# 1NR---DRR---Round 5

## Case

### Law Good---2NC

## Capitalism K

### AT: Perms---2NC

## Joy K

### Impact---2NC

#### 1. Psychic violence. A focus on trans maladjustment is spiritually damaging. Centering joy promotes trans well-being. That’s Shuster, and…

Stef M. Shuster 24, associate professor in Lyman Briggs College and the Department of Sociology at Michigan State University; and Laurel Westbrook, Associate Professor of Sociology at Grand Valley State University, August 2024, “Reducing the Joy Deficit in Sociology: A Study of Transgender Joy,” *Social Problems*, vol. 71, no. 3, pp. 805-806, https://academic.oup.com/socpro/article-abstract/71/3/791/6603089?redirectedFrom=PDF&casa\_token=9y87WaJA5zwAAAAA%3awH8lJtKne47mldxWpdQqq7-wwFt8zEX61rbtCQllIaDJE6BV6xDoUXRrWkpQEMnkG2HG3UOZZ2xC&login=false.

Furthermore, the knowledge produced by academics filters out to the public through news coverage and the educational system. If research states that shame, misery, and isolation are central to being a member of a particular group, that is more likely to become established as “truth” (Waidzunas 2012). Similarly, if scholarship highlights these negative aspects, members of marginalized groups may be more likely to notice despair and less likely to attend to the joyful aspects of their lives. Moreover, those who are not part of the marginalized identity may come to believe that there is nothing desirable about being part of that group, resulting in pity. Although feelings of pity often evoke the desire to “protect” group members (Sajir and Aouragh 2019), pity does not inspire people to lift up the oppressed and celebrate the group. For example, poster children are frequently used to entice viewers to donate money out of pity in publicized events to raise funds for people with disabilities, such as the “Jerry’s Kids” telethon. As Shapiro (1994) documents, crafting pity narratives perpetuates stigma and disempowers people with disabilities (see also Sunderland, Catalano, and Kendall 2009). Finally, if scholarship portrays members of a group as lonely and isolated, those with that identity may be less likely to try to connect with others, particularly if early attempts at connection are met with discrimination.

By contrast, overlooked aspects of being from marginalized groups may be revealed if we start asking about joy. And, like findings that focus on violence and inequality, findings about joy would also filter out to the public. This sharing of findings about joy, pleasure, and happiness may help reduce inequality by uplifting narratives of joy and well-being (Thin 2014; Veenhoven 2018). For example, imagine the difference of being a student in a classroom who studies the joys of being Black, rather than only focusing on slavery, poverty, and racially-motivated violence. Or imagine reading similar news coverage. Celebrating Blackness has positive effects for both Black and non-Black people alike (Moody-Ramirez 2019). It may increase self-esteem and reduce racism. Scholars who have attended to joy in disciplines other than sociology have noted that Black joy is a form of resistance and that centering Black joy is vital to anti-racist pedagogy (Dunn and Love 2020; Lu and Steele 2019). It is widely believed that the way to reduce inequality is to bring attention to misery (Santiago 2015). However, our society has long told narratives about suffering, and yet we still have high levels of inequality. What if part of the solution to social problems is also to tell narratives about joy?

#### 2. Conservative mobilization. The narrative of trans people as maladjusted and incapable of being happy while trans is the same narrative used by the far right to advance anti-trans rhetoric, legislation, and hate crimes. A focus on joy is necessary to confront that disinformation.

J.J. Wright 25, Assistant Professor at MacEwan University; and Casey Burkholder, Associate Professor at Concordia University, 2025, “Introduction to the special issue ‘Mobilising queer joy: Establishing queer joy studies,’” *Sexualities*, vol. 28, no. 3, pp. 758-759, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/13634607241304546.

In the past 5 years, around the world, there has been an explosion of anti-queer, anti-trans rhetoric, legislation, and hate crimes, which are fuelled by populist politicians seeking to advance conservative and far-right anti-democratic agendas (Liu et al., 2024; Tudor, 2023). By stoking fear of queer and trans ‘others,’ populist affects are mobilised to scapegoat and make antiqueer hatred ‘common sense.’ We see this, for example, through the assumption that the growing population of queer and trans youth are the result of social media and contagion, wherein logics of compulsory cisheterosexuality situate being cisgender and heterosexuality as natural and normal and queerness and transness as aberrations (McRuer, 2003). In this sociopolitical climate, it is perhaps unsurprising that queer affects–queer and trans joy, in particular–have gained popularity and traction, with the term “queer joy” popularly seen online, in advocacy campaigns, and on merchandise (Weisler, 2023). Queer joy, however, is not a kitschy slogan on a tote bag, nor just an intentional response to rising populist affects that espouse hate. Queer joy holds transformative power more broadly: as an embodied affective experience that catalyzes new forms of anti-colonial relationality (Wright and Falek, 2024), as a pedagogy (Wright et al., 2024), and as a method for research and community advocacy (Burkholder and Wright, 2024; Wright and Burkholder, 2025). Spurred by the desire to expand the articulation of queer joy both as an analytic and an embodied experience, we came together to create this special issue for Sexualities to help foundationalise a new field within Queer and Trans Studies: Queer Joy Studies. The issue contains six articles from scholars from Canada, Australia, the Philippines, and the US that extend theorizations of queer joy and provide frameworks for understanding the shape of queer resistance in the current historical moment.

