

## Points of Exit: Queering Queer Texts

On Thursday, March 19, and Friday, March 20, 2009, the Centre for Gender and Diversity, Maastricht University, the Netherlands, will mark its ten-year anniversary with a conference entitled *Points of Exit: (Un)conventional Representations of Age, Parenting, and Sexuality*. The conference aims to examine the potential deconstruction of conventional scripts of age, parenting, and sexuality.

For one of the panels, entitled *Queering Queer Texts*, we invite papers that deal with the following theme:

In his poem “Two Loves” of 1894, Lord Alfred Douglas famously referred to same-sex love as “the love that dare not speak its name.” Although this motto of silence might properly reflect the outward appearance of many queer lives and texts, both queer audiences and queer scholars have found that underneath the straight veneer there always lies queerness. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick queered canonized fiction in *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), Alexander Doty did the same for the movies in *Flaming Classics* (2000), and Richard Dyer covered popular culture at large in *The Culture of Queers* (2001). Each of them showed that queerness goes to the heart of Western imagination: it might not be in your face, but it is present in the awkward silences, blanks, gaps, ruptures, and breaks that permeate our canonical texts.

But what about the other texts, the ones that openly deal with queerness, that desire to be queer, that do dare to speak their name? Think of theater plays like *Torch Song Trilogy* and *Angels in America*, of television shows like *The L-Word* and *Will & Grace*, of openly gay poets like Allen Ginsberg and Frank O’Hara, of trailblazing novels like *The Well of Loneliness* and *Giovanni’s Room*. Are these texts not in need of queering, as the rest of Western culture seems to be? Do these explicitly queer texts still have gaps and silences? And if so, what do we find in those blanks and ruptures? Perhaps a queerness that is queerer than the queerness on the surface? How do we read such queer texts? Do we need to develop a new methodology for reading them, for queering them?

Send in a 500-word abstract and a short bio to [info-gender@cgd.unimaas.nl](mailto:info-gender@cgd.unimaas.nl) (subject heading: “queering queer texts”) before November 1, 2008, proposing either:

- a close reading of the queerness of an overtly queer text; or
- a meditation on the development of methodological tools for queering queer texts.

We aim at publishing a selection of conference papers in a special issue of a peer-reviewed journal.

Confirmed keynote speaker for this panel is Professor Henry Abelove, the Wilbur Fisk Osborne Professor of English at Wesleyan University. He is the author of *The Evangelist of Desire: John Wesley and the Methodists*, and of *Deep Gossip*; and he is co-editor of *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*.

For further information on the *Points of Exit* conference, see:  
[www.genderdiversiteit.nl/pointsofexit/](http://www.genderdiversiteit.nl/pointsofexit/).