

Maria Katharina Wiedlack

“We’re gonna burn your rainbow and we’re having fun, oh yeah” (Skinjobs)

The Onset of Societies Death Drive *Or* Punk Rock’s Utopian Fantasy?

Queer punk rock is more than a style of music. It is situated in a well connected network of local groups with specific agendas. Accordingly, it is not overestimated to call queercore a subcultural movement, which can be understood as a form of queer activism and agency, able to communicate queer-feminist ideas in an informal setting (Judith Halberstam 2005; José Muñoz 1999, 2010).

This presentation will give a brief overview of the phenomenon queercore, based on my dissertation-project. Starting with a short general overview, I will focus on some examples of queercore bands, to demonstrate prototypical politics and strategies.

Queer punk uses tactics of shocking by violating social rules and norms and promotes sexual and gender diversity. Anticapitalistic ideals, antiracist and feminist agendas are included as well as anti-transphobic messages.

Listening to some lyrics, it seems as if *queerness* is understood in Lee Edelman’s (2005) terms as anti-social, always disturbing identity. While queers refer to the anti-identitarian and anti-social meaning of the term queer within the symbolic, queer punk music offers so much more than this reference and inherent cultural criticism. Punk’s physical and emotional qualities enable individuals to connect with each other, to envision a better future in the present.

My research questions are: why is the genre punk rock used to articulate queer criticism and do punk performances really challenge socio-cultural norms and power, or do they stabilize them? In reference to Lee Edelman’s famous statement, that politics in the means of a brighter future necessarily stabilize the existing (homophobic) system, empirical work might be appropriate to evaluate the actual place of queer politics within US societies and its effect.

Mag.a **Maria Katharina Wiedlack** is a doctoral candidate at the Department for English and American Studies at the University of Vienna and currently works at the Gender Research Office at the University of Vienna. Her research fields are queer theory, gender and postcolonial studies. She is a queer activist and conference organizer; her dissertation focuses on punk rock, queer theory and activism.