“Vivere con” means in Italian “to live with.” In recent decades, “conviviality” has become one of the concepts (next to multiculturalism, interculturality, or cosmopolitanism) used to articulate the possibilities for felicitous ways of living together in a hyper-diverse world marked by a great variety of cultural differences and conflicts (Gilroy, 2004). Various authors have deployed conviviality to analyze human modes of togetherness and to search for approaches to common life that work with differences (Nowicka & Vertovec, 2014; Wise & Noble, 2016).

“Convivialism,” as a relational philosophy of with-ness and interdependence (Boisvert, 2010), is neither pursuing an illusorily consensual form of harmony nor reifying differences and identities. The term lent its name in 2013 to a Convivialist Manifesto signed initially by about 40 French-speaking intellectuals, initiating a conversation that resulted in the relatively more international Second Convivialist Manifesto in 2020, with a wider co-authorship and co-signed by about 300 intellectuals from three dozen countries (Convivialist International, 2020). The second manifesto hopes to initiate a “Convivialist International” as a global sociopolitical movement toward futures that would improve the art of living well together across differences. It highlights five principles for conviviality: “common naturality, common humanity, common sociality, legitimate individuation, creative opposition.” It subordinates these principles to an ethical “absolute imperative of hubris control” that addresses especially the most hyper-privileged and hyper-entitled inhabitants of this planet. However, the manifesto only shortly mentions gender and does so in traditional binary terms. It defends the rights of women and voices a polite criticism of patriarchy, moderated by a tribute to cultural diversity. More generally, the manifesto shows no explicit signs of inspiration from queer discourses, even though the concern for living together in difference is one that is shared with queer studies. My goal is to help address this lack by suggesting some elements of queer inspiration for convivialism, toward queer-convivialist futures (Kagan, 2020).

As readers of this chapter, you undoubtedly carry with yourselves a variety of encounters with and understandings of “queer.” While some of you may be aware of the fields of queer theory and queer studies, others may relate the term to LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Queer, Intersex, and more) activism or to a growing desire to experience everyday life beyond gender binaries (as in the expression “genderqueer”). Some may think of the ancient meaning
of “queer” as something weird and wonky or of its earlier use as an insult uttered by “straight” heterosexuals against homosexuals.

The verbal form “queering” is often understood as a transversal and transgressive process of questioning of norms—starting with gender and sexual norms and eventually also questioning other kinds of norms. For example, feminist economist-duo J. K. Gibson-Graham deployed queering to help them in “making difference visible and calling normative impulses and forms of social closure into question” (Gibson-Graham, 1999, p. 83) in order to demonstrate how the diversity of alternative economic practices seen today point to possibilities beyond the dominant norms of capitalism. Queering brings to visibility a wider diversity of already emerging practices, it deepens the significance of their divergences, and it encourages a diversification of alternative visions. This supports the futuring process toward convivial futures.

The following lines are not intended as a definition of queer “itself” but as an overview of how I aim to deploy queer to interrogate and inform the search for convivial futures. I will explore here especially what queering (i.e., queer as a verb, as a process) can do to inform the art of living together. The queer is both a critique and a dream at the edge of the given.

Queering affects a given context in space and time. It affects the existing dominant norms. It creates disturbances in a normative field. The queering process disrupts the tendency to want to “figure things out” by drawing categories and rules, mastering them, and “controlling” them. Queer troubles any teleology that would have us manipulate situations to make them fit into some norms and reach pre-fixed normative goals. Queer is The Queer Art of Failure (Halberstam, 2011), that is an art whose virtuosity lies in the failure to perform according to dominant criteria (Muñoz, 2009). The queer is opening to futures like a complex “open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning” (Kosofsky Sedgwick, 1993, p. 8). So, “to become queer is to be on the way away from teleological conceptions about life and futurity” (Küpers, 2020, p. 295). To queer is not to draw new directional lines but to take an “orientation towards queer moments of deviation” (Ahmed, 2006, p. 570).

As a process, I suggest that queering can do a number of interrelated actions (note the verbs highlighted in bold characters):

1. Queering can help us **perceive** (a) the real as fluid, unstable and in perpetually becoming, as well as (b) the norms enforced to frame the real into specific levels of reality.
2. Queering can thereby **question** and “highlight the instability of taken-for-granted meanings and resulting power relations” (Browne & Nash, 2010, p. 4), contributing to “situated knowledges” (Haraway, 1988) rather than knowledge from a God-like position.
3. Queering as social and cultural research **invites to unearth** the contexts of emergence of certain dominant meanings and categories and **to trace back** their genealogies.
4. Queering as discourse **upholds** the subjects in their multiplicity and indeterminacy while it challenges the process of normalization and homogenization in social practice and subjectivities (Gorman-Murray et al., 2010, p. 99).
5. Queering as an individual and social practice can **invent** “willfully eccentric modes of being” (Halberstam, 2005, p. 1), dissolving the patterns and trajectories of dominant norms through experiments that foster the emergence of “strange temporalities, imaginative life schedules, and eccentric economic practices” (Ibid.).
6. Queering as an art of resistance and resilience to hegemonic forces can **develop** “radical disharmony with various sites of oppression: gender, morality, the patriarchal nuclear family, the prevailing culture of nature, and white racial supremacy” (Jesse, 2016; see also Muñoz, 1999).
Thereby, futures of conviviality as an art of living together well on this planet would benefit from a queering process that unsettles certainties of the “good life,” as understood in western contexts. This brings me to the double question of queer futuring and of queer futures.

