QUEER PLOTS: THE GERMAN DRAMA OF GAY LOVE AND MIGRANT HATE

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Christina Research Seminar
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Topelia D112 (Unioninkatu 38)

In Germany, sexual politics are progressively racialized. From a problem between straights and queers, homophobia is redefined as a problem between gay-friendly ‘Germans’ and homophobic ‘migrants’. This is accompanied by an invention of new ‘German’ traditions and core values of ‘gay friendliness’, whose constitutive outside are globalized notions of Islam, which in Germany interpellate the majority of the post/migrant population. As intimate publics expand for (certain) queer bodies and subjects, this ambivalent and melancholic embrace nevertheless requires performances of victimhood, vulnerability and assimilation, which call for protection from Others who become repositories for a violence which was never grieved.

In Germany, the recently imported Hasskriminalität (hate crimes) discourse is especially productive as a catalyst in this necropolitical conversion. Set in the exceptional metropolis, and in the ambivalently celebrated and demonized space of the inner city, its script appears intensely local. Nevertheless, near-identical stories are now mushrooming across Western Europe. The existential struggle between queer lovers and fearsome Others seems endlessly transposable, and calls for similar forms of intervention across vastly different national contexts. What sense do we make of this replicability in the face of a rapid travel of capital, techniques of governance and LGBT activisms across various borders - European, trans-Atlantic, and beyond? What is the work of the ‘Muslim homophobia’ discourse in both producing and concealing political economies of neoliberalism, assimilation, gentrification, policing and militarization?

Christina research seminar is chaired by prof. Tuija Pulkkinen. Seminar pays tribute to Gender Studies, and the history of Queen Christina’s name connected to this field of studies at the University of Helsinki. Seminar is open to everybody with an interest in research questions related to gender studies.