

# the Committee on Lesbian and Gay History

Fall 2008

CLGH

Volume 22, Issue 2

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## CLGH

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## Chair's Column Karen C. Krahulik

Greetings, friends. I can hardly believe three years have flown by so quickly. It seems like just yesterday I was sending Leisa Meyer my nomination to be the next CLGH chair. Now that I am stepping down, I do so with mixed feelings. I started my CLGH position at the same time that I resigned from my position as director of the Center for LGBT Life at Duke. I had always been engaged in LGBT activist work and I worried that my position at Brown would seem too far removed from this lifelong hobby. So, yes, I will miss holding the reigns for a group of scholars that work in some way or another on making visible the histories of lgbt life. At the same time, it has been three years since my book on Provincetown first appeared and I am eager to devote more time to my second book project. Perhaps the new leadership for the CLGH will still find ways for me to exercise my queer activist tendencies! Stay tuned.

All joking aside, I do hope you will consider the ballots in this issue carefully. You'll find a ballot for our next CLGH chair and I—personally and professionally—couldn't be more pleased. The candidate and I have known each other for a full decade and we worked closely together for several years in North Carolina. In stepping down I feel as though the vehicle for change is reducing its speed just slightly, asking me to hop off the highway without pulling over for a complete stop or rest. The CLGH is in the midst of several critical changes and I have complete confidence in how these will come to fruition. For example, the other ballot you will find asks you to vote on a new name for the CLGH. We have spent many, many years thinking this item through and it is time now for our members to give us guidance on the future title of our organization.

I'll sign off, finally, with an invitation to take part in this year's AHA events. Please see the AHA listings in this newsletter and consider attending the CLGH Saturday night reception and Saturday noon-time business meeting. The reception will feature a multimedia presentation by Sarah Schulman on the ACTUP Oral History Project and website. And at the business meeting we will discuss two items of importance: first, the new AHA-CLGH Task Force on LGBT matters that is just now taking shape; and, second, the CLGH's role in boycotting one of the host hotels at the AHA's meeting in 2010. I look forward to seeing you at our traditional slate of panels and I'll be sending out notices via email about additional socializing opportunities at venues in the neighborhood. Until then, my very best wishes.

## Statement—CLGH Chair Nominee

Ian K. Lekus

I am pleased to accept a nomination to serve as the next chair of the CLGH, and honored by the opportunity to advance the work of this organization that has been so professionally and personally supportive to me since the beginning of my academic career. Thanks to the work of our current and previous chairs, Board members, and other volunteers, we are in better position than ever to expand our advocacy on behalf of LGBTQ researchers, teachers, and other practitioners in the historical profession, at all career stages, and in and outside the university.

As Chair, I welcome the opportunity to coordinate CLGH's collaboration with the new AHA-sponsored Task Force on LGBTQ issues that will document and address anti-LGBTQ discrimination in the hiring, promotion, and tenure processes and elsewhere in the profession. Beyond that, I look forward to working with the CLGH membership and leadership to enhance our visible presence at the AHA annual meeting and other major events, to fundraise in support of our activities and awards, to more thoroughly manage and promote our publications and those of individual members, to deepen our connections with LGBTQ caucuses in other disciplines, and to solicit additional suggestions and feedback about our work.

To support our agenda, I will draw upon my experience in a broad range of leadership positions in and outside the academy. My most extensive service to the CLGH has come over the past three years, volunteering as Book Review Editor for the *CLGH Newsletter*. In that capacity, I have recruited a far larger pool of reviewers and substantially expanded our coverage of emerging scholarship, especially outside the Anglo-American world and from historically grounded scholars working in other disciplines. At Georgia, I spent three years on the Steering Committee of GLOBES, UGA's LGBTQ faculty/staff organization, while at Duke, I served for seven years on the University's Task Force on LGBT Matters. With the latter group, I helped lobby to create the Center for LGBT Life, worked on campus climate assessment projects, and organized to convince the University to extend domestic-partner benefits to graduate students in same-sex relationships. Once the Center was established, I designed and coordinated an LGBTQ oral history project under its auspices, recruiting and training students and volunteers to conduct and archive dozens of life histories of community members. Additionally, I served for three years on the Board of the Raleigh-Durham chapter of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), including two years as Chair. With GLSEN, I directed strategic planning for local implementation of the organization's national of fostering LGBTQ-affirming K-12 school communities, helped expand our Resource Library for parents and school personnel, represented GLSEN in the media and with our corporate partners' LGBTQ employee groups, and coordinated our grant-writing and direct mail fundraising efforts.

I submit these examples of my record of LGBTQ advocacy, all grounded in a social justice framework addressing a broad range of differences, and all conducted during my academic career, as evidence both of the administrative experience I will bring to CLGH and of my excitement at the opportunity to support the mission as your next Chair. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward greatly to working with you in this role for the next three years.

*Ballot on p. 21.*

## CLGH Fundraising Drive Report

Charles Upchurch

In April the CLGH conducted its first ever fundraising drive, in an effort to stave off a dues increase for graduate students and those with limited incomes. Just over eighty letters were sent out to the Life Members of the CLGH, the majority of whom are established scholars, asking if they would be willing to support this effort. The response was overwhelmingly positive, with over a third of those contacted contributing, and nearly all of the respondents donating \$100 or more. The CLGH raised \$3395 in this effort, more than meeting our goal.

Thanks to the generosity of the Life Members within our group, the CLGH will be able to continue the low \$5 annual membership rate for graduate students and those with limited incomes for at least the next three years.

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### COMMITTEE ON LESBIAN AND GAY HISTORY PRIZES--2009

**\*\*\*final announcement\*\*\***

The Committee on Lesbian and Gay History, an affiliated society of the American Historical Association, will award two prizes in 2009:

The John Boswell Prize for an outstanding book on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, and/or queer history published in English.  
(Odd-numbered years, covering previous two years.)

The Joan Nestle Undergraduate Prize for an outstanding paper on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, and/or queer history completed in English by an undergraduate student.  
(Odd-numbered years, covering previous two years.)

Materials may be submitted by students, faculty, authors, readers, editors, or publishers.  
Self-nominations are encouraged.

**Send one copy to each of the three members of the Prize Committee by 31 December 2008.**

Chair:

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## Committee on Lesbian and Gay History AHA 2009 Schedule

**Saturday, January 3**

**12:15-1:45 P.M.**

Hilton New York, Hilton Board Room.

