

Studies in Canadian Literature Études en littérature canadienne

Queer Bodies Corps Queers

Domenico A. Beneventi and Jorge Calderón

Volume 46, Number 1, 2021

Special Issue: Queer Bodies
Numéro spécial : Corps Queers

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1086607ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1086607ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

University of New Brunswick, Dept. of English

ISSN

0380-6995 (print)

1718-7850 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this document

Beneventi, D. & Calderón, J. (2021). Queer Bodies. *Studies in Canadian Literature / Études en littérature canadienne*, 46(1), 5–22. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1086607ar>

Introduction: Queer Bodies / Corps Queers

DOMENICO A. BENEVENTI AND JORGE CALDERÓN

THIS SPECIAL ISSUE OF *SCL/ÉLC*, *Queer Bodies/Corps Queer*, tackles a rich array of representations of bodies at the intersections of gender expression, sexualities, biological specificities, racialization, indigeneity, and disability. Topics addressed include the materiality of bodies and their affects, (cyborg) bodies interfacing with machinery and architectures, bodies shaped and inscribed by legacies of colonial and gender violence, and the normative structures of feeling and affective landscapes that impinge upon present forms of corporeality. They also consider the various ways in which bodies inhere in, resist, and subvert the social, political, and economic institutions and discourses that pathologize, marginalize, or otherwise efface non-normative bodies, dispositions, propensities, and practices. Located at the intersection of queer studies, body studies, affect theory, and human geography, the articles in this special issue demonstrate the complex intersectionalities of queer embodiment: How does one define the queer body in terms of its materiality, its performativity, its subjectivity, its agency, and its affectivity? What can the queer body *do* within the predetermined dispositions of habitus (Bourdieu 17)? What are the exceptions, the anomalies, the *failures* — to use Jack Halberstam's term (*Queer Art*) — in the forms of embodiment generated by the system of normative and hegemonic knowledge-power? Can the queer body be seen as that exception, as that *virus* to the system, as Joshua Whitehead contends, which would infect the fantasy of the cohesive, docile, measured, and proper collective body? By examining various representations of the queer body, we may arrive at a better understanding not only of how each body — whether queer or not — is situated within and subjected to pre-established subjectivities, corporeal norms, forms of affect, expressions of desire, and bodily enactments, but also of how each body has the potential to subvert, reconfigure, or queerly transform the normative, the expected.

Recent queer theory has shown the various ways in which queer lived realities depart from heteronormative constructions of the spatial (Halberstam, *Queer Time*), the temporal (Muñoz), and of affect (Ahmed; Love). In the Canadian literary context, it is only recently that *queerness* has been approached as a category of analysis that subverts fixed categories of identity. Peter Dickinson, for instance, points to the “absent presence of queerness” (6) in Canada’s canonical texts and criticism, affirming that to read from a queer perspective constitutes a political alternative to Nation that defines the ways in which gender, sexuality, and ethnicity/race are intimately tied up with a collective imaginary. Dickinson and Terry Goldie situate the figure of the homosexual historically, culturally, and textually by examining hidden manifestations of gay identity and the manner in which they interrupt or subvert nationalist rhetoric. Similarly, Robert Schwartzwald and Robert K. Martin (“Cheap Tricks”) show the imbrication of queer desires and rhetorics of nationalism in Quebec, from the fetishization of the Québécois “other” to the performativity of gender as expressive of Quebec’s struggles with its political authenticity.

Gay and Lesbian, and, more recently, Queer Studies have been the subject of a number of special issues of Canadian journals, beginning in 1995 with a special issue of *ESC: English Studies in Canada* titled *Lesbian and Gay Studies II* (Martin). In a 2010 special issue of *Canadian Literature* titled *Queerly Canadian*, editor Janice Stewart argues that queer theory in the Canadian context “question[s] the rhetorics of pigeonholed identity and initiate[s] an engagement with complexity and intersectionality” (7). *Québec Studies* published special issues edited by Charles Batson and Denis Provencher in 2015 and 2016 titled *Queer Québec*. In 2015, Domenico Beneventi and Jorge Calderón edited a special issue of *Canadian Literature* titled *Queer Frontiers* that examined queer spatialities as heterotopia (Foucault, *Dits*), as counterpublics (Warner, *Publics*), and as border zones or frontiers (Anzaldúa). In 2020, a special issue of the *Journal of Canadian Studies*, edited by Ronald Cummings and Sharlee Cranston-Reimer, titled *Queer Canada*, examined “the ways in which Indigenous studies, decolonial critiques, diaspora studies, and critical race studies have offered key interventions and heralded new horizons within the field” (213).

Au cinéma, en photographie et dans les arts visuels, les études de Thomas Waugh abordent les thématiques de la représentation corporelle, de la sexualité, et de l’espace urbain et national des sujets gais, lesbiens

et queer. Récemment paru, d'ailleurs, est le volume *QuébeQueer : Le queer dans les productions littéraires, artistiques et médiatiques québécoises* (Boisclair et al.). Sur le plan de la critique féministe, nous observons un positionnement semblable dans le sens où l'on préconise une identité genrée qui emploie diverses stratégies de représentation comme formes émergentes d'agentivité et de contestation sociale. Les études d'Isabelle Boisclair et Catherine Dussault-Frenette, Nicole Côté, Catherine Mavrikakis et Lori Saint-Martin sur la sexualité et les identités genrées se sont penchées principalement sur les façons de représenter les sexes et les genres, notamment sur ce que les dispositifs textuels, à travers les personnages, relaient et produisent comme discours normatifs ou dérogoratifs sur les identités, les performances, et les pratiques. Notons également les études de Martine Delvaux sur la construction de la féminité dans *Les filles en série* et sur la domination et les réseaux de socialisation masculins dans *Le boys club*. Si les études de Barbara Havercroft sur la construction de la subjectivité dans les écritures féminines s'inscrivent dans la lignée du féminisme, de nouvelles voies féministes sont aussi explorées à partir des théories du *care* (*Writing*) et de l'affect (*All*) par Marie Carrière. Pour leur part, Viviane Namaste et Helen Leung analysent en particulier les enjeux liés à la transsexualité et aux expériences transgenres et Ele Chénier a étudié l'histoire des lesbiennes au Canada.