Recitativo: The queer must flow—queer futuring as de-re-identification and de-re-harmonization

Queering Futures should not be mistaken for identity politics, but in certain moments and to certain degrees, identity politics were, are, and will be necessary and helpful. A queer futuring works with, for, against and beyond identities. This paradoxical approach can be well understood with the help of some notions from a pioneering scholar of transdisciplinarity: The “complex thought” introduced by Edgar Morin across the six volumes of his Magnus Opus *La méthode*. Morin’s complexity offers a wide epistemic framework that is generally very welcoming of ambivalences and paradoxes and allows to think through contradictions.

Morin suggests that, in any complex system, “the whole is more than and less than the sum of the parts” (Morin, 1992, p. 111). Reaching an understanding of “generalized” or “qualitative” complexity means going beyond two binarily opposed simplifications: the simplification of reductionism (which invites us to a learning process where we take apart the whole and study its parts) but also the simplification of holism (which invites us to perceive qualities that emerge from the whole beyond adding up the mere qualities of its parts). Often, criticism of reductionism only tells us that “the whole is more than the sum of its parts”—omitting that it is also “less than the sum of its parts,” and thereby conveying a fallacious imaginary of purely harmonious wholes (from harmonious human communities to harmonious nature), inviting us to seek out bright futures in harmonious identities and collectives.

Instead, Morin’s insight that the whole is more and less than the sum of its parts has a queer significance because it opens up, in principle, our attention to harmonies and disharmonies everywhere we look. It also points to disharmony in/through harmony and harmony in/through disharmony. The specifically queering insight coming from this attention is that it teaches us the following: Whatever communities/societies and historical period we are in, affirming any shared collective identity is at once both emancipatory and repressive: A specific collective allows the emergence of certain qualities. However, this very same collective also both represses some of the qualities of its members (individuals as well as subgroups, subcultures) and suppresses some of the possibilities for the emergence of other collective identities.

For future alternatives to get a chance to shape up—or borrowing Wendelin Küpers’ word-play, for “alter-natives” (other births) to emerge, the grip of a certain collective, the hold of a certain identity, must be allowed to loosen. And this must be allowed to happen again and again. A queering process is a process of disidentification (questioning hegemonic identities), de-normalization (questioning dominant norms), and de-naturalization (questioning natural evidences) at a certain point in time and in a certain cultural context. This process will become something different again as soon as the context changes. Queering processes may then enter in a generative recursive dialogue with processes of neo-/re-identification, neo-/re-normalization, and neo-/re-naturalization, as long as the latter do not foolishly set themselves a goal of permanent stability or a rigid line of development. The queering process is a futuring process that must be set in motion again and again.

The queering of conviviality must therefore be allowed to continuously perform its questioning. Hence: The queer must flow! Some readers will have recognized the hint at the slogan from Frank Herbert’s *Dune*: “The spice must flow.” However, the parallel it draws is
a misleading suggestion. Queer approaches have been sometimes misunderstood as obeying to a neoliberal logic, owing to an imagination of fluidity that inspired a “flexibilization” of capitalist organizing in the late 20th century. But the flowing of queer is not a flowing of “the spice.” The circulation of a radical questioning of norms and identities should not be assimilated to the circulation of means of exchange and accumulation (money on Earth, or spice in *Dune*) through the exploitation of natural and human resources, such as workers and the environment (just as the spice production in *Dune* requires the exploitation of sandworms and miners) according to a capitalist logic.

The flowing of the queer is also not a freeing emancipation from the ties that bind (whether in an individualistic-liberal or a Marxist understanding of emancipation). It is not a flow of independence but of interdependence. What one can do is reconfigure dependencies, weakening harmful ties while strengthening other-wise ties.

The flowing of the queer allows more radical openings of utopian futures than the flowing of the spice and less abstract utopias than the fables of emancipation. So, where is the utopian in the queer?

