“Born This Way”: Queer Vernacular and the Politics of Origins

Although popular discourses frequently suggest that sexual orientation is an immutable characteristic, several scholars and activists have argued there is danger in postulating same-sex desire is inborn. This analysis looks to another feature of the controversy, arguing that when queers themselves utilize “born this way” rhetoric, they frequently do so in surprising ways that rest outside the presupposed binary. Exploring hundreds of posts to the “Born This Way” blog, Bennett argues that vernacular appropriations of the phrase are more fluid than often imagined among LGBT publics, allowing for a rethinking of the epistemology of the closet that is more ethical than ontological.