More recently, homonormativity (Duggan) and homonationalism (Puar) have been critiqued by Indigenous, trans, non-binary, and racialized writers, activists, and scholars. Critical race theory, intersectional approaches, and Indigenous methodologies have also been important in reframing Queer Studies in Canada; for instance, the work of Rinaldo Walcott examines the intersections between racialized Black bodies, sexualities, and diaspora, while the work of Qwo-Li Driskill et al. "bring[s] Indigenous-specific critiques of colonial heteropatriarchal gender/sexuality into broader conversations within queer and Indigenous studies" (3). Daniel Heath Justice ("Queering," *Sexuality*) has also examined the intersections of queer theory and Indigenous sexualities.

Dans une perspective queer plus générale, rappelons que *L'histoire de la sexualité* de Michel Foucault (*Dits*) est le texte fondateur de la théorie queer qui va influencer la pensée de Teresa De Lauretis (*Practice, Technologies*), d'Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, de Judith Butler (*Gender*), de Michael Warner (*Trouble*), de Leo Bersani et de David M. Halperin, entre autres. Foucault démontre que la sexualité est un dispositif de

pouvoir transmis par les savoirs psychologique, psychiatrique et médical assujettissants ; que ces savoirs produisent un sujet, une subjectivité et une agentivité, et donc qu'ils produisent et délimitent ce qu'il est possible de penser, de dire, d'écrire et de faire. La critique et la théorie queer tentent de rendre compte de ce qui excède ce système de savoir-pouvoir. L'intérêt dans la théorie queer vient, en partie, de sa capacité à dégager et à matérialiser ce que Halberstam appelle les logiques non normatives de la corporéité, de l'espace et du temps. Ainsi, la notion de queer résiste à une définition simple ou univoque et renvoie avant tout au caractère essentiellement instable de l'identité, de même qu'à son potentiel d'inventer de nouvelles formes hors des normes fixes. Halberstam suggère que l'échec est un « art queer », car même s'il nous oblige à affronter le côté sombre de la vie, il offre souvent un moyen de repenser notre façon d'exister dans le monde.

Suivant Foucault au sujet de la discipline et régulation des corps et Butler au sujet de la performativité du sexe/genre en tant que construction sociale, la corporalité queer implique désir, amitiés, parenté, famille, communauté, mémoire, désirs/nostalgie de l'utopie (*utopic longing*) et la façon dont les performances publiques et privées constituent de nouvelles formes de sociabilité « contre-publiques » (Warner, *Trouble*). Les études d'Elizabeth Grosz sur la « corporalité féministe » et celles de Donna Haraway sur la figure du corps-cyborg conçoivent les corps comme résultat d'un assemblage complexe de matérialité biologique, d'affect et de discours sociaux interagissant avec l'environnement ainsi qu'avec d'autres corps d'une manière stratégique et agentive. On retrouve toute une théorisation sur la matérialité des corps dans les études de Butler (*Gender, Bodies*) et de Bordo, de même que la théorisation des corps androgynes et transgenres (Bornstein; Halberstam, *Queer Time*), ainsi que celle sur la masculinité (Connell). Gayle Rubin, de son côté, met en contexte la hiérarchisation des actes sexuels (hétérosexuels, conjugaux, procréateurs, par opposition aux actes homosexuels, transsexuels, sadomasochistes, commerciaux, etc.). La corporalité queer, dont on ignore les capacités, les potentialités, les possibilités et les identités qu'elle pourrait produire, permettrait de sortir du système binaire homme/femme, masculinité/féminité, hétérosexualité/homosexualité, cisgenre/transgenre, normalité/anormalité, et échapperait à l'ordre, aux catégories, aux classements et aux divisions imposés aussi bien à l'hétéronormativité qu'à l'homonormativité.

Queer Bodies/Spaces

One cannot speak of queer bodies without discussing the spatialities in which they are made legible *as* queer. Public and private spaces are experienced by queer subjects in ways that differ significantly from the norm, and these are tied to the performativities of gender and sexuality: from the need to hide queerness from public view to the public expression of queer bodies and desires in public space as political acts, one cannot divorce the body from the spatial: they are not discrete but rather do and undo each other in mutually constitutive strategies and enactments (Grosz). With the concomitant emergence of queer theory and the spatial turn in the humanities, interrogating spaces from a queer perspective required an initial recuperation of clandestine spaces of queer sociability and the material spaces of the queer everyday often hidden away from the hegemonic spaces of the city (Duberman; Chauncey; Warner, *Fear, Trouble*). The critical postmodern geographies of Edward Soja, the class-based studies of David Harvey, and Doreen Massey's groundbreaking work on gendered spatialities have allowed queer theorists such as Halberstam (*Queer Time*) and José E. Muñoz to explore queer spatialities at the junction of embodiment, affect, and temporality. Queer space is body-space, defined by the material, biological, and affective realities of queer lives inseparable from, yet resistant to, normative spatial codes; queer spaces, like queer bodies, are ambiguous, worrying, and eminently productive.