*Business meeting*

**2:30-4:30 P.M.**

Hilton New York, Gramercy Suite B.

Session 1, sponsored by the AHA Professional Division, the AHA Committee on Minority Historians, the AHA Task Force on Disability, and the Coordinating Council for Women in History.

*Discrimination/ Harassment on the Job*

**2:30 -4:30 P.M.**

Hilton New York, Murray Hill Suite B.

Session 2, joint with The American Historical Association.

*The Politics of Love: Male Friendship in the Mediterranean, Britain, and America, 1500-1800*

**2:30 -4:30 P.M.**

Hilton New York, Petit Trianon.

Session 3, joint with The American Historical Association.

*Oral History, Memory, and Identity: Making the Connections*

**5:30 – 7:30 P.M.**

Hilton New York, Lincoln Suite.

*Reception—featuring Sarah Schulman and ACTUP Oral History Project*

**Sunday, January 4**

**9:00-11:00 A.M.**

Hilton New York, Murray Hill Suite B.

Session 4, joint with The American Historical Association.

*Sexuality and Psychiatric Liberalism in Twentieth Century Britain, Canada, and the United States*

**9:00-11:00 A.M.**

Sheraton New York, Empire Ballroom East.

Session 5, joint with The American Historical Association and the Conference on Latin American History.

*Connecting Religiosity and Sexuality in Colonial Mexico: Tension, Ambiguity, and Convergence in Archival Texts*

**Sunday, January 4**

**11:30 - 1:30 P.M.**

Hilton New York, Beekman Parlor.

Session 6, joint with The American Historical Association.

*Queer Tourism and Globalization: Charting Local and Global Effects*

**12:15-1:45 P.M.**

Hilton New York, Hilton Board Room.

*OutHistory.org advisory meeting*

**2:30-4:30 P.M.**

Sheraton New York, Riverside Suite.

Session 7, joint with The American Historical Association.

*Globalizing the Historiography of Sexuality: Critical Reflections on Issues of Epistemology, Genealogy, and Methodology*

**2:30-4:30 P.M.**

Sheraton New York, Madison Suite 3.

Session 8, joint with The American Society of Church History.

*Christianity and The History of Gay Rights: New Narratives*

**Monday, January 5**

**8:30-10:30 A.M.**

Hilton New York, Concourse B.

Session 9, joint with The American Historical Association.

*Queer Historiography*

**11:00 – 1:00 P.M.**

Hilton New York, Sutton Center.

Session 10, joint with The American Historical Association.

*Identities in Flight: Aviation's Impact on Nation, Gender, and Sexuality*

## OutHistory Launches a New Queer History Website

Lauren Gutterman

In October 2008 the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies (CLAGS) at CUNY celebrated the launch of OutHistory.org, the first freely accessible, comprehensive website focused on queer history!

OutHistory is pioneering in making reliable scholarship on LGBT history accessible on the Web to a larger and more varied audience than can be reached by academic publications. The site solicits new scholarly work and republishes out-of-print work. For example, a searchable copy of Barbara Grier's bibliography "The Lesbian in Literature" is available on the site, as are historical documents from Jonathan Ned Katz's *Gay American History* and *Gay/Lesbian Almanac*.

OutHistory welcomes content contributions to the site from any community members who have documents, data and source citations relevant to LGBT history. For example, OutHistory is presenting a colorful group of postcards from the early twentieth century picturing "Masculine Women and Feminine Men," artifacts collected by an avid community member. By allowing site users to post comments on each article, we hope to facilitate collaborations among users and encourage critical thinking and knowledge production in digitally innovative ways.

The site is unique as an online historical museum offering "exhibits" of featured content by scholar-curators. Present exhibits focus on lesbian history in the twentieth century, executions and legal cases in the American Colonial era, LGBT youth on campuses and in the mass media, the Pre-Gay Movement, and openly gay and lesbian elected officials. Several of these exhibits were curated by professors but researched and written by students; we hope these exhibits will serve as a model for teachers who want to use OutHistory in the classroom.

We will also develop the site's content by awarding two yearly OutHistory Fellowships of \$2,500 to support scholars in designing original exhibits for the site. This year's winners are Joey Plaster and Tristan Cabello. Mr. Plaster, a journalist and historian, will create an exhibit featuring over 50 interviews with residents of San Francisco's Polk Gulch neighborhood, home to some of the most underrepresented segments of the queer community since the late 1970s: the homeless, immigrants, seniors and poor transgendered women. Mr. Cabello, a doctoral candidate in the History Department at Northwestern University, will present an exhibit on the experiences of African American homosexuals in Bronzeville, Chicago from the Great Migration to the early days of the AIDS epidemic.

For more information or to volunteer content, expertise, or financial support, contact Lauren Gutterman, the Project Coordinator, at [outhistory@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:outhistory@gc.cuny.edu) or Jonathan Ned Katz, the Project Director, at [jnk123@mac.com](mailto:jnk123@mac.com).

If you are interested in getting involved with OutHistory we will be holding a board meeting at the AHA Conference on January 4th from 12:15-1:45 pm in the Hilton Board Room. We hope to see you there!



## Book Reviews

Joseph A. Massad, *Desiring Arabs* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007)

Review by Rudy Bleys, Independent Scholar

In *Desiring Arabs*, Joseph A. Massad provides us with an intellectual history of how the modern Arab world has been dealing with its own culture, heritage and modernity, and more specifically, with its own sexual ideologies and practices. These prove to be major signifiers of Western “othering discourses” toward the Arab world, and, as a result, of Arab discourses about the Arab “self” as well. The author aims in particular to show how modern Arab *Selbstdarstellung* — how their image and representation of “self” — is tied up with the critical reassessment of sexual desire during the Arab past, and especially with a repudiation of men’s love for boys, which was presumed to be common during the Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258). The centrality of this question in Arab identity discourses results from Orientalist discourse of Western signature ascribing certain sexual qualities to Arab and Muslim people. Massad claims that the Arab intelligentsia, while rejecting such projections and representations, remained tied to the very epistemological assumptions upon which they were based — a pattern that is perpetuated to this very day as Western discourses keep rearticulating a presumably fundamentally “other” (read: “inferior,” “backward”) Arab sexual and cultural identity, and Arab intellectuals feel obliged to either subscribe to or refute such notions.

