

WHATS THAT SMELL? : QUEER TEMPORALITIES AND SUBCULTURAL LIVES JUDITH HALBERSTAM pdf

1: Queer Youth Cultures

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Queer Temporalities and Subcultural Lives by Judith Halberstam Queer Temporality This essay is drawn from a book-length study of the explosion of queer urban subcultures in the last decade. My larger purpose is to examine how many queer communities experience and spend time in ways that are very different from their heterosexual counterparts. Queer uses of time and space develop in opposition to the institutions of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction, and queer subcultures develop as alternatives to kinship-based notions of community. In my work on subcultures, I explore the stretched out adolescences of queer culture makers and I posit an "epistemology of youth" that disrupts conventional accounts of subculture, youth culture, adulthood, race, class, and maturity. It is usual in the study of gender and sexuality to use the term "queer" to refer simply to "sexual minorities. This study will include material on and by white gay men but it will focus on lesbian and transgender subcultures punk, drag, performance, spoken word and will pay special attention to racialized constructions of youth, leisure, waste, and maturity. The focus on queer subcultures, and dyke subcultures in particular, allows us to make some potentially new claims about agency, style, liminality, community, and history. A broad-based study of queer subcultures, as I have suggested, can provide material evidence for lives lived "otherwise," outside of the conventional life narratives of family and reproduction, but it can also point to those modes of resistance which survive the encounter between marginal subjects and dominant culture. An essay by Judith Butler in a volume dedicated to the work of Stuart Hall tackles the question of what kinds of agency can be read into forms of activity that tend to be associated with style. And, building on the work by Hall and others in the classic volume on subcultures *Resistance Through Rituals*, Butler puts the concept of "ritual" into motion as a practice that can either reinforce or disrupt cultural norms. Liminal subjects, she implies, those who are excluded from "the norms that govern the recognizability of the human," are sacrificed to maintain coherence within the category of the human, and, for them, style is both the sign of their exclusion and the mode by which they survive nonetheless. Punk has always been the stylized and ritualized language of the rejected; as Poly Styrene of Xray Spex sings: Subcultures provide a vital critique of the seemingly organic nature of "community," and they make visible the forms of un-belonging and disconnection that are necessary to the creation of community. At a time when "gay and lesbian community" is used as a rallying cry for fairly conservative social projects aimed at assimilating gays and lesbians into the mainstream of the life of the nation and family, queer subcultures preserve the critique of heteronormativity that was always implicit in queer life. Community, generally speaking, is the term used to describe seemingly natural forms of congregation. Kinship would seem to be one of the main building blocks of community. The idea of community, writes Jean Luc Nancy, emerges out of the Christian ritual of communion and expresses a sense of something that we once had that has now been lost, a connection that was once was organic and life giving that now is moribund and redundant. Nancy calls this the "lost community" and expresses suspicion about this "belated invention. This is a beat that takes no prisoners and makes no concessions to the "boys who are fearful of getting an earful. When taken separately, riot dyke bands, drag kings, and queer slam poets all seem to represent a queer edge in a larger cultural phenomenon. When considered together, they add up to a fierce and lively queer subculture which needs to be reckoned with on its own terms. This essay tracks the significant differences between the ladymen who rock and roll and drag up and slam their way towards new queer futures and the punk rockers of an earlier generation of subcultural activity. Queer subcultures are related to old school subcultures like punk but they also carve out new territory for a consideration of the overlap of gender, generation, class, race, community, and sexuality in relation to minority cultural production. I have long been interested in and part of various subcultural groups. I plunged into punk rock

