

## TALKING TRASH: The Counterpolitics of Abjection

*Conference Date:* Monday, April 18, 2016

*Keynote Speaker:* Jordan Stein, Assistant Professor of English, Fordham University

*Submission Deadline:* Monday, February 8, 2016

The third annual QC English MA conference aims to open up a conversation about the discarded, the silly, and the abject. In her book, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship*, Lauren Berlant compiles and analyzes an archive of objects not traditionally “made for” critical analysis. She refers to the attitude that studying these kinds of materials devalues intellectual and academic work, and in response, conducts “a counterpolitics of the silly object by . . . developing a mode of criticism and conceptualization that reads the waste materials of everyday communication” (12). For this conference, we want to build on Berlant’s mode of criticism and showcase work that attends to cultural waste, or trash—what has been deemed unfit, inferior, worthless. We are interested in the abject: the bodies, identities, and literatures that have been historically regarded and treated as trash, as well as “low” forms of popular media that are deemed trashy, unintellectual, and unworthy of critical analysis. We want to look to the abject to learn new, subversive ways of being and knowing in the world, and to que(e)ry canonical literature with inappropriate or uncomfortable questions. We invite critical and theoretical works about literature and culture, both canonical and non-canonical, that deal with the bodies, identities, literatures, etc., that have been culturally regarded as trash.

The QC English Graduate Conference is a chance for CUNY master’s students to share their research interests with the larger CUNY community. Submissions can be pieces of larger works or works-in-progress.

### *Possible submission topics include but are not limited to:*

#### Forbidden Genres

- Comics and Graphic Narrative
- Gothic Literature
- Romance and Chick Lit
- Horror, Vampires, and Zombies
- Science Fiction and the Apocalypse
- YouTube Series

#### Discarded Voices

- Women’s Literature
- Recovered Literature
- Queer Literature and Performance
- Children’s and Young Adult Literature
- Disability Studies

#### Trash Aesthetics

- The cute and the precious
- The uncomfortable and the visceral
- The silly and the fun
- The ugly and the bad
- Shock and transgression
- Kitsch and camp

#### Abject Feelings

- Shame
- Envy
- Anxiety
- Paranoia
- Disgust
- Laughter
- Indifference

## The Third Annual Queens College English Graduate Conference CFP

### *To Submit a Proposal*

Please send proposals of 250 words max. to [QCEnglishMAconference@gmail.com](mailto:QCEnglishMAconference@gmail.com) by **Monday, February 8, 2016**. Proposals should be pasted in the body of the email. Please include your full name and the name of your program and school.

All Queens College MA, MFA, and MS Ed students are welcome to submit, as well as master's students from other CUNY schools. If you have any questions, please email [QCEnglishMAconference@gmail.com](mailto:QCEnglishMAconference@gmail.com).

### *Keynote Speaker Biography*

Jordan Alexander Stein is the author of journal articles in *American Literary History*, *American Literature*, and *ESQ*. With Justine S. Murison he co-edited a special issue of *Early American Literature* on "Methods for the Study of Religion" in 2010, and with Lara Langer Cohen he co-edited *Early African American Print Culture* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012). His research has been supported by fellowships from the Library Company of Philadelphia and the New-York Historical Society, and in 2012, he co-directed the American Antiquarian Society's summer seminar in the history of the book, on "African American Cultures of Print." He is completing "The People Are Clarissa," a monograph on Protestant literacy and transatlantic print, and developing a new project, "Sex in the Archives."