Massad starts by describing how, in the eyes of Western observers, the Arab world was both “backward” and “decadent,” due in large part to Islam allegedly preventing the Arab world from progressing towards “modernity.” While positioning themselves against Orientalism, Arab intellectuals set about “explaining away certain ‘cultural’ phenomena identified as uncomplimentary either as unrepresentative of the ‘civilization’ of the Arabs or as foreign imports that corrupted a pure Arab ‘culture’; or as universal, in that they existed among Arabs as they did or do among Europeans and others” (5). The most striking aspect of their views is that they did not fundamentally question the Western concepts such as “culture” and “civilization,” according to Massad, who stresses how Arab intellectuals thus remained circumscribed within an essentially Eurocentric view. They rather uncritically adopted these terms, and subscribed to the “commensurate insertion [of these concepts] in a

social Darwinist idiom of ‘evolution,’ ‘progress,’ ‘advancement,’ ‘development,’ ‘degeneration,’ and most important, ‘decadence’ and ‘renaissance.’”[5].

They also subscribed to the Western discursive trope that evaluates civilizations and cultures in sexual terms, separating the “deviant” from the “natural.” In such a context, the label “deviant” is applied to societies, that differ from one’s own and that, as a result, are considered “inferior.” Building upon historians and critics such as Edward Said, Ann Laura Stoler, Kobena Mercer and (implicitly) this reviewer, Massad rightfully stresses the colonial and imperialist dimension of such race/sex analogies in nineteenth-century European thought, but adds to this story by convincingly arguing that the Arab intelligentsia itself reproduced this link between racial and sexual identities. It is a discursive dynamic that actually prevents a free and social-scientific debate on sexuality, even if the author does not claim this so explicitly.

In the first two chapters, Massad focuses on the modern re-writing — since the mid-nineteenth-century “Arab Renaissance” — of the history of Arab sexual civilization and culture from the pre-Islamic period to the present. Chapter Three chronicles how a Western universalizing discourse of gay rights, based upon particular notions of subjectivity and identity, puts pressure upon Arab countries to “modernize,” and thus gives a new impulse to various forms of postcolonial criticism. In Chapter Four, the focus gazes upon Islamist responses to the rise of “gay rights” discourse, while the final two chapters provide critical analysis of the representation of sexual desires in contemporary Arabic fiction.

1.

During the period before independence, much debate evolved around the “moral laxity” and lewdness (*mujun*) during the Abbasid caliphate, particularly around the medieval poet Abu Nuwas (762-c.812), whose *ghazal* or love poems for younger boys present themselves as a cause of embarrassment to Arab intellectuals, trying to uphold a “civilized” image of Arab peoples. Various strategies were deployed: some writers simply denied or obfuscated the quantitative and qualitative importance of these poems, while others stressed that they were no different from homoerotic literature in the West. Intellectuals such as Husayn refused to see Abu Nuwas’s poetry as a sign of Arab inferiority, nor of Arab cultural backwardness, but they nevertheless considered it advisable to hide this cultural heritage from younger

people in order to avoid emulation. A distinction was made between Nuwas's literary merits (which were valorized) and his sexual exploits (which were to be silenced). Other writers contextualized Nuwas's poetry as "foreign (read: Persian) import," or psychoanalytically, as the outcome of "arrested development," or through a Marxist lens, as typical of the decadence of a rich elite, that itself indulged in pederast practices yet hypocritically hid it from society. "His conduct (was) not anomalous (*shudhudh*) from the conduct of that group whose deviations were abundant then," Massad explains (91). Only the literary critic Adonis took a rather different stance. For him, Nuwas embodied a "revolutionary," independent spirit and thus a modern one, that ought to be appreciated as positive. Significantly, however, he focused on the poet's drinking of wine while leaving his love for younger boys in the dark. In the eyes of Adonis, independence of spirit clearly did not include the realm of intergenerational all-male sex.

2.

Decolonization accelerated intellectual reflection about Arab identity, which was increasingly seen within the context of nationalist, postcolonial politics. Yet, here too Arab writers and commentators remained closed tied to Western notions of "civilization" and "modernity." Thus, for example, Salah al-Din al-Munajjid, a pioneer of history of sexuality and a great advocate of sexual education, deployed a historical narrative as part of a social critique. But he did so primarily to contrast the sexual excesses and "deviance" of earlier times with the extreme repression of sexuality in contemporary times. Believing that neither repression nor moral laxity was desirable, al-Munajjid pled instead for an enlightened program of sexual education. This would protect youth from deviant practices on the one hand, and from unnecessary feelings of guilt on the other. The keywords for a sound sexual education program were to be "moderation" and "normality." Similarly, Salamah Musa claimed that the separation of boys and girls, common in Arab culture, provided fertile soil for sexual deviances such as masturbation and homosexuality. He described the medieval Arab past as proof of his thesis, and called for the social mingling of boys and girls as the best guarantee to avoid the pitfalls of a homosocially organized society.

Other nationalist discourses were more idealistic, however, and aimed at purging the Arab past of all compromising aspects. Authors like 'Abd al-Latif Shararah and Sadiq Jalal al-'Azm considered Udhri poetry to be of a highly spiritual level and thus as

more valuable than Nuwas's *ghazal* poetry about boys – a vision that reveals a great deal of animosity towards the body and a desire to safeguard the nation against the seduction of sex. A similar strain of *Körperfeindlichkeit* is present also in the writings of the Islamist Sayyid Qutb, who portrayed American culture as obsessed with sex and ridden with venereal disease.

Massad describes how the various Arab nationalist discourses above were increasingly questioned in the wake of the defeat in the Arab-Israeli War of 1967, replaced instead by a renewed Orientalist discourse about Arab backwardness. Thus Abdelwahab Boudhiba, Nawal al-Sa'dawi, and Fatima Mernissi who despite their differences shared a common perception of Arab sexuality as a timeless reality, as immersed in "tradition" and as highly hypocritical. From this perspective, Boudhiba criticized the contrast between a largely normative Islamic model on the one hand, and the reality of sexual practices on the other. He explained this hypocrisy as the outcome of an obsession with cleanliness or, put differently, as an anal-focused "morality of the sphincter" (quoted, 149).

3.