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music, clothing and rebellion precisely because it gave me a language with which to reject not only the high cultural texts in the class rooms but also the homophobia and sexism outside it. I tried singing in a punk band called Penny Black and the Stamps for a brief two-week period thinking that my utter lack of musical ability would serve me well finally. But, alas, even punk divas scream in key and my rebel yells were not mellifluous enough to launch my punk singing career. Instead of singing, I collected records, went to shows, dyed my hair and fashioned outfits from safety pins and bondage pants. And so I learned at an early age that even if you cannot be in the band, participation at multiple levels is what subculture offers. I found myself reminiscing over my punk past when I began researching drag king cultures for a collaborative project with photographer Del LaGrace Volcano. Through my new subcultural involvement I began to see some specific features of queer subculture as opposed to a larger historical subcultures like punk rock. After finishing my drag king book in , I received calls every few months from TV stations wanting me to put them in touch with drag kings for talk shows and news shows. Most of these shows would invite the kings on to parade around with some drag queens in front of a studio audience. At the end of the show, the audience would vote on whether each king or queen was really a man or really a woman. The audience was confused and horrified by the spectacle of indeterminacy. Josh Gamson in *Freaks Talk Back* has written about the potential for talk shows to allow the "crazies" and "queers" to talk back but most of the time when drag kings appeared in mass public venues, the host did all the talking. On every occasion that drag kings appeared on "straight" TV, they were deployed as an entertaining backdrop against which heterosexual desire was showcased and celebrated. As the talk show phenomenon vividly illustrates, mainstream culture within postmodernism should be defined as the process by which subcultures are both recognized and absorbed, mostly for the profit of large media conglomerates. In other words, when TV stations show an interest in a dyke subculture like drag kings, this is cause for both celebration and concern: The subculture might appear on TV eventually as an illustration of the strange and perverse or else it will be summarily robbed of its salient features and the subcultural form: In an essay that tracks the results of precisely this process, Marco Becquer and Jose Gatti examine the contradictory effects of the sudden visibility of Harlem drag balls and their drag practices. The subculture itself, the gay Black and Puerto Rican children of the Houses of Channel, Extravaganza and LaBeija, disappeared back into the world of sex work, HIV and queer glamour and within five years of the release of *Paris is Burning*, five of the queens in the film were dead. Subcultural activity is, of course, rarely profitable, always costly for the producers and it can be very short lived without the necessary cash infusions in the words of Sleater-Kinney: Some subcultural producers turn the subculture itself into a source of revenue and as Angela McRobbie comments: In my experiences working with drag kings however, we found that while big media reached their "hipness quota" quickly with the addition of a few well placed drag kings, in return, they almost never paid for drag king services and when they did pay, it was always a pittance. Obviously the pay back for the subcultural participants cannot come in the form of material benefits; what seems more useful then, in this exchange between mainstream attention and subcultural product, would be to use the encounter to force some kind of recognition upon audiences that what is appealing about mainstream culture may very well come from subcultures that they do not even know exist or that they have repudiated. Where such alliances exist academics can play a big role in the construction of queer archives, and queer memory, and, furthermore, queer academics can and some should participate in the ongoing project of recoding queer culture and interpreting it and circulating a sense of its multiplicity and sophistication. The more intellectual records we have of queer culture, the more we contribute to the project of claiming for the subculture the radical cultural work that either gets absorbed into or claimed by mainstream media. While early work on subcultures from the Chicago school assumed a relationship between subcultures and deviance or delinquency, later work from the Birmingham University Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies characterized subcultures as class-specific "youth formations. The Meaning of Style by Dick Hebdige, read subcultures in terms of the way they challenged hegemony through style rather than simply through overt ideological articulations; and he characterized the recuperation of subcultural disorder in terms of either an economic conversion of the signs