Similarly, one cannot approach a discussion of queer bodies without considering how those bodies produce/experience temporalities that differ from the norm. If the logic of contemporary capitalist societies demands *productive*, measured, linear temporalities, other forms, such as Indigenous traditions for example, suggest alternative ways of seeing and experiencing time. Similarly, queer bodies and subjectivities do not necessarily follow heteronormative temporal logics; Muñoz defines temporality as imminent and constantly projecting itself toward a utopic future: "Queerness is not here yet . . . but we can feel it as the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality" (1). If heteronormative temporalities are constructed around pre-established life stages (childhood, adulthood, marriage, the birth and rearing of children, old age, and death), queer temporalities escape this structuring logic. Queer time is often (but not always) liberated from marriage and reproduction, creating an atypical temporality that may be creative, productive, and

even subversive. For Halberstam (*Queer Time*), queer temporalities subvert hegemonic life-scripts as well as the organization of the everyday. Hegemonic temporal economies are suspended — upended even — by the eruption of queer subjectivities, as are, potentially, notions of utility, productivity, and profitability.

Affected/Affecting Bodies

If affectivity is pre-linguistic and precedes the construction of identity of self and others, in what ways can we speak about queer affect as it is expressed and experienced in and between queer bodies, subjectivities, and practices? Several of the articles collected here address the question of affect in and through the queer body. Approaching the queer body from the point of view of its biological materialities, its phenomenological perceptions, and its emotive interpretations through the aleatory movements of affect allows for a queer *worlding* of the heteronormative landscapes into which queer subjects are thrown, and with which they must continually contend. Deleuze understands affect as expressing corporeal significations that disturb normative interpretations of sensation, and the “body without organs” (BwO) is undisciplined, prediscursive, and devoid of structure, rules, interdictions, taboos, and social expectations. The concept of the BwO suggests unregulated flows, pulsions, and desires; the potentialities of affect as an *emergent* quality thus seems an apt way of describing queer embodiment — where the materiality of the body, itself prone to creative transformations, aleatory performances, enactments, and reversals, is not reducible to a static and cohesive subjectivity. Affect may describe the movement toward and away from objects of desire or of fear, but affect is also instrumental in the politicization of the queer (collective) body. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick discusses the negative affect of shame, for instance, in relation to repression, transgression, and disavowal, but also evokes the ways in which shame may incite agency. Heather Love similarly discusses the ways in which looking to a homophobic and queerphobic past, “feeling backward,” evokes negative affect which may, in the present, coalesce into a queer political praxis and the politicization of queer bodies, performances, and corporealities. Sarah Ahmed’s queer phenomenology places/*orients* the queer body with its attendant perceptions, sensations, and desires within spaces and among objects at hand and those beyond reach, in a

queer desire both to be *at home* and to take divergent paths toward new forms of sociability.

Qu'est-ce qu'un corps peut avoir de queer ?

De quelle façon pourrions-nous définir les corps que nous qualifions de queer ? Pour commencer, nous pouvons mettre en relief le fait que tout corps qui n'entre pas dans le système cisgenre hétéropatriarcal peut être considéré comme un corps qui a des qualités queer. Si les possibilités des corps qui sont au service du système cisgenre hétéropatriarcal et surtout de sa logique reproductrice sont extrêmement limitées, les possibilités et les potentialités des corps queer sont, quant à elles, illimitées. Cela peut paraître contradictoire, mais c'est bien parce que les corps queer échouent à divers degrés à reproduire le système cisgenre hétéropatriarcal, à faire partie de sa logique de reproduction que, par le fait même, ils mettent en échec ce système. L'échec des corps queer est par conséquent la mise en échec du système cisgenre hétéropatriarcal. Cette mise en échec laisse des espaces vides que les corps queer comblent autrement. Et ainsi, l'échec queer ouvre la possibilité de perceptions, d'intelligibilités, d'affectivités, de performativités, de performances culturelles et sociales, de matérialisations, et, en bref, de corporalités qui sont la conséquence de créations sans origine aucune. Les corps queer n'ont aucune origine parce que les corporalités queer existent par le processus spatiotemporel du seul fait d'être en train d'exister.

Soulignons que le corps queer, comme tout autre corps, n'existe pas en lui-même. Les corps, queer ou non, font partie d'une construction de la réalité. Et c'est dans l'espace déterminé par une construction particulière de la réalité dans une société et à un moment historique précis que les corps prennent un sens qui leur est propre. Ce sens ne vient pas d'une intériorité du corps, mais il est construit à partir de l'interaction du corps avec, entre autres, l'espace culturel, social, historique, légal et politique dans lequel il prend place. Pour cette raison, nous préférons parler d'un potentiel corporel, et non d'une intériorité corporelle qui serait à découvrir de manière introspective.

La question des corps queer — et surtout les enjeux liés à la manière dont ils peuvent exister dans une société qui cherche à les surveiller, à les interdire, à les punir, à les discipliner et à les réguler — fait partie d'une réflexion sur le fonctionnement de la biopolitique. Quels corps sont valorisés et quels corps sont dévalorisés ? Quels corps sont récompensés

et quels corps sont punis ? Quels corps sont légitimés et quels corps sont délégitimés ? Quels corps ont le droit d'exister ? Et quels corps sont condamnés à la destruction et même à l'autodestruction ?