Three elements – the rise of Islamism, international gay rights campaigning, and AIDS – provide a new context for the intellectual questioning of Arab identity and of the place of sexuality within Arab societies. Massad reveals himself as committed to the fate of homosexually active men and women in the Arab world, yet is also highly critical of the global campaign for gay rights, which he considers counterproductive in that it advocates a "Western" model of gay emancipation and, as a result, provokes intolerant reactions within the Arab world. Initiatives by the International Lesbian and Gay Association and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Committee – which Massad derogatorily calls "Gay International" – are "assimilationist" as they tend to "impose" Western notions of sexual subjectivity and identity upon societies, such as Arab societies, that have very different sexual cultures. The so-called Gay International "produces homosexuals where they do not exist, [and] represses same-sex desires and practices that refuse to be assimilated into this sexual epistemology" (163). Massad thus takes a somewhat provocative position in regard to the presumed goals of the campaign for gay rights, stressing that "it is precisely this perceived instability in the desires of Arab and Muslim men that the Gay International seeks to stabilize, as their polymorphousness con-

founds gay (and straight) sexual epistemology” (164).

Such criticism isn't merely academic for Massad, who emphasizes how the campaigning for gay rights in the Arab world has been leading to an increasingly repressive policy against men who have sex with men. The Egyptian story of “homosexual men” being arrested during a boat party is revealing, and Massad argues that

“It is upper- and middle-class Westernized men who seek publicity for their newly acquired sexual identities, who are able to exit Egypt, while those poorer members of society who do not possess the choice of exit remain to bear the brunt of the state's repression and that of the religious authorities, which was precipitated to begin with by those who possess social and class power” (370).

Here, Massad's book is very helpful for Western scholars and activists alike, who often have a difficult time imagining different configurations of religious, cultural, national, and sexual politics. This is especially the case when Islamist groups grow in power and manage to influence even secularized states such as Egypt. The Foucauldian “incitement to discourse,” implied within the Western call to come out, also works in an oppositional way in the Arab world where sexual practices remained unspoken of for centuries. It is those fundamentalist Islamist groups that become more explicitly intolerant in regard to homosexual behaviour – an unintended but real side effect that is detrimental first and foremost to poorer men who have sex with men, whose local sexual cultures and configurations are being destroyed.

Chapter Three, where Massad takes position against the Gay International, was a lecture, originally published in *Public Culture*, and gave rise to criticism from various Western and Arab diaspora critics and commentators, accusing him of a false search for Arab “authenticity.” Time will tell if, in the end, the negative effects of the international campaigning will have outweighed the positive ones or vice-versa, but I think there is a lot to be said for Massad's critical view of a too-dogmatic, too-universalist approach that abstracts from local context – especially (in view of rising fundamentalisms) from those local political contexts where issues of sexuality are being mobilized within wider postcolonial frameworks of globalization and global media.

Indeed, the intolerant positions towards matters of sexuality, pushed forward by Islamists (such as Muhammad Jalal Kishk, Nabil al-Tawil, Fa'iz al-Haj, Ali al-Barr, and 'Abd al-Hamid al Oudah) are not only provoked by what Massad calls the Gay International, but also by a more widespread anger and frustration at Western economic domination, at Western cultural imperialism and, finally also, by the AIDS pandemic. In the eyes of Islamists, as of Christian fundamentalists, AIDS is indeed seen as “divine punishment” for extramarital sex, prostitution, and homosexuality, as well as a disease that also undermines the social body of the Arab nations. While critical of secular state legislation, they plea for the implementation of Shar'ia law as well as for a new, more regulatory role for ideological institutions (e.g., schools, media, cultural venues) and for increasing the repressive power of the instruments of the state (e.g., law, police). Only such measures can save the Arab world from civilizational decline – marking current debates as yet another moment where the public debate on sexuality is being inscribed within the wider discourse of national and cultural identity.

4.

The highly ideological signature of such writings makes one wonder if there are other sources that are perhaps more revealing of the reality of sexual (homosexual or otherwise) practices in the Arab world. Massad thus turns to the fiction of Naghib Mahfouz, Sun'allah Ibrahim, Isma'il Waliy al-Din, Muhammed Shukri (known in the West as Mohammed Choukri), Jamal al-Gitani, Hanan al-Shaykh, Sad'allah Wannus, and, finally, 'Ala'-al-Aswani. To a degree, the novels of these writers do portray the realities of sexual life in the Arab world. Instructive, for example, is a comparison of Naghib Mahfouz's *Middaq Alley* (1947), describing a world where working-class homosexual relations are presented as unproblematic as long as they are not publicly professed, and his later work, *Sugar Street* (1957), portraying an altogether different reality of homosexuality seen by the novel's character involved as a matter of diseased identity. The novel “accounts for the transformation of same-sex attraction from one of many existing and tolerated deviances among the lower middle classes and the poor in society into a medicalized condition among the rich and the upwardly mobile” (288).

But novels often also provide a platform for staging homosexuality as a signifier of cultural or national decline. This is the case in Waliy al-Din's story of an encounter between a poorer young man, working in a bathhouse, and a middle-class customer who



invites the boy to his house and wants to be penetrated by him. This was not the customary pattern in Arab society: usually, the rich man fucks the poor boy. But the novelist presents the role reversal as a sign of national decline after the Arab-Israeli War. Al-Gitani's fiction likewise posits homosexuality as a metaphor for national decline and anarchy during the Nasirist regime. The harshness and severity of the security state has made Arab men into impotents, with the elite allowing themselves to be buggered by working-class men. Massad argues that, "These descriptions do not only or entirely describe actual practices as much as function as symbolic of wider political trends –homosexuality here is a metaphor more than anything else, standing in for other abominations and unnameable forces of anarchy infiltrating the social body and transforming the order of things" (324). Fiction, according to Massad, is the "central (if not necessarily the most popular) forum through which matters of sexual desire and its connections to civilisation and its antonyms are negotiated and how matters political and economic are allegorised through appeals to the sexual" (416).

5.

It is a great contribution of Joseph A. Massad to have gathered and analyzed so many Arab sources on sexuality that are usually inaccessible to Western and other scholars who do not read Arabic. His contextualization of these sources within the wider framework of colonial, postcolonial, nationalist and Islamist discursivity on Arab identity, culture, civilisation and modernity is most instructive, and introduces the reader to a complex intellectual landscape that until now remained virtually unknown in the West. As I previously pointed out, the material and analysis provided by Massad should not be seen as obstructing the emancipatory struggle of men having sex with men in these countries. It is better, I think, to welcome *Desiring Arabs* as intelligence information, allowing for the development of a more successful local and global strategy. It should help LGBT activists also to better assess the complexity of Arab sexuality and to prevent a backlash in terms of intolerant and repressive discourse (i.e., hate speech), surveillance, and legislation. The firm political stance against a gay rights approach, deployed in Chapter Three in particular, does leave the reader wondering, however, if Massad can indeed advise us all on how to proceed wisely indeed when it comes to untangling the problem of social stigmatization of homosexually active men, whether gay-identified or not. Evidently, his book is a historical and critical study in the first place and not a political treatise. So

perhaps this book did not lend itself to such a questioning. But I, and surely many others, are looking forward to a study in the future where the outlines are being drawn of an incitement to discourse that, as the author declares in book's conclusion, "need not take the forms deployed by Islamism and the Gay International" (417). But all this hardly diminishes the unmistakable merits of Massad's study, and from now onwards, it will be a whole lot easier to see beyond the Orientalist horizon that kept limiting not only Western but also Arab views of Arab (homo-)sexuality.

