

Call For Papers: Envisioning Queer Black and Indigenous Self-Representations within the Digital Literary Sphere

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Guest Editors: Oluwadunni Talabi & Corina Wieser-Cox

In their book on Queer Indigenous Studies (2011), Qwo-Li Driskill, Chris Finely, Brian Joseph Gilley and Scott Lauria Morgensen ask: “What does a queer decolonization of our homelands, bodies and psyches look like?” (219). Their question is critical when understanding the complex realities of Indigenous and Black queer individuals in the settler-colonial states of both Canada and the US, as well as in the central and southern states of “Latin” America. The queer Indigenous and Black body – especially when it is trans* or gender nonconforming – is often the site of violence and misrepresentation, yet it is also a site of destabilization and decolonization when reimagined and reified in digital media and literary forms. Through online self-representations facilitated by digital infrastructure, the queer Black and Indigenous heterogeneous consciousness is made accessible. Queer Black and Indigenous creators and writers, given to existing at the most periphery of inter and intra discourse and imposed upon by the limits of Western gendered vocabulary in Queer discourse, are at the forefront of rethinking queerness. Returning to the past, pulling references that point to liberation and juxtaposing it in the context of the future, they are producing alternate realities and showing a relationship between times, while staying rooted in African and Indigenous world consciousness, inadvertently pushing for queer imaginings beyond Eurocentric epistemological limits. The intersectional shifts and visual aesthetics that arise from the everyday digital sphere of literary and cultural media goes beyond the liberational idea of, ‘if you can imagine it, you can create it’ to the idea of, ‘that it is not your norm does not mean it does not/did not previously exist.’

The digital sphere and its ability to provide an avenue for self-representation, has already been explored by Shola Adenekan in his recently published book *African Literature in the Digital Age* (2021) in which he showcases how digitalization has enabled African writers to transcend the power relations of traditional publishing and scholarship. In order to discover an unlimited range of non-heteronormative representation and complexity, one must turn to the digital sphere, where queer Black and Indigenous artists from the Americas are leading conversations on the repercussions of colonial modern epistemes and are using an amalgam of their lived reality, historical narratives and fiction to create new epistemes of encompassing futures.

Two main questions arise concerning the digital sphere and queer Black and Indigenous self-representations: First, how do digital literary/cultural forms produced by queer Black and Indigenous creatives engender a monumental paradigm shift in queer self-representation and self-fashioning? Second, how do the literatures and cultures produced in the digital sphere mediate how the queer body is constructed, viewed, represented, and delineated within a diasporic and settler-colonial context of the Americas? This special issue of *AmLit* invites papers that analyze queer literary works within the digital sphere, specifically pertaining to queer Indigenous and Black peoples residing in the Americas, i.e., Turtle Island, Mesoamerica, Abya Yala, etc, that might include some of the following topics:

- the digitization and archiving of zines: e.g., the People of Color Zine Project (POCZP) and the Queer Zine Archive Project (QZAP)
- Audience engagements with texts/counterpublics
- Disruption of the “heteronormativity of settler colonialism” (Smith) through digitization
- Visual and literary aesthetics of the “sovereign erotic” (Rifkin)
- Two-Spirit epistemologies & digital literatures
- Black/Afrofuturist queer futures
- The aesthetics of survivance
- The aesthetics of metaphysics
- New vs. old forms of aesthetics within digital literary media
- Digital violence and counterdiscourses
- Racism and homophobia online
- Misogynoir and reimagining the world through digital resistance
- Communal and relational aspects of the digital sphere
- Discourses of resistance and survivance
- Imaginations created from cultural archives

Submission Information

Full essays should be between 5,000 and 10,000 words (including notes and bibliography) and be submitted by **January 16th, 2023**. **The deadline has been extended to January 30th, 2023!** Notification of acceptance for the articles will follow shortly after the deadline in January. The first round of edits is planned for March 2023 and publication is set to be October 2023. The article should be preceded by a short abstract (180 – 200 words). Bibliographical references and general presentation should follow the current MLA style sheet. If you have any questions before submission, feel free to email the guest editors at digitalselfrepresentations@gmail.com

Please send completed articles to the email (digitalselfrepresentations@gmail.com), along with any questions you might have concerning the publication.

Guest Editors:

Corina Wieser-Cox – University of Bremen
 Oluwadunni Talabi – University of Bremen

Works Cited

Adenekan, Shola. *African Literature in the Digital Age: Class and Sexual Politics in New Writing from Nigeria and Kenya*. Boydell & Brewer, 2021.

Driskill, Qwo-Li, et al., editors. *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature*. University of Arizona Press, 2011.