Les corps queer sont des points de résistance face au pouvoir de discipliner et de réguler de la biopolitique. Prenons, par exemple, l'enjeu de la perception. Dans la logique cisgenre hétéropatriarcale de la biopolitique, les corps queer sont ce que l'on ne devrait pas avoir la capacité ni de voir, ni d'entendre, ni de toucher. Le corps queer ne devrait pas pouvoir être perçu d'aucune façon et par aucun moyen. Dans le cadre de cette relation d'altérité, il est évident qu'une personne ou un groupe de personnes ne devrait pas pouvoir percevoir ce que le corps de l'autre a de queer. Il est toutefois moins évident que cette relation d'altérité concerne également la relation d'altérité entre soi et soi-même comme un autre. Le sujet queer ne devrait pas non plus pouvoir percevoir ce qu'il a lui-même de queer, ce que son propre corps a de queer. Le soi du sujet et du corps queer devrait aussi être imperceptible pour soi-même. Le processus qui rend possible une certaine perception, parfois même infime, du corps queer peut commencer par le sujet queer se percevant lui-même, mais il peut aussi commencer par l'autre/les autres percevant au début ce corps qui leur semble transgresser les normes. Cette perception rendue possible du corps queer peut ainsi enclencher un changement, ne serait-ce que la prise de conscience qu'un corps autre peut exister.

Avoir enfin la capacité de percevoir ce qu'il y a de queer dans un corps ouvre aussi la possibilité d'en comprendre le sens. Ainsi le corps queer change la capacité de perception et il change aussi le régime d'intelligibilité. Qu'est-ce que nous pouvons comprendre ? Qu'est-ce que nous n'avons pas les moyens nécessaires pour comprendre ? Qu'est-ce que nous devons affirmer clairement que nous comprenons ? Qu'est-ce qu'il faut parfois faire semblant de ne pas pouvoir comprendre, même si dans les faits nous le comprenons très bien ? Quelle est l'intelligibilité des corps queer ? Et qu'est-ce que les corps queer subvertissent au niveau du régime d'intelligibilité de la biopolitique ? Les corps queer résistent ainsi à la logique de la signification du contrôle disciplinaire et régulateur du pouvoir cisgenre hétéropatriarcal. Par leur résistance, les corps queer redéfinissent le régime d'intelligibilité en mettant en relief le fait qu'il y a d'autres manières de comprendre et qu'il y a différentes façons de créer une signification. Qu'est-ce que nous pouvons savoir et que nous ne savons pas encore ? Qu'est-ce que le savoir ? De quelle

manière nous développons ce savoir ? À la limite, par quel processus le savoir est-il construit à l'intérieur d'un régime d'intelligibilité ? Ce sont les limites du savoir et les processus de construction du savoir que les corps queer remettent en question par le fait qu'ils existent parfois à l'extérieur d'une forme de savoir, parfois à ses limites et parfois en court-circuitant le régime de production et de fonctionnement de ce savoir.

Les corps queer soulèvent aussi des questions liées à l'affectivité, c'est-à-dire aux façons dont je m'affecte moi-même, dont l'autre et/ou les autres m'affectent, dont nous nous affectons entre nous, dont j'affecte le monde qui m'entoure et le monde qui m'entoure m'affecte. Rappelons que, dans ces relations d'affectivité, la subjectivité et la corporalité fusionnent dans le soi et sont inséparables l'une de l'autre. La subjectivité est ainsi corporalité, et la corporalité est subjectivité. Par conséquent, la subjectivité et la corporalité du soi ne font qu'un dans le cadre d'une théorie de l'affect. Ce sont ces problématiques, et beaucoup d'autres, que les articles qui font partie de ce numéro spécial explorent.

*

The recent critical interest in Indigenous expressions of queer genders and sexualities affected by and affecting legacies of settler-colonialism and heteropatriarchy are well represented in this special issue. In her contribution, Arianne des Rochers discusses the representation of queer abjection in Joshua Whitehead's work, which "revels in negative stereotypes — poverty, addiction, trauma, disease, and so on — and turns them on their heads" (25), thus reconfiguring queer anti-relationality into a form of Indigiqueer agency that critiques white settler-state hegemonies and opens a space for decolonial intimacies. Des Rochers tackles not only the representation of queer bodies and bodily acts through logics of self-abjection as agency, but also examines how multilingual writing itself may be seen as permeable to linguistic impurities. "Language," des Rochers affirms, "presents itself much like the queer body: porous, transgressive, and drawing its power from the abject" (26). The abject body and bodily practices of Whitehead's Indigiqueer subject may be read both as the "remainders" of settler colonialism and as embodied critiques of that very system.