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Heather Love, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007).

Reviewed by Julian B. Carter, California College of the Arts

Heather Love's *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* is a beautifully crafted, intensely evocative literary study of considerable historical value. The book explores loss, regret, attachment to the past, refusal, and suffering in the nineteenth and twentieth century Anglophone "tradition of queer experience and representation" (4). Love identifies these various forms of sadness as variations in a larger, characteristically queer cultural structure of feeling she calls "backwardness." Authors as different as Walter Pater, Willa Cather, Radclyffe Hall, and Sylvia Townsend Warner all record this structure of feeling, she shows, and in each author's work it can be understood as a response to the "coming of modern homosexuality" (4). Love argues that "backwardness" in queer modernist texts reflects the fact that the history of homosexuality's emergence as possible grounds for identity is inseparable from the history of homophobia. Love, following Ann Cvetkovich, calls her sources an "archive of feeling": they constitute a record of the "corporeal and psychic costs" of "social exclusion and the historical 'impossibility' of same-sex desire" (4).

The "queer history" in *Feeling Backward* is a history of the present. Love does not study the past "for its own sake," but for insight into the way that critical response to the literary/historical record of queer misery both forges and documents an affective connection with the past. This reflexive tendency in Love's work mirrors the "backwardness" she traces through her sources. Love solicits her readers to join

her sources in turning toward the past, but simultaneously asks that we remain fully alert to the critical and affective situation in which our turning takes place. Always in touch with the difference between past and present, but also to the impossibility of knowing the past except from our position in the present, Love uses feelings about the past as the evidence with which to knit historical sources and contemporary criticism together.

This book will be most easily accessible to scholars comfortable with literary interpretation. Nonetheless, more historically inclined readers should find considerable value in the way that Love's attention to affect shifts the terms of familiar historical debates about the emergence of modern homosexual identity. For some time now, we historians have been arguing about whether the historical record supports claims for gay or lesbian existence *avant le lettre*. Professional opinion on both sides of this argument has crystallized without, to my mind, doing much to deepen our comprehension of queer experience in the past. Love's focus on affect allows her to sidestep this debate, and the payoff in insight is tremendous. Instead of trying to establish what identity-categories best describe an ambiguous figure like Walter Pater, she details what Pater's work can show us about the emotional experience of being identified as a socio-sexual deviant before the late 19th century classification of "the homosexual." Rather than entering old arguments about the nature and causes of the transition from romantic friendship to lesbianism as the dominant model for female intimacy, she explores how attention to Willa Cather pushes us to consider the complex emotional charge of same-sex friendship in both the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Where other critics have either dismissed or attempted to resolve the terrible sadness of *The Well of Loneliness*, Love urges us to consider Hall's work as a representation of what it felt like to bear a "spoiled identity" in the 1920s. Finally, Love's chapter on Sylvia Townsend Warner suspends discussion of whether Warner was more interested in class politics or in same-sex love, suggesting instead that Warner's fiction allows us a glimpse of how radicals could imagine the revolutionary dimensions of same-sex love before the advent of Gay Liberation. Love's creative engagement with these significant historical topics makes *Feeling Backward* essential reading for lesbian/gay/queer historians, especially those who engage lesbian identity and representation.

The "politics of queer history" Love engages are "backward" in their attachment to the past but progressive in their intent. While Love insists that we remember a queer past full of loss, suffering, and melancholy, she in no way resuscitates the homophobic ideology that would install sadness as the transhistorical essence of homosexual experience. Instead, she argues for the legitimacy of cultural perspectives informed by the experience of being defined as a failure. *Feeling Backward* provides a stellar account of queer participation in the longstanding representational tradition where same-sex desire is saturated with a sadness that reflects the inherent impossibility of its full satisfaction. The toxicity of that representational tradition, of course, is why the term "gay" carried such a positive charge to the liberationists who founded the field of lesbian/gay/queer history. Love's historiographic aim in this book is to resist the current normalizing perspective that interprets queer unhappiness as something we have left behind in the bad old days, or, if it has somehow survived, as a shameful symptom of our vulnerable to ideology ("internalized homophobia"). If we who live now have not always felt gay, she says, we should take that experience seriously as a sign that social trauma and injustice persist despite the increasing normalization of some forms of homosexuality. "Given this state of affairs," she concludes, "the question really is not whether feelings such as grief, regret, and despair have a place in transformative politics: it would in fact be impossible to imagine transformative politics without these feelings" (163).

*Feeling Backward* is brilliantly successful at the level of the individual chapters. "Spoiled Identity," Love's discussion of *The Well of Loneliness*, deserves special mention for the perfect balance it strikes between close attention to crucial passages in the original text, thorough exploration of critical response to Hall's work, and original thought about the relationship between these two sets of sources. This chapter is among the best pieces of critical historiography I have ever read. Each of the other chapters contains sections of this extremely high caliber. There are, however, some weak points in the book's overall design. The most disappointing is Love's lack of sustained engagement with the racial dimensions of "backwardness." Late nineteenth and early twentieth century constructions of race relied heavily on images of temporal progress and delay that situated queers as both primitive and degenerate. Thus the "aesthetic strategies of modernity's others" necessarily must have included significant racial, as well as gender and sexual, meanings (6), but Love leaves

these—and the affect associated with them—for other scholars to pursue. Given the centrality of primitivist discourse to the construction of homosexuality in exactly the era on which Love focuses, an analysis of the “coming of the modern homosexuality” that does not incorporate any critical attention to race is significantly flawed in its basic premise.

