We welcome papers from across disciplines which address the following, or any other relevant, questions and themes:

- How is Marx’s analysis of alienated labour relevant to contemporary queer-materialist thought?
- What functions do the categories of production and reproduction play in queer-Marxist thought?
- How should queer and Marxist activists respond to rising precarity?
- What are the differences between queer and Marxist accounts of the labouring body, and can they be reconciled?
- How have both queer and Marxist theory failed to account for the racialised order of capitalist labour relations?
- How should queer-Marxist thought treat the question of domestic labour?
- What are the limits of Marxist and Marxist-feminist analyses of sex work, particularly with regards to queer sex work, and what other modes of critique are possible?
- What can the queer post-humanist turn offer to Marxist theories of automation?
- How do we account for the relationships between heterosexuality, social reproduction, and alienating labour?
- Can and should transition be considered as labour, and how might this be politically generative?
- What are the tensions between Marxist-feminist analyses of emotional labour and the affective turn in contemporary queer theory?
- From where does the value of queer care labour derive?

Please submit abstracts of no more than 300 words to nsuqueermaterialism@gmail.com by no later than 17th November 2024. We will notify you of the outcome of your submission by 22nd November.

When submitting your abstract, please indicate if you would like to be considered for funding to attend this symposium, and how much you would need (travel, accommodation, conference fees, etc.). We have a very small amount set aside for contributing participants without institutional funding to attend.

Attendance to this winter symposium requires a fee of 50EUR per participant.

About NSU

The Nordic Summer University (NSU) is a Swedish non-profit organisation. Since 1950, NSU has been an independent academic institution which organises winter and summer symposia that draw international participants across disciplines in the Nordic and Baltic regions and beyond. NSU is organised into interdisciplinary research networks called 'study circles'. These circles pay particular attention to cross-disciplinary areas not yet targeted by larger research institutions. The practice of NSU addresses two fundamental premises of a knowledge-based welfare state: production of knowledge based on academic freedom and democratic practice of self-governance.

About Study Circle 8: 'Queer Materialism'

Study circle 8- 'Queer Materialism'-- focuses on the tensions and overlaps between queer and Marxist theory. Despite often sharing similar objects of study and working together for similar liberatory goals, the divergences between these two schools of thought often produce unresolved methodological contradictions. It is these contradictions from which our circle will begin to consider the limits of both queer and Marxist thought, as well as the possibilities for synthesising them in new, politically generative ways. The circle meets twice a year and will run for three years in total (2025-7). Throughout our meetings and symposia, our central questions will be: To what extent can the differing methodologies of queer and Marxist thought be used in mutually informative ways? How might we approach perceived tensions between queer theory and Marxist thought as generative intersections? How might we use these contradictions as productive starting points for analysing key subject matters for both schools of thought? What might be the limits of thinking these two methodologies together? What can a queer-materialist method illuminate about contemporary systems of oppression?