The erotics of the Indigiqueer body is explored also by Janice Niemann in her article on Gregory Scofield's *Love Medicine and One*

Song, arguing that the mouth is not only the site of intimacies and the organ by which desires are verbalized, but is also “a point of departure into history, into territoriality, and into sex” (44): mouths “share stories, they explore bodies, they give pleasure, and they become metaphors” (43). Scofield’s collection describes bodies that affect and are affected by others, since the coming together of bodies blurs “distinctions between sensation and perception and, in so doing, [creates] the foundation for blurring the boundaries between body and land” (44). Orality — as an expression of embodied sexuality, language, naming, and song — is conjoined, thus “incorporating Cree and Métis histories into erotic moments and, in doing so, ultimately positions oral sex as a speech act” (44). If the mouth is both object and subject in Scofield’s poetry, as Niemann argues, the Indigiqueer body, like the lands it occupies, contains unsettled textures that traverse bodily boundaries and spatial frames. Naming various parts of the body becomes a ritual of storytelling that “speaks to the ability of orality to establish connections between spatial (bodily) structures and, in the process, to address a culture’s oral histories” (50). Queer bodies in Scofield’s poetry are tied not only to the past in the form of Indigenous histories, languages, and utterances, but to the spaces in which such bodies dwell and come together in moments of intimacy.

The intersections of Indigeneity, racialization, and the intersex body are explored in Katelyn Dykstra’s study of Kathleen Winter’s *Annabel*, as she examines the ways in which “racially inflected language . . . relies on whiteness to make intersex legible with the Canadian cultural imaginary” (61). Dykstra calls for a re-situation of the intersex body that would “challenge the omission of intersex from academic discussions of Canadian nationalism and whiteness” (62). Reading Wayne/Annabel as symptomatic of the all-too-common strategy of homonationalism in relegating the Indigiqueer body to external spatial and temporal contexts, Dykstra asks to what extent the queerness of the intersex body is placed under erasure in the construction of national mythologies. *Annabel*’s anti-hero “disappears into whiteness” (Francis, qtd. in Dykstra 61) in a homonationalist project that aims at the erasure not only of Indigenous specificity but of the intersex body itself, rendering the Indigenous intersex body “unreal, an uncanny haunting of the present” (Francis, qtd. in Dykstra 64).

Drawing on Robert McRuer’s work on queerness and disability, which draws parallels between compulsory heterosexuality and com-

pulsory able-bodiedness, Sabrina Reed examines Wayson Choy's *Not Yet: A Memoir of Living and Almost Dying*, arguing that illness and the aging queer/Asian body instigate various forms of shame, social exclusion, and undesirability. If at first Choy "adopts the 'rehabilitative logic of identity'" (McRuer 121), by the end of his memoir he "rejects the model of a composed, whole, and healthy self by embracing his messy but exuberant personhood" (Reed 80). Like his queer, ill, and racialized body, Choy's memoir embraces its lack of discipline as a means of undermining the normative, bringing to mind the productive potential of queer failure evoked by Halberstam.

In her article "Parodies of Manhood Bent: Ann-Marie MacDonald's Queer Verona," Jacqueline Petropoulos recontextualizes MacDonald's *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* as a convergence of feminist and queer politics in a contemporary take on Shakespeare. Taking issue with previous criticism, which sees the play simply as a critique of the marginalization of women and lesbians, Petropoulos examines the ways in which "the text disrupts and exceeds the binary categories of hetero- and homosexuality" (97). In so doing, she highlights the text's two competing political goals: its feminist revisionist aim of calling for greater representation of women by recasting them as heroes in a patriarchal society and its anti-essentialist deconstruction of normative gender, which occurs when Constance "lands in queer Verona, a site of fluidity and multiplicity that exceeds the binary sex-gender system" (98). Petropoulos critiques the lack of critical engagement with the political aspects of sexuality and the manner in which the queering of gender roles, including cross-dressing, is often subsumed by this feminist theme or "trivialized as fun and games if not overlooked completely" (103). Seen through queer theory, cross-dressing can move beyond the comedic and into the political, as "commentary on the fluidity of gender and sexual desire" (107). MacDonald's "revisioning of the Bard" (109) allows for a queering of power relations through the performativity and malleability of the body — those of actors taking on various gender roles, but also those of the characters themselves, whose lines of desire cross thresholds of convention. If in Shakespearean drama the divestment of gender-inappropriate costume signals a return to heteronormative order, in *Goodnight Desdemona*, Petropoulos argues, "there is no original or normative identity to return to because gender and sexuality are exposed as fluid and arbitrary concepts" (114).

Chris Roulston investigates various forms of queer parenting — including the biotechnologies of pregnancy, queer social roles, and affective arrangements — in arguing that queer families undermine one of the central tenets of queer theory: the figure of the child. Roulston addresses queer theory's resistance to reproduction, especially in light of Lee Edelman and Leo Bersani's anti-relationality that articulates the queer body as one that resists kinship ties and reproduction. Drawing upon a history of the construction of queers as "failed progeny" (Roulston 118) expelled from the heteronormative family, Roulston questions "the normative assumptions that underwrite the categories of reproduction, pregnancy, and parenting" (118), furthermore asking if these must always neatly align with "the linear temporality of 'birth, marriage, and death'" (Halberstam, qtd. in Roulston 118). In effect, the article "writes back" to queer theory's binary assumption of normative/non-normative: can queer parenting as an assemblage of practices, roles, alternate lines of filiation, and mixed forms of kinship reappropriate the figure of the child as a constitutive element of queer lives and bodies drawn together? Drawing upon Haraway's concept of the cyborg, Roulston argues that queer families may more productively be thought of "as assemblages rather than nuclei" (128) — as "hybrid" (128) and "improper alignments [that are] always in excess of the linear and the straight" (128). Roulston's article suggests that just as the reproductive queer body is an assemblage in the sense described by Haraway, the queer family unit is one as well, in its dynamic forms of kinship, care, socio-economic arrangements, and filiation that fall outside the bounds of the normative.