The other weakness in the book’s overall plan is that Love situates her historiographical discussions almost exclusively in relation to literary criticism. The history of lesbian and gay history therefore can be difficult to recognize in Love’s descriptions of the field, as when she asserts that “The cultures of same-sex love that were central to the postliberation historical imagination were notably free of homophobia as we know it” (105), or that “early” lesbian and gay studies tended “to ignore the difficulties of the past in order to construct a positive history” (18). These characterizations are empirically dubious. To take but one example, Jonathan Ned Katz’s 1976 *Gay American History*, the first book-length investigation of the queer past, offered over a thousand pages of details about the many forms of hatred and violence queer people sustained across four centuries. Other pioneer researchers in the field, such as Allan Bérubé, Estelle Freedman, and Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy, spent many years collecting and interpreting evidence of the precise nature of “the difficulties of the past.” Had Love engaged a more interdisciplinary body of secondary literature, her book would find easier access to its natural constituency, the broad interdisciplinary community of gay/lesbian/queer historians.

Despite these weaknesses, Heather Love’s first book is a really remarkable demonstration of compassionate and careful engagement with the literary record of the queer past. I strongly recommend *Feeling Backward* as an inspiring, revealing, and often moving exploration of queer historical emotion. It is especially suitable for graduate seminars in gay/lesbian/queer history, where the strengths and limitations of an affective historical practice can be examined in greater detail than is appropriate here. *Feeling Backward* conclusively demonstrates the fruitfulness of affective history as an interpretative method and sets a high standard for its execution.

Elizabeth Povinelli, *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006)

Reviewed by Andrea Robertson Cremer, Macalester College

Over the last decade, a variety of academic disciplines have produced monographs and anthologies that attempt to explore and/or explain the relationship of the material body to the neoliberal state. One of the most path-breaking contributions to this literature remains Judith Butler’s *Bodies that Matter*, in which she responded to criticisms of neglect of the material flesh, and its very real and pivotal role in constructions of cultural and political realities, in her earlier text *Gender Trouble*. In *Bodies That Matter*, Butler asserted that a presumption that if material bodies are “constructed,” then this assumption “demands a rethinking of the meaning of construction itself.”<sup>1</sup> Though focused primarily on the relationship of such constructions to the central problems raised originally in *Gender Trouble*, Butler’s work inspired the production of diverse attempts to interrogate the relationship of the material body to the production of self, state, and society.

With the arrival of anthropologist Elizabeth Povinelli’s text, *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy Genealogy, and Carnality*, it appears that a new approach to such studies might be emerging. Citing her interest in an exploration of relationship between the flesh and its governing institutions, the author breaks away from most other studies by specifically attempting to avoid what she views as a stifling paradigm, that itself seems to govern the ability of scholars to approach her intended topic. This paradigm is the “referent of liberalism,” which Povinelli posits can never enjoy a singular, accepted definition, but instead is “phantom-like,” a “moving target” that was created and is in constant states of recreation (1, 13).

Building upon this fluid ideology of liberalism and, to use the author’s term, a “liberal diaspora,” Povinelli is able to move into the substance of her text: a close reading and careful interrogation of the interactions of liberal sites and the carnal (18). *Empire of Love* contests what Povinelli views as prescribed roles of the flesh in scholarship. Bodies as related to the liberal state have been viewed as acted upon and inscribed with social norms; the flesh remains subject and the recipient of diverse subjectivities. In contrast, Povinelli views the flesh as dynamic, active,



and reactive. Just as liberalism must be approached as fluid and phantasmagorical, so the flesh equally constructs, challenges, and breaks down those categories into which it has been negotiated within the liberal diaspora.

To illustrate her theory of the ever-enmeshed actions/reactions of liberalism and material bodies, Povinelli moves between analyses of two liberal settler colonies: the indigenous community of Belyuen, Australia and radical faerie communities in the United States. The seemingly stark economic, geographic, cultural, and political differences between these two juxtaposed social collectivities is jarring initially, but just as the distance between the two sites of examination seems too great, they instead reveal the seamlessness and quality and remarkable potential of Povinelli's study. Readers expecting an ethnographic analysis and comparison of these two sites should look elsewhere. *Empire of Love* is not a comparative anthropological study; rather, the two communities' central role is to ground the "theoretical reflection" that Povinelli has offered (1).

Weaving her analysis back and forth from Belyuen to the U.S., Povinelli offers a thick description of encounters with her kin: the husbands, brothers, and extended family into which she has been welcome over many years within the aboriginal encounters, but also to kin in the United States, friends and lovers in familiar major urban centers. She also describes the relationship of her flesh to instruments of the state: medical, legal, spiritual, and academic. On the surface, such encounters might appear non-intimate, but as Povinelli reflects upon them, such spaces become vehicles of an intimate event between self and state by virtue of the presence of flesh and carnality in such spaces. In one instance, Western voyeurism of infected flesh, the contrast of indigenous and Western attempts to "correct" putrid flesh, and Povinelli's own silences in the face of an invasion of the intimacy of her carnal self, all combine to create a complex and compelling vision of the sticky web that is relationship of the liberal diaspora to carnal self (58-63).

The author shares with reader diverse "intimate events," a phrase she defines as "the way in which the event of normative love is formed at the intersection and crisis of the autological subject and genealogical society," as her own body travels back and forth between the spaces her flesh inhabits and the social roles she takes on in each geographic and cultural site (4). The insistent presence of Povinelli's

carnal self remains central to her study in the first two sections of her text "Rotting Flesh" and "Spiritual Freedom, Cultural Copyright."

In "Rotting Flesh," the dramatic presence of Povinelli's own wound makes the role of the material body and its sociality urgent. This chapter focuses upon the meanings of self and flesh as each interacts with and is intruded upon by the liberal state, as well as the way in which such meetings reveal layers of sociality, as well as issues of legitimation and neglect of normative and marginal societies in discourses of public health. This relationship plays out with more subtlety, but is no less compelling, in "Spiritual Freedom, Cultural Copyright." The narrative of this section pivots around the theme of a journey. While the author describes the journeys of objects that hold spiritual significance for a variety of characters in her narrative, the key journey that holds this analysis together is Povinelli's own. She becomes the bearer of spiritual lore and practice between the radical faerie and indigenous communities, a role she is able to maintain because of her friendship and kinship ties in both worlds. By examining ritual practices in radical faerie communities, Povinelli interrogates disciplinary discourses in what she terms an "experimental social world" (100). The examples Povinelli provides reveal the frequent referent for disciplinary action amongst radical faeries is that of "authenticity." In several cases, the anthropologist is able to name words or deeds as authentic or inauthentic with relation to indigenous spirituality, which immediately produces a disciplinary response within the radical faerie community. Bodies disciplined for lack of authenticity in radical faeries' ritual recreation reveal its desired genealogical link to indigenous spiritual practice. While treating with respect the radical faeries' aspiration to this link, Povinelli does not neglect the treacherous ground of this discourse and she takes care to address its potential violence against indigenous cultural and political autonomy (118-121).