**Aria: Queer futures as the “not-yet-conscious”**

Drawing on Ernst Bloch’s foundational treatise on utopias, *The Principle of Hope* (Bloch, 1995), queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz discussed “queer futurity” as “concrete utopia,” in other words, not purely abstract utopia but educated hopes both related to historically situated struggles and “marked by an enduring indeterminacy” (Bloch in Muñoz, 2009, p. 3) that gives them anticipatory qualities. “Queerness is a structuring and educated mode of desiring that allows us to see and feel beyond the quagmire of the present […] to think and feel a *then and there* […] Queerness is essentially about the rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world” (Muñoz, 2009, p. 1).

For example, Muñoz discusses how queer art may practice a Blochian method of “astonished contemplation” sketching potential futures through past and present quotidian situations and thereby “able to detect an opening and indeterminacy in what for many people is a locked-down dead [object]” (p. 9). Far from ever being fully realized in the here and now, “Queerness is always in the horizon” (p. 11). He also discusses queerness’s uses of the past as “a field of possibility […] in the service of a new futurity” (p. 16), whereby “queer temporality” does not resort to straightforward or “static historicisms” (p. 17) but seeks ephemeral signs of past queering across all sorts of archival records from the queer shadows of official history.

For queer approaches to open up queer utopias, the queering process needs to work toward developing a “reparative reading,” as discussed by Sedgwick, and not only the “paranoid reading” inherited from canonical critical thinkers of the past century. Sedgwick reflected self-critically on the work of queer theory (and critical theory in general) and how it is dominated by a paranoid way of thinking (earlier theorized as “hermeneutics of suspicion” after Paul Ricoeur referring to Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud). Suspicion performs an important critical work of unmasking illusions. However, there are advantages to thinking also otherwise (and that it is neither naive nor a denial of critical insights). “The main reason for questioning paranoid practices are other than the possibility that their suspicions can be delusional or simply wrong. […] They represent a way, among other ways, of seeking, finding, and organizing knowledge. Paranoia knows some things well and others poorly” (Kosofsky Sedgwick, 2003, p. 130). Sedgwick argued against the assumption that “to make something visible as a problem” would be a significant step toward the solution of said problem. But including other readings requires a real conscious effort because paranoia tends “to grow like...
a crystal in a hypersaturated solution, blotting out any sense of the possibility of alternative ways of understanding or things to understand” (p. 131). Paranoid reading’s “aversion to surprise” makes it poorly equipped to facilitate serendipitous learning. By seeking to eliminate surprise, paranoid reading “fails spectacularly […] to anticipate change” and merely achieves to reinforce itself in the belief that “things are bad and getting worse [and therefore] you can never be paranoid enough” (p. 142). Instead, reparative reading is about the “achievement […] to move toward a sustained seeking of pleasure […] rather than continue to pursue the self-reinforcing because self-defeating strategies for forestalling pain” (p. 137).

The utopian not-yet-conscious of queer futures may then function as a reparative calling to pursue the search for alter-native desires and pleasures in the wake of a queer futuring process. Further, the blossoming of queer futures also necessitates spaces of potentiality.

**Duet: Spaces of possibility and spaces of potentiality**

Once able to unfold thanks to the presence or creation of safe spaces for its unfolding, queering as questioning of norms allows its partakers to open up the possibility to gain a deeper understanding of how the self and others may not fit into certain norms. Thanks to that learned ability to become other-wise, queering allows its partakers to then engage in de-re-identifying the self. This is not just a need or benefit only relevant to gender and sexual selves and others, only of concern for people who identify as LGBTQI+ and so on, but a convivial-utopian possibility whose areas of application expand as the socio-historical context changes. That possibility opens up for anyone reaching some safe space for the unfolding of queering processes.

Safe spaces for queering, as mental spaces (in the minds), social spaces (interconnecting us both in presence and digitally), and physical spaces (geographic), need to be open-ended, open to indeterminacy. I suggest to distinguish them into two forms: spaces of possibility and spaces of potentiality. Please think of the two expressions: Having possibilities and having

**BOX 14.1: Through the Television Screen—Bortus in Rudolphland**

As I am writing these pages, I turn on my television. Aboard the spaceship USS Orville, travelling through interstellar space far from his home world, Lieutenant Commander Bortus from planet Moclus has a beer with two human colleagues and they watch *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* together, on a screen … In the televised science-fiction dramedy *The Orville*, fishy jokes and wonky situations are commonplace, as part of the show’s tightrope walking efforts to balance humor and seriousness. In this case, Bortus and most Moclans of planet Moclus adhere to an extremely rigid and oppressive system of compulsory male identity. Biologically female newborns are systematically surgically operated to “conform” them … and Bortus aims to do just the same to his newborn daughter. Yet, after much friction of his views with those of other species on the spaceship, and most especially after a single viewing of the 1964 stop motion animation of *Rudolph* (a definitely queerer character in 1960s US television), Bortus changes his mind. From then on, his views take queerer turns, at odds with the Moclan dominant value-system. What’s going on? What kinds of spaces, in that part-silly, part-serious spaceship and with the vicarious experiencing of the red-nose reindeer, could possibly start queering Bortus the misogynic macho?
Potential. Possibility implies some empowerment and leverage, whereas potentiality exists even in disempowered and marginalized situations. Possibility is about an option that begs space to unfold, working toward potential futures. A queer possibility is a queer experience that asks to be acted with. Potentiality is about the invocation of an option that emerges from a horizon of existence. According to Giorgio Agamben, potentiality is “the presence of an absence” (Agamben & Heller-Roazen, 1999, p. 179) and may invite both action and non-action, engagements, and withdrawals. A queer potentiality is a queer dawning of experience, “not-quite-conscious” (in the words of Muñoz), which asks to be sensed and imagined and that enables an anticipatory desire for queered futures.