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and symbols of the subculture into mass culture commodities or an ideological conversion of the subcultural participant into either complete otherness or complete spectacle. And yet, it remains an important text for thinking about how to move beyond the contextualization of subcultures in terms of relations between youth and parent cultures and for its formulations of style and historicity. The subcultures which I want to examine here are neither male nor necessarily young and they are less likely to be co-opted or absorbed back into dominant culture because they were never offered membership in dominant groups in the first place. Queer lesbian subcultures have rarely been discussed in the existing literature and they offer today a new area of study for queer scholarship as well as exciting opportunities for collaborations between queer cultural producers and queer academics. One of the reasons that theorists tend to look to subcultures for political mobilization has to do with the conflation of subculture and youth culture. Dick Hebdige, in an essay on "Youth, Surveillance and Display," for example, understands youth subcultures to register a dissatisfaction and alienation from the parent culture which is both "a declaration of independence. Queer subcultures, unlike the male dominated youth cultures that Dick Hebdige, Stuart Hall and other members of the Birmingham school have written about, are not located in any easy relation to so-called parent cultures: Economic, political and social conflicts may be resolved in subcultural arenas, according to these arguments, without really effecting any grand changes at the level of superstructure. Of course such a theory of subcultures has long since been replaced by more nuanced understandings of the relations between class, youth and mass media and indeed in an essay on youth cultures, "Different, Youthful, Subjectivities: Queer subcultures illustrate vividly the limits of subcultural theories which omit consideration of sexuality and sexual styles: We need to alter our understandings of subcultures in several important ways in order to address the specificities of queer subcultures and queer subcultural sites. First, we need to rethink the relation between theorist and subcultural participant recognizing that for many queers, the boundary between theorist and cultural producer might be slight or at least permeable. Second, most subcultural theories are created to describe and account for male heterosexual adolescent activity and they are adjusted only when female heterosexual adolescent activity comes into focus. New queer subcultural theory will have to account for non-heterosexual, non-exclusively male, non-white and non-adolescent subcultural production in all its specificity. Precisely because many queers refuse and resist the heteronormative imperative of home and family, they also prolong the periods of their life devoted to subcultural participation. This challenge to the notion of the subculture as a youth formation could on the one hand expand the definition of subculture beyond its most banal significations of youth in crisis and on the other hand challenge our notion of adulthood as reproductive maturity. In the longer version of this essay, Judith Halberstam goes on to consider each one of these features of queer subcultural production in relation to specific lesbian subcultures. Thanks to Glen Mimura for the formulation of "an epistemology of youth. Geographies of Sexuality New York: Routledge, ; Boone, Joseph et al. University of Wisconsin Press, University of Minnesota Press, University of Chicago Press, Green documents the death of Angie Extravaganza and Kim Pendarvis among others. Green reminds us that: See Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-war Britain [], eds. Michael du Plessis and Kathleen Chapman, "Queercore:

2: Holdings : In a queer time and place : | York University Libraries

"What's That Smell?: Queer Temporalities and Subcultural Lives" - Halberstam. On a personal note: After introducing her thesis for this particular essay, Halberstam offers her readers a tightly woven, but rich anecdote of her own subcultural experience as an adolescent in s England.

3: In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives - Judith Halberstam - Google Books

Halberstam is the author of In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives, Skin Shows: Gothic

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Horror and the Technology of Monsters, Female Masculinity and co-author with Del LaGrace Volcano of The Drag King Book.

4: Table of contents for In a queer time and place

In the seventh chapter of Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies and Subcultural Lives, Halberstam weaves personal accounts of her experience in the subcultural life of the punk music scene of s England with theoretical arguments about "decisions that queer people make about where to live, how to live, and how to recraft relationality itself" ().

5: In a queer time and place : transgender bodies, subcultural lives in SearchWorks catalog

Queer temporalities and subcultural lives An essay by Judith Butler in a volume dedicated to the work of Stuart Halberstam What's that smell?

6: A Gender Variance Who's Who: Jack Halberstam (â€™) academic. Part II

What's That Smell?: Queer Temporalities and Subcultural Lives Judith Halberstam; Queer Temporality. This essay is drawn from a book-length study of the explosion of queer urban subcultures in the last decade.

7: Location by Nicole Pickering on Prezi

Judith Halberstam's In A Queer Time and Place both validates and admires the beauty of the transperson as well as the genderqueer in this new era of identity performance. It is an incredible portrayal of the partnership between trans issues and gay and lesbian issues that I applaud with a full heart."

8: S&F Online - Public Sentiments

Get this from a library! In a queer time and place: transgender bodies, subcultural lives. [Judith Halberstam] -- In a Queer Time and Place opens with a probing analysis of the life and death of Brandon Teena, a young transgender man who was brutally murdered in small-town Nebraska.

9: In a queer time and place : transgender bodies, subcultural lives - Ghent University Library

Judith Halberstam, "What's That Smell? Queer Temporalities and Subcultural Lives, Trust and the Activist Archivist) 5.

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