To bring together the overarching themes of *Empire of Love*, "The Intimate Event and Genealogical Society" returns to an analysis of legal and cultural discourses that might seem more familiar in narrative and content to most readers. Explicating a line of public discourse about love as simultaneously intimate, social, and political, Povinelli argues that the language of genealogy itself has functioned to elide the complex and vibrant aspects of kinship, sociality, and carnal relations in attempt to produce cultural hegemony for Western claims to authority regarding



such issues. Future analyses of intimacy, the body, and liberalism, which hope to avoid the reification of this hegemony, must strive to avoid reproducing the “dialectic of intimate event and genealogical society” (230).

*Empire of Love* challenges the language and categories deployed in analyses of the body, intimacy, and the liberal state. Insightful connections that Povinelli aptly draws between two communities, which seem impossibly disparate at first, reveal the potential of the analytical model she has begun to explore. Scholars hoping to investigate similar topics would do well to ponder Elizabeth Povinelli’s text, whether as a means to produce further theoretical reflections or as a framework upon which more nuanced and provocative historical, anthropological, and literary studies may be built.

<sup>1</sup>Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter* (New York: Routledge, 1993), xi.

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Martin Meeker, *Contacts Desired: Gay and Lesbian Communications and Community, 1940s-1970s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

Reviewed by Vicki Eaklor, Alfred University

The recent death of Daughters of Bilitis founder Del Martin on August 27, 2008 reminded us all not only what we owe to pre-Stonewall activists, but also that those pioneers of our current movements are aging and passing from the scene. How much more important, then, it is to have books like *Contacts Desired* that offer a detailed and nuanced account of post-World War II gay and lesbian efforts at establishing communication networks. Meeker’s book, awarded the CLGH 2007 John Boswell Prize for the outstanding book on LGBTQ history published in English in the previous two years, is well deserving of the honor and merits a careful reading.

*Contacts Desired* derives its title from the abbreviation “C. D.” that appeared in ads in the *Hobby Directory* of the late forties, one of many venues through which “personal and informal sexual communication networks were created in the public sphere,” and that, Meeker argues, laid the foundation for community formation and ultimately a more public (or publicly recognized) presence (23). He takes us, in three sections, from the formation of networks in the 1950s, through the intersection of mass media and homosexual communities in the 1960s, to what he

calls the “do-it-yourself ethic” of gay/lesbian liberation as the 1970s opens. The bulk of the attention is thus directed at the crucial era of homophile organizing, which is credited here as more radical and innovative than often portrayed. Furthermore, because of his emphasis upon print and mass media, Meeker’s turning point is 1964, not 1969.

The first two chapters focus on the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis, respectively, and provide not only a thorough account of the networks each established, especially through print, but also an analysis of their similarities and differences and the role of each in “smashing the conspiracy of silence” (59). Although few CLGH members will find much of the information entirely new, Meeker’s emphasis on the link between print communication networks and an “imagined community” based on a gay/lesbian identity sheds new and important light on a familiar story, and adds to the growing literature that has reclaimed the pre-Stonewall years for a younger audience. Even more intriguing is the detailed account of the *Life* magazine article, “Homosexuality in America,” dated June 26, 1964, which offered up written and photographic images of homosexuals to “mainstream” America in the most mainstream of publications. Devoting an entire chapter to the *Life* treatment, Meeker provides a model case study that combines analyses of text, photography, urban geography, identity, and the erosion of the public/private division. About the photography session at San Francisco’s Tool Box bar, Meeker notes, “the public culture of the respectable mass media and the private world of a gay bar met in this moment where the gay world was literally giving up its privacy in exchange for mass publicity” (161). This was a key dilemma for activists, and the choice of a public presence was neither consistent nor automatic. Nevertheless, through the combination of mass media in one arena and individuals seeking contacts in another, writes Meeker, “a massive realignment of homosexual networks of communication and connection occurred with far-reaching implications” (184). Among those implications were the increasing importance of both homophile organizations and the cities—San Francisco and Los Angeles among others—in serving as hubs of “a vast sexual communication network” (188). In the book’s last section, innovations like bar directories, travel guides, and lesbian-feminist publishing bring the story into the mid-seventies, and full circle, in terms of gay- or lesbian-controlled print media similar to its forbears but now in an age of greater visibility and potential circulation. Finally, the epilogue, “The

Study of Sexuality in the Internet Age,” is a summary but much more: a refreshingly self-conscious but clear consideration of such issues as the role of media and the dynamics of history itself.

One of the book’s many strengths is its equal attention to male and female organizations, communities, and activities. In fact, among the strongest explanatory passages are those concerning the larger context of feminism (especially in Chapter Six). At the same time, it was a little surprising not to find more analysis of gender in an otherwise impressively insightful book. That is, differences between the decisions men and women made at times are described well, but the reasons for those differences, likely based in their respective place in the gender order, are not really explained. (Another very minor complaint in this category is the relative lack of attention to *Lesbian Connection*, simply because I was hoping for more about its contributions in this area).

The book has many other strengths, including interviews with forty-one informants as a basis for, and not just supplement to, traditional research into print sources (though since the number of print sources themselves is vast and there is no bibliography, a list of the primary print sources would have made the book even more useful). The use of case studies, central to the overall treatment, is very effective, with the *Life* example just one of many that enlivens the book. Especially important is the way in which Meeker allows readers to appreciate events in their own context by providing the history to do so, and by reminding us that we too often see pre-1970 events with post-liberationist eyes.

*Contacts Desired* should be read by anyone seriously interested in LGBTQ history, since that history is so much more than the quest for civil rights. In addition, this is the rare book that crosses several academic areas in an accessible manner to readers in each field; certainly anyone studying urban life, mass media, community formation and imagined communities, or the presumed divide between public and private worlds will find something to consider. One can only hope this will be but one of many future studies of this kind, filling in the potholes our history while paving the way to more interdisciplinary work.