Queer forms of reproduction, generative bodies, and non-normative filiations are also taken up by Cassandra Olsen in her discussion of the "animalized racial body" (146) in Larissa Lai's *Salt Fish Girl*. Taking as a point of departure Rosi Braidotti's idea of the posthuman as a means of thinking through and thinking outside of the privileged bodies of Enlightenment rationalism, Olsen claims that human-animal hybrids in Lai's novel not only draw attention to bodily violence against racialized subjects but allow for new forms of (queer) sociability through "improper affiliations" (147). Human-animal hybridity allows for a "reconstruction" of racialized bodies and forms of sexual intimacy, reproduction, and procreation, making queer bodies in Lai's novel instances of evolution's "unruly capacity to drive change," an "untidiness" that "gestures towards . . . categorical instability" (159). The queer bodies in Lai's

novel assemble the human and the animal together in new and queer forms of relationality and kinship.

In her study of Erin Moure's *Citizen Trilogy*, Jessica MacEachern examines the "erotic and political potential of queer citizenship" (166) through a mapping of the citizen's body that is attentive to the ways in which some bodies cross frontiers more easily than others. Affectivity is intimately tied to relations of citizenship — across borders and across racial, gender, and class divides. Furthermore, as MacEachern argues, Moure sees the link between material bodies, architectures, and the affects that they elicit as being mutually defining, since "the equivalent textures of body and landscape are unmistakable" (175). Practices of reading, writing, and witnessing construct *autrui*, or "being-among" (183). MacEachern argues that Moure presaged the affective turn and its ontological and moral implications, and sees affect as having the potential to bring together poet and citizen, reader and material page, since "the body of the (writing) subject . . . is propelled by desire" (181). MacEachern's discussion of the body as both active and passive in a libidinal economy that is "inextricable from the larger force of desire" (180) brings to mind several other articles in this collection that posit the body not as a bounded thing but one indelibly marked by the various forms of power and discourse that shape them: colonial and racial violence, economic dispossession, and gender conformity. The skin in Moure's poetry becomes a surface that is materially and symbolically porous, vulnerable, affected by sound, language, and a "shimmering world-in-becoming" (182), in an unending attempt at a queer *worlding*.

Flesh produces knowledges, affects, pleasures, desires, and community. How is the queer body experienced as a site of shame but also of pleasures? In their contribution to this collection, Jen Rinaldi and Karleen Pendleton Jiménez reflect upon the intersections between queerness and body size/weight. Workshops held in 2015 titled *Through Thick and Thin* focussed on the intersections among queer identity, desire, and corporeal shame, which allowed participants to "reperform queerness in ways that confronted and transformed our relationships to shame and desire" (Pendleton Jiménez and Rinaldi 190). The ways in which fatness and the corpulent body have been stigmatized and pathologized within medical, psychiatric, media, and cultural discourses demonstrates the ways in which bodies — their comportments, habits, and forms of care — are regimented so as to fit into normative frames. In the capitalist logic of productivity and profit through consumption,

the accumulation of excess flesh is not only seen as shameful and taboo, but as indicative of bodily and moral failure; a body which exceeds or spills over the space allotted to it in the normative habitus of everyday life is seen as abject and undesirable. As Jana Evans Braziel and Kathleen LeBesco have argued, “Fat equals reckless excess, prodigality, indulgence, lack of restraint, violation of order and space, transgression of boundary” (3). The stigmatization of the fat body, like the stigmatization of the queer, trans, or non-binary body, is part of the disciplinary regimes by which docile, practised bodies enter into the logics of bio-power, or, in the words of one contributor, “enacting the bio-pedagogies imprinted in my muscle memory” (Pendleton Jiménez and Rinaldi 194).

Dans « En attente d’identification », Étienne Bergeron analyse l’utilisation littéraire des applications de rencontre telles que Grindr, plus particulièrement dans *Morgues* d’Éric-Guy Paquin. Il base sa réflexion sur les théories du « corps sans corps » et de l’hétérotopie développées par Foucault ainsi que sur celle du « Corps sans Organes » proposée par Deleuze. Il étudie, entre autres, les processus virtuels qui offrent des possibilités de désorganisation, de désarticulation et de désidentification des corps queer. Par exemple, Grindr permet la création d’une forme de catalogue de corps queer fragmentés et présentés visuellement à l’aide de gros plans qui nous laissent seulement voir des parties d’un corps qui nous échappe par conséquent dans sa totalité. L’espace virtuel ouvre la possibilité de mettre en scène des identités multiples ou encore l’absence de toute identité. C’est, d’une certaine façon, une hétérotopie à l’intérieur de laquelle les sujets queer peuvent explorer de manière interactive les enjeux liés aux représentations et aux discours sur le désir et la sexualité à l’extérieur de l’espace social hétéronormatif. Toutefois, en conclusion, Bergeron note que le sujet queer pourrait par la suite « appliquer en partie ou en totalité, à son corps social, à sa vie réelle » ce qu’il aura pu expérimenter dans l’hétérotopie de l’espace virtuel des applications de rencontre.