Spaces of possibility (SoPs—see Kagan, 2022) facilitate challenging experiences, imagination, and experimentation that open up future-oriented questions and perspectives in situations of uncertainty. They allow their users to experience surprise, puzzlement, and confusion while learning something. They are spaces where queering futures may happen through on-the-ground imaginative, experimental, and creative processes. They are spaces of prefigurative practice, where partakers rehearse possible futures.

Spaces of potentiality (SoPt.s) indicate a different, more ephemeral, and subtler safe space where ephemeral performances allow the dawning of unidentified or even amorphous experience. They are spaces where queer futures emerge on the horizon. “Unlike a possibility, a thing that simply might happen, a potentiality is a certain mode of nonbeing that is eminent, a thing that is present but not actually existing in the present tense” (Muñoz, 2009, p. 9).

Both spaces allow the emergence of futuring through everyday social practices, but in different modes. While SoPs largely correspond to the manifold examples of “real utopian” spaces researched by sociologist Erik O. Wright (2010), SoPt.s correspond to more ephemeral utopian spaces such as those discussed by Muñoz. SoPs and SoPt.s develop transformative visioning and futuring in different ways: SoPs facilitate the exercise of critical experimentation and prefigurative doing and making fueled by backcasting imaginations of possible futures. SoPt.s facilitate the exercise of critical imagination and transformative gestures and performances fueled by concrete utopias and nourished by queer ephemeras from the past.

Both spaces facilitate belonging across difference and with difference, in different ways: SoPs network preexisting groups and communities transversally into cooperative archipelagos in specific localities and online social platforms. A SoP connects the “we” of existing collectives into new configurations, forging cooperation across difference at the intersections of various shared affinities.

SoPt.s sketch the silhouettes of potential collectives in emergent lines of encounters at temporary sites, forming translocal gatherings both online and offline. A SoPt does not focus on connecting existing collectives; instead, a “we” emerges in response to what the identities of collectives have obfuscated, and this “we” invites a disturbance in single or combined fields of oppression (such as race, nation, gender, sexuality, class, religion, species). A SoPt then “speaks to a ‘we’ that is ‘not yet conscious,’ the future society that is being invoked and addressed at the same moment. The ‘we’ […] describes what the collective and the larger social order could be, what it should be” (Muñoz, 2009, p. 20).

**Couverture: It’s ecstatic**

The process of queering convivial futures is “an invitation to desire differently, to desire more, to desire better” (Muñoz, 2009, p. 189), inviting to an “ecstatic temporality” (p. 186) that is stepping out of linear progressions in time and place. Its unfolding is facilitated through the combination of spaces of possibility and spaces of potentiality. With possibilities of queer...
Queer convivial futures

futuring and potentialities of queer futures, queering can and should become a critical complement to the ongoing projects of conviviality across the planet. The futures of conviviality as an art of living together on this planet would benefit from a queering process that unsettles certainties of “good life” while exposing relative privileges: How good will a specific “good life” be for whom? How to seek possibilities that open up other-wise “good lives” for whom else? Queering convivialism informs these questions by stimulating de-normalizing and de-naturalizing aesthetic experiences, then taking us to a utopian potential for other desires, deviating from the lines of path dependencies.

One of the benefits of the queering process is that it incites its partakers to “stay with the trouble” (Haraway, 2016) of the mess we live in. This means “staying with the unfolding” (as expressed by Arawana Hayashi in her practice) in its contradictory complexities instead of running to fix problems, running for appealing solutions. Staying with the unfolding instead of running for shortcuts will benefit multiple processes of doing: in theorizing, in describing, representing, analyzing, commenting, critiquing, cooperating, and in making.

Queering not only stays with the trouble. It also ventures into darker zones of shaming: Queering questions and learns by attentively mapping regions covered in darkness by dominant cultures (Jesse, 2015), and eventually turns shame into pride, other-wisely reclaiming spaces for future convivialities through reparative imaginings and actions.

References
Sacha Kagan