Louis Crompton, *Homosexuality and Civilization* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003)

Reviewed by Nikolai Endres, Western Kentucky University

Louis Crompton, professor emeritus of English at the University of Nebraska, is well known for his pioneering essay, “Gay Genocide: From Leviticus to Hitler,” and his book, *Byron and Greek Love: Homophobia in Nineteenth-Century England*. In 2003, he published his monumental *Homosexuality and Civilization*. No doubt, a book with such a title sounds hubristic, and Crompton does by no means cover all of “civilization.” Asia, apart from China and Japan, remains spotty, especially Hindu culture. (Crompton curiously explains this absence based on a lack of research, but isn’t that what a new book is supposed to contribute?) Significant parts of Africa and the Americas are missing as well, and the volume strangely concludes in 1810.

In his preface, Crompton dismisses the standard account of sexuality as constructed. Pre-19th-century “sodomites,” he claims, were “human beings with whom the modern gay man may claim brotherhood and the modern lesbian recognize as sisters. To divide history in two in 1869 at the moment when the word ‘homosexual’ was coined is to deny this bond. To adopt Michel Foucault’s view that the homosexual did not exist ‘as a person’ until this time is to reject a rich and terrible past” (xiv; see also 174-75). This sounds naïve to scholars, but clearly Crompton is writing for an audience less steeped in the proliferating field of queer studies. Therefore, in my review, I am going to focus on the book’s intention of general overview.

Crompton begins with “Early Greece,” where he turns to Homer’s *Iliad* (were Achilles and Patroclus a couple?) and Sappho. In the chapter on Judea, Crompton reviews the Old Testament sources dealing with homosexual activity, noticing that much remains unclear and controversial. In “Classical Greece,” Plato features prominently: “Plato’s ideal lovers remain palpitatingly desirous of each other but unremittingly chaste” (55), but surely the arts of love are a bit more complicated. I find several problems here: “We know that many Greeks had relations with both women and boys. But Pausanias clearly identifies another class of man – a class who are exclusively devoted to their own sex, approximating the modern conception of the ‘homosexual’” (57). But that is

not what Pausanias is saying. He does imagine that some lovers remain in a meaningful and life-long relationship (Pausanias' attachment to Agathon celebrates its tenth anniversary at the moment of the *Symposium*), but how is all this supposed to relate to sexual orientation as we understand it? Crompton could have made a stronger case for homosexuality as "natural" or inborn by referring to Aristophanes' myth of soul-mates. Unfortunately, Crompton also terms Socrates' speech as the *Symposium's* "conclusion." Giving the final symposiast his due respect would have, I suspect, left Alcibiades more palpatingly desirous of Socrates and less unremittingly chaste.

When comparing Rome to Greece, Crompton rightly notes that *paiderastia* never enjoyed the same cultural status because of the Roman emphasis on empire. In "Christians and Pagans," Crompton wonders why Jesus himself is silent on homosexuality and whether he might have felt attracted to his disciples; in any case, the unequivocal condemnation of homosexuality dates back to the Pauline epistles. Theodosius and Justinian eventually rejected homosexuality/effeminacy as offending Roman traditions. Here an edict of 342 has attracted wide disagreement for its translation of "cum vir nubit," which John Boswell (in the path-breaking *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*) reads as a form of gay marriage, but *nubere* is probably just a euphemism for sexual intercourse. Regardless of its exact meaning, this *Lex cum vir* would later be regularly invoked in justifying the death penalty for gay people.

In "Darkness Descends," Crompton stresses, contra Boswell, the hostility of the Visigoths (early Christian Spaniards), who issued the first Germanic law against homosexuality, and contrasts it with the leniency of Spain's Islamic conquerors. Arab treatises on same-sex love even contain "a vein of romanticism" (162). In "The Medieval World," Crompton scrupulously relates the persecution of the Templars on concocted charges of sodomy coupled with heresy. With meticulous detail, he then surveys legal documents, including those pertaining to lesbianism, which in some cases stipulated the loss of a woman's "member." Grotesque as this sounds, Crompton fails to wonder whether, in the popular imagination, lesbians could have been perceived as having a penis or at least a prodigiously enlarged clitoris (for a mythological reference, see Phaedrus, *Fables* 4.16).

Imperial China follows. Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism showed little concern with homosexuality, which was prevalent among emperors, courtiers, and even the lower orders. In "Italy in the Renaissance," Crompton dismisses the cliché that the Renaissance entailed a new openness toward same-sex activity; on the contrary, in the ceremonial heart of Venice and now a favorite tourist haunt, "more homosexuals died on this spot than anywhere else in Europe before Hitler" (248). He next chronicles the terror in "Spain and the Inquisition," where medical attention to diarrhea could send one to the stake and where mutual masturbation could banish one to the galleys. According to "France from Calvin to Louis XIV," Protestant countries persecuted homosexuals even more rabidly, yet paradoxically, at the beginning of the 17th century, half of Europe was governed by "sodomitical" monarchs. In "England from the Reformation to William III," Crompton asserts that sodomy was viewed as "ineffably alien, bizarre, diabolical, and, above all, un-British" (362), but that could be said of a lot of other countries; in France, for example, homosexuality came to be known as *le vice anglais*.

For pre-Meiji Japan, Crompton establishes how *nanshoku* ("love of males") became institutionalized among the country's religious and military leaders (the Samurai code) on a scope rivaling classical Athens. In "Patterns of Persecution," he singles out the Netherlands, a country with a reputation for great tolerance. In 1730, a veritable witch hunt of gay people resulted in about 250 trials, over 100 exiles, and at least 75 executions. "Sapphic Lovers" turns to the legal and religious difficulties of dealing with lesbians, while once again lesbian desire (or allegations thereof) reached the highest levels: Queen Anne and the ill-starred Marie Antoinette. The final chapter, "The Enlightenment," commemorates the decriminalization of sodomy in France in 1791, with England lagging far behind.

Crompton's conclusion makes us pause:

to look back on the history of homosexuality in the West is to view a kaleidoscope of horrors: Justinian's castrated bishops; the dangling corpses of Almería; the burning of the 'married' couples in Renaissance Rome; the priests starved to death in cages in Venice's Saint Mark's Square; women burned, hanged, or beheaded on the charge of lesbianism; men tortured and burned by the Spanish Inquisition; Indians savaged



by Balboa's mastiffs or burned in Peru; the deaths at the quemadero in Mexico City; the men and boys of Faan; and the scores of men and adolescents hanged in Georgian England. All these atrocities were committed with the certainty that they were the will of God, necessary to stave off the kind of disaster that had overwhelmed the Cities of the Plain. (539)

But the story of homosexuality and civilization is also about heroism