Drawing upon Melanie Yergeau’s definition of neuroqueer as a mode of being “in which subjects perform the perversity of their neurotypes” (Yergeau, qtd. in Blair 232), Jennifer Blair examines the links between queer affect and the neurodivergent body, seeing, in the poetry of David Eastham, who communicated through and later composed poetry with the aid of a Sharp EL 7001 Memowriter machine, an affirmation of his desire to find a lover, to “TRY MY BEST/IN MY MIND/GET MARRIED/IN MY MIND.” The ambiguous interpretation and inten-

tionality of what is meant when Eastham responds “queer” to the question of how he feels about being able to communicate with people opens up a semantic and affective field of possibilities of what it means to “feel” queer — what are the links, Blair asks, between the subjectivity of the autistic poet and his communicative intentionality, his affects, and his embodied desire? The interfacing of the autistic subject and writing machine calls to mind Haraway’s cyborg, for it allows the poet, “for the first time in his life, to participate in a relatively fast-paced exchange of words with another person: . . . to have a conversation” (Blair 229). What is most provocative in Blair’s article is the manner in which intentionality and affectivity is queerly expressed in the singular mode of communication of autism; Blair considers, following Yergeau, whether “[t]o author autistically is to author queerly and contrarily” (Yergeau, qtd. in Blair 231). If being properly rhetorical is, as Yergeau has written, to establish oneself as properly human, then what does it mean to communicate in ways that challenge the expectations around communication itself? Blair argues that Eastham’s poetry “neuroqueers” (234) language and social expectation, a “disorientation” (Yergeau, qtd. in Blair 242) that “calls attention to the rigid structure and highly normative circuitry of affect in communication — in particular affects signified or connoted by love, desire, belonging, friendship, happiness, and connection” (234). Through his poetry, Eastham calls into question the normativity of rhetoric, communication, affect, and desire, and posits the possibility of a desiring and desired autistic body, putting the lie to the equation of autistics with antisociality and anti-relationality.

Conclusion

Les articles qui font partie de ce numéro spécial se veulent une contribution aux domaines des recherches en études québécoises et canadiennes, aux études queer et aux études sur les corps. Notre but premier est d’explorer les corpus québécois et canadiens à partir de perspectives critiques et théoriques contemporaines afin de mettre en relief la diversité des approches qui peuvent aujourd’hui éclairer les études littéraires et culturelles. En invitant des chercheurs et chercheuses universitaires à analyser les corps queer, nous voulions montrer à quel point cet objet d’étude traverse différents domaines de recherche universitaire, par exemple : les études autochtones, les études féministes, les études sur l’affect, les études sur le genre, les études sur

la représentation de l'histoire, les études sur la sexualité, les études sur la construction de la temporalité, les études sur la construction de l'espace, etc. Être intellectuellement confronté·e à la problématique des corps queer, c'est faire face à une extrême complexité que nous pouvons seulement essayer de percevoir, de saisir, de comprendre et d'expliquer en sachant que les corps queer continueront à nous échapper et à s'échapper d'une manière ou d'une autre. L'une des rares conclusions à laquelle nous pouvons arriver en parcourant l'ensemble des articles, c'est que les corps queer sont des phénomènes de résistance. Par leur seule existence, les corps queer prouvent qu'il est possible de résister à toute forme de contrôle disciplinaire, à tout système de régulation, à tout pouvoir de normalisation et à tout processus d'assujettissement. Par les diverses intensités de leur résistance et la constante modulation de cette résistance, les corps queer nous font prendre conscience que tout ce qui existe sous la forme que nous connaissons actuellement pourrait et peut exister tout autrement. Ainsi, de l'acte même de résister de manières impensées et impensables émerge la force utopique des corps queer. Chaque corps queer par son unicité nous offre la possibilité d'entrevoir la probabilité que des utopies puissent parfois advenir dans un autre espace-temps. Et à chaque seconde qui passe, notre espace-temps se modifie.

WORKS CITED

- Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Duke UP, 2006.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands: The New Mestiza = La Frontera*. Aunt Lute Books, 1991.
- Batson, Charles, and Denis Provencher, editors. *Queer (Again) in Québec*. Spec. issue of *Québec Studies*, vol. 61, no. 1, 2016.
- . *Queer Québec*. Spec. issue of *Québec Studies*, vol. 60, no. 1, 2015.
- Beneventi, Domenico, and Jorge Calderón, editors. *Queer Frontiers*. Spec. issue of *Canadian Literature*, no. 224, 2015.
- Bersani, Leo. *Is the Rectum a Grave? And Other Essays*. U of Chicago P, 2010.
- Boisclair, Isabelle, et al. *QuébecQueer: Le queer dans les productions littéraires, artistiques et médiatiques québécoises*. Les presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2020.
- Boisclair, Isabelle, et Catherine Dussault Frenette. *Femmes désirantes. Art, littérature, représentations*. Éditions du remue-ménage, 2013.
- Bordo, Susan. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. U of California P, 2004.
- Bornstein, Kate. *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women, and the Rest of Us*. Routledge, 1995.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. 1972. Translated by Richard Nice, Cambridge UP, 1977.
- Braidotti, Rosi. *The Posthuman*. Polity Press, 2013.

- Brazier, Jana E, and Kathleen LeBesco. Introduction. *Bodies Out of Bounds: Fatness and Transgression*, edited by Jana Evans Brazier and Kathleen LeBesco, U of California P, 2001, pp. 1-15.
- Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* Routledge, 2015.
- . *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge, 1990.
- Carrière, Marie. *Writing in the Feminine in French and English Canada: A Question of Ethics*. U of Toronto P, 2016.
- , et al. *All the Feels: Affect and Writing in Canada/Affect et écriture au Canada*. U of Alberta P, 2021.
- Chauncey, George. *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Makings of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*. Basic Books, 1994.
- Chénier, Ele. "Hidden from Historians: Preserving Lesbian Oral History in Canada." *Archivaria*, vol. 68, 2009, pp. 247-70.
- Connell, Raewyn. *Masculinities*. Routledge, 2005.
- Côté, Nicole. "Masculinity in a Minority Setting: The Emblematic Body in Simone Chapur's *Le Coulonneux*." *Making It Like a Man: Canadian Masculinities in Practice*, edited by Christine Ramsay, Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2011, pp. 185-96.
- Cummings, Ronald, and Sharlee Cranston-Reimer, editors. *Queer Canada*. Spec. issue of *Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 54, no. 2-3, 2020.
- De Lauretis, Teresa. *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction*. Indiana UP, 2001.
- . *The Practice of Love: Lesbian Sexuality and Perverse Desire*. Indiana UP, 1995.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Mille plateaux*. Éditions de minuit, 1980.
- Delaux, Martine. *Le boys club*. Éditions du remue-ménage, 2020.
- . *Les filles en série. Des Barbies aux Pussy Riot*. Éditions du remue-ménage, 2018.
- Dickinson, Peter. *Here Is Queer: Nationalisms, Sexualities, and the Literatures of Canada*. U of Toronto P, 1999.
- Driskill, Qwo-Li, et al., editors. *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature*. U of Arizona P, 2011.
- Duberman, Martin B. *The Martin Duberman Reader: The Essential Historical, Biographical, and Autobiographical Writings*. New Press, 2013.
- Duggan, Lisa. *The Twilight of Equality?: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy*. Beacon Press, 2003.
- Edelman, Lee. *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Duke UP, 2007.
- Foucault, Michel. *Histoire de la sexualité*. 1976. Gallimard, 2018.
- . *Dits et écrits* (1954-1988), tome IV : 1980-1988. Dir. Daniel Defert et François Ewald. Gallimard, 1994.
- Goldie, Terry. *Pink Snow: Homotextual Possibilities in Canadian Fiction*. Broadview, 2003.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. *Space, Time and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies*. Routledge, 1995.
- Halberstam, Jack. *The Queer Art of Failure*. Duke UP, 2011.
- . *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. NYU Press, 2005.
- Halperin, David M. *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality: And Other Essays on Greek Love*. Routledge, 1990.
- Haraway, Donna. "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s." *Australian Feminist Studies*, vol. 2, no. 4, 1987, pp. 1-42.
- Harvey, David A. *Spaces of Hope*. Edinburgh UP, 2000.
- Havercroft, Barbara. *Politiques de l'autobiographie: engagements et subjectivités*. Éditions Nota bene, 2018.
- Justice, Daniel Heath, and James H. Cox. "Queering Native Literature, Indigenizing Queer Theory." *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2008, pp. xiii-xiv.

- Justice, Daniel Heath, et al., editors. *Sexuality, Nationality, Indigeneity*. Duke UP, 2010.
- Leung, Helen H.-S. *Undercurrents: Queer Culture and Postcolonial Hong Kong*. Vancouver: U of British Columbia P, 2014.
- Love, Heather. *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History*. Harvard UP, 2007.
- Martin, Robert K., editor. *Lesbian and Gay Studies II*. Spec. issue of *English Studies in Canada*, vol. 21, no. 2, 1995.
- . "Cheap Tricks in Montreal: Scott Symons's *Place d'Armes*." *Essays on Canadian Writing*, no. 54, 1994, pp. 198-211.
- Massey, Doreen B. *Space, Place, and Gender*. U of Minnesota P, 1994.
- Mavrikakis, Catherine, and Patrick Poirier. *Un certain genre malgré tout: pour une réflexion sur la différence sexuelle à l'oeuvre dans l'écriture*. Éditions Nota bene, 2006.
- McRuer, Robert. *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability*. NYU Press, 2006.
- Muñoz, José E. *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. NYU Press, 2009.
- Namaste, Viviane K. *Sex Change, Social Change: Reflections on Identity, Institutions, and Imperialism*. Women's Press, 2011.
- Puar, Jasbir K. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Duke UP, 2018.
- Rubin, Gayle. *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader*. Duke UP, 2012.
- Saint-Martin, Lori. *Contre-voix: Essais de critique au féminin*. Nuit blanche, 1997.
- Schwartzwald, Robert. « La Fédérastrophobie, ou les lectures agitées d'une révolution tranquille. » *Sociologie et Sociétés*, vol. 29, no. 1, 1997, pp. 129-43.
- Sedgwick, Eve K. *Epistemology of the Closet*. U of California P, 2008.
- Soja, Edward W. *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. Verso, 1989.
- Stewart, Janice, editor. *Queerly Canadian*. Spec. issue of *Canadian Literature*, no. 205, 2010.
- Walcott, Rinaldo. *Queer Returns: Essays on Multiculturalism, Diaspora, and Black Studies*. Insomniac Press, 2016.
- Warner, Michael. *Publics and Counterpublics*. Zone, 2014.
- . *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life*. Harvard UP, 2000.
- , editor. *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*. U of Minnesota P, 1993.
- Waugh, Thomas. *The Romance of Transgression in Canada: Queering Sexualities, Nations, Cinemas*. McGill-Queen's UP, 2006.
- Whitehead, Joshua. *Full-Metal Indigiqueer: Poems*. Talonbooks, 2017.
- Yergeau, Melanie. *Authoring Autism: On Rhetoric and Neurological Queerness*. Duke UP, 2018.