

Symposium The Ontology of the Couple

Can one be queer and coupled? Or is the logic of complementarity that subtends the couple fundamentally at odds with queer existence?

In 1998 Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner wrote that 'making a queer world has required the development of kinds of intimacy that bear no necessary relation to domestic space, to kinship, to the couple form, to property and to the nation'. Since then, however, we have witnessed the couple form move from the periphery to the center of queer politics, becoming the major vehicle through which gays and lesbians have achieved access to cultural and legal institutions as well as broader social acceptance. While before the late twentieth century same-sex relations circulated largely outside what Foucault called the 'monogamic and conjugal cell', today it seems even the most peripheral of sexualities have been absorbed under the couple's ever-expanding jurisdiction. Does the present moment require a more honest reckoning with the central role of the couple in queer politics and everyday life? Or do we need, now more than ever, to revitalize our commitment to the production of a sexual politics that would resist the ideology of the couple?

This two-day symposium brings together some of the most significant voices in Anglo-American queer theory today to address the historical, cultural, and metaphysical force of the couple—and its often unquestioned status in queer life.

Heather Love and Eng-Beng Lim on Commitment
Elizabeth Freeman and Bobby Benedicto on Reproduction
Aliyyah I. Abdur-Rahman and Peter Coviello on Devotion
Lee Edelman and Joseph Litvak on Estrangement
Michael Cobb and Petrus Liu on Openness
C. Riley Snorton and Rinaldo Walcott on Arrangement
Laura Kipnis and Annamarie Jagose on Asymmetry

ICI Berlin Institute for Cultural Inquiry
Christinenstr. 18/19, Haus 8
D-10119 Berlin
Tel: +49 30 473 72 91 10
www.ici-berlin.org
U-Bhf Senefelder Platz (U2)

EBERHARD KARLS
UNIVERSITÄT
TÜBINGEN



ZENTRUM FÜR GENDER- UND
DIVERSITÄTSFORSCHUNG (ZGD)



ici
BERLIN KULTURLABOR
INSTITUTE FOR CULTURAL INQUIRY

9-10 June 2016
ICI Berlin

Symposium

in English

The Ontology of the Couple

In English

Organized by
Pearl Brilmyer, Filippo Trentin, Zairong Xiang
Co-organized by
Hila Amit, and in cooperation with
the Zentrum für Gender- und Diversitätsforschung of
the University of Tübingen (ZGD Tübingen) and
GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies

Programme

THURSDAY – 9 JUNE 2016

10:30
Morning coffee

11:00
Introductions

11:15–13:00
Heather Love and **Eng-Beng Lim** on Commitment

13:00–14:30
Lunch

14:30–16:15
Elizabeth Freeman and **Bobby Benedicto** on Reproduction

16:30–18:15
Aliyyah I. Abdur-Rahman and **Peter Coviello** on Devotion

18:15
Coffee break

19:30–21:15
Lee Edelman and **Joseph Litvak** on Estrangement
preceded by an Intermezzo by the organizers

21:15
Reception sponsored by GLQ

FRIDAY – 10 JUNE 2016

13:30
Welcome coffee

14:00–15:45
Michael Cobb and **Petrus Liu** on Openness

16:00–17:45
C. Riley Snorton and **Rinaldo Walcott** on Arrangement

17:45
Coffee break

18:30–20:15
Laura Kipnis and **Annamarie Jagose** on Asymmetry