The need for Queer Joy Studies is urgent given that queer joy directly confronts conservative politicians and pundits’ strategic disinformation about 2SLGBTQIA+1 communities, particularly concerning assertions that queer and trans lives are abject and undesirable ones to live. When journalists and politicians cite the promotion of ‘gender ideology’ in schools and on social media as the reason for a growing queer and trans population, they imply that no one should want to be 2SLGBTQIA+ and that the lives of those in queer and trans communities are marked by mental illness, self-hatred, and misery. In Alberta, Canada, where JJ writes from, the Premier of Alberta, Danielle Smith, released a 6-min video on Twitter/X in early 2024 where she announced a slew of new homophobic and transphobic policies that limit the rights of 2SLGBTQIA+ Albertans but particularly youth, policies which were couched in her ‘care’ for queer and trans youth who, she said, are largely suffering from mental illness (Smith, 2024). In the UK, the government-commissioned Cass Review, a report on youth seeking gender-affirming healthcare related to gender identity, suggested, among other things, that mental health issues co-occurring with ‘gender dysphoria2 ’ may cause youth to become transgender, implying that being trans is a mental illness (Cass, 2024). While oppression and violence certainly shape the mental health and lives of queer and trans people, homogenous, misery-filled visions of 2SLGBTQIA+ existence are severed from the profound beauty of queer love, queer and trans joy, gender euphoria, and the strength and depth of 2SLGBTQIA+ community care and chosen families. 2SLGBTQIA+ communities do have disproportionately high rates of mental health distress, but this distress is not intrinsic to these communities and emerges from a political context of queerphobic and transphobic discrimination, prejudice, and violence. Indeed, if given the choice, many queer people would choose to be queer, even in a context where being queer is met with the promise of struggle due to cisheteropatriarchy (Ward, 2022).

### AT: Rehighlight

#### Bottom part of the card still goes neg! this would be bad if our author was solely arguing for joy to replace sadness, but that misses the contextuality and depth of our argument.

Megan Ingram 25, queer disability studies scholar and documentary filmmaker who holds an MA in Sociology from Queen’s University in Canada; and Kai Jacobsen, trans health researcher and MA student in Sociology at Carleton University, 2025, “Both because of and in spite of: Towards the reclamation of queercrip joy,” *Sexualities*, vol. 28, no. 3, pp. 800-807, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/13634607241264319.

While emphasizing euphoria over dysphoria can resist the pathologization of transness on an individual and cultural level, it falls flat as a political strategy. Positioning trans joy as evidence that transness is not an illness or disorder implicitly positions trans dysphoria, depression, and negative affect as evidence that transness is an illness. This tactic does not disrupt the ableist logic that justifies the harms of psychopathologization, it merely seeks to exempt trans people from these harms. Positioning trans as happy and therefore healthy and good distances trans people from disability and madness, reinforcing ableism and sanism (Pilling, 2022). Notably, Cameron Awkward-Rich (2022) argues that the proponents and beneficiaries of trans happiness discourses are primarily white non-disabled transmasculine people, whose access to whiteness and masculinity allows them to distance themselves from other racialized, feminized, and disabled trans people. As such, while trans joy discourses enable some trans people to escape some of the harms of oppression and pathologization, they fail to disrupt the power structures that maintain oppression. The palatable trans person is similarly reflected in disability pride narratives that rely on assimilation into cisheteronormative and white supremacist ideals of overcoming, defeating, and eliminating shame, symptoms, or disability itself, as evident in the trope of the Paralympian. Even in texts where disability pride is based in a rejection of overcoming narratives, the incitement to see pride as the emotion to orient to and the “end” of the disability acceptance journey creates another affective expectation that in many ways parallels developmentalist narratives. In both cases, the mechanisms of ableism and sanism seek to distance queer, trans, and disabled people from themselves as well as from each other to block coalitional politics.

Overcoming shame and pain in pursuit of joy requires subjects to perform a particular affective narrative to be seen as the ‘right’ kind of queer, trans, or disabled person. Normative joy narratives that rely on linear trajectories mimic the very same curative and developmental narratives that have pathologized and constrained queer, trans, and disabled lives. Here, the linear development narrative from disability to cure parallels the assumption that disabled joy requires an affective trajectory from grief and sadness to pride and happiness. Similarly, while many trans people experience increased euphoria and decreased dysphoria as a result of accessing gender-affirming medical care, transitioning should not be understood as a linear trajectory, let alone one with an clear affective move from dysphoria to euphoria (Jacobsen and Devor, 2022).

Queercrip joy does not require the erasure of physical or psychological pain, of dysphoria, or of any number of ‘negative affects’ in a move towards‘positive’ affects such as euphoria. Indeed, merely replacing dysphoria with euphoria as the defining emotion of transness, or grief with pride as the defining emotion of disability still require queer, trans, and disabled people to perform a particular affective narrative to legitimize their identity. As Hil Malatino writes, “Transitioning doesn’t have to be wholly curative, or even minimally happy-making, in order for it to be imperative. It doesn’t have to guarantee survival in order to be necessary” (2022: 3). Indeed, Frye (1983) asserts that oppressed subjects are often required to perform a degree of happiness and cheer, placing them in an affective double bind. Oppression, to Frye, involves signaling one’s docility and acquiescence to the situation at hand–“to participate in our own erasure” (1983: 2). These affective performances uphold the fantasy of normative happy objects and reinforce the affective alienation of oppression. It is from these parallels of structural oppression, the limitations of purely ‘positive’ affects’, and the location of queer trans and disabled people as affect aliens that we formulate the potentials of queercrip joy.

Towards queercrip joy

Queercrip joy is more than just joy and euphoria; it is a complex formulation of intimacy, pleasure, pain, validation, refusal, and relationality. Queercrip joy resists the easy binaries of positive/negative affects to instead embrace joy and pain as simultaneous and coconstitutive. Queercrip joy exists both because of and in spite of the pain of enduring oppression and physical and psychological pain. As such, queercrip joy is not merely a pure “happy object” (Ahmed, 2010), but embraces the affective messiness of reorientating towards new, ‘wrong’, or ‘unhappy’ objects and futures. Queercrip joy allows us to feel the grief of non-conformity, the shame of failing to align with the ‘right’ political horizon, the dysphoria and dysmorphia of bodily difference, and still understand that we can have a ‘good’ life and that our lives can be happy, full, livable, and imaginable.

### AT: ADA

#### In case there’s any ambiguity, Awkward-Rich clarifies that a commitment to trans maladjustment asks us to reject trans joy in favor of embracing the “durable association between trans identity and particular forms of bad feeling.” We are impact turning this embrace.

Lauren Herold 23, educator, researcher, and writer whose work explores LGBTQ culture, media history, and activism; interview with Cameron Awkward-Rich, 15 June 2023, “In The Terrible We, Cameron Awkward-Rich Makes Space for Bad Trans Feelings,” *Autostraddle*, https://www.autostraddle.com/in-the-terrible-we-cameron-awkward-rich-makes-space-for-bad-trans-feelings/.

Taking a close look at transmasculine writing and trans studies itself, Awkward-Rich implores readers and scholars to think with what he calls “trans maladjustment,” what he briefly describes to me as the “durable association between trans identity and particular forms of bad feeling.” Rather than disavow “bad feeling” — “things like depression, social withdrawal, unruly post-traumatic identity/affect, suicidality, dysphoria, feeling haunted, and so on” — he is interested in exploring how these feelings “show up again and again in transphobic and trans-affirmative discourse.”

Put another way, Awkward-Rich is wary of the way trans scholars and activists have been quick to distance themselves from accusations of illness. To be sure, affirming that “we are not sick” can be a politically important rhetorical move in the face of entrenched medical pathologization. However, Awkward-Rich writes that this rhetorical move is “produced only in direct opposition to the word sick.” The Abprallen sweatshirt, for example, declares that trans people are not sick; Awkward-Rich argues that this kind of rhetoric distances trans people from disabled and mentally ill people, re-marginalizing the latter while trying to legitimize the former. If we say “trans ≠ sick,” as Awkward-Rich simplifies it in the book, where does that leave everyone who is sick?

The Abprallen sweatshirt is just one example of this disavowal. We can see it over and over again in our contemporary moment. During our conversation in May, Awkward-Rich and I discuss how we repeatedly see calls for representations of “trans joy” online and from our students. And this impulse to celebrate trans joy is extremely understandable as a response to the political right’s focus on stigmatizing trans lives. “The Terrible We, of course, does not set out to contest the critical value of potentially good trans feelings—euphoria, curiosity, hope, earnestness,” he writes in the Introduction.

However, Awkward-Rich asks, what happens when we deny or ignore “the full range of human experience and emotion and relation to trans life”? Feminist scholar Sara Ahmed has critiqued how the cultural imperative to be happy limits our ways of understanding how oppression and marginalization feel in our everyday lives. Along these lines, Awkward-Rich tells me, “what actually is it that my desire for the absence of suffering or my joy, in this simple [way of] reflecting myself back, like, [how] is that asking me to live? And do I actually like that? Joy is a great way of reproducing normativity.” Perhaps over-emphasizing narratives of joy might put pressures on trans people to perform euphoria and happiness in a way that limits our understanding of the workings of transphobia.

### 2NC---Perm

### 2NC---Alt

### AT: Fleeting Freedoms DA

### AT: Perm do Each