

Queering Multiculturalism – Multiculturalising Queer Theory: On Sexual Autonomy,  
Cultural Diversity and Same Sex Marriage  
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Proposal for a lecture

It has for some time amazed me that the huge debate between feminism and multiculturalism is not accompanied by a debate between multiculturalism and queer theory – hence the idea for this lecture, which intends to interrogate multiculturalism from queer perspectives and to question queer theories from multiculturalist perspectives. I want to start by asking for the place of queer identities, actions and ideas in multicultural theorizing. Is the sexual autonomy of queers something multiculturalism has in mind at all? And what kind of political offer can and will multiculturalism make? Jacob Levy is one of the few authors who have dealt with these issues – and he basically suggests that safe exit from queer-unfriendly groups has to be enabled. Accordingly, such groups may remain unchanged, if only they let their queer members go. Of course, such an approach goes blatantly against the queer idea of radical change. As a next step, this radicalism of queer will be reconstructed and developed, using the example of a queer critique of marriage. Reference will be made to concepts such as compulsory monogamy and compulsory matrimony (Ruthann Robson). Keeping in mind that marriage is a central institution for many cultural and religious groups, the question will then be posed whether there can be a synergetic relationship between multiculturalism and queer theory or whether a diagnosis of permanent tension and conflict has to be made – and what we might make of such a clash of theories when it comes to developing a political vision for a society that does justice to sexual autonomy as well as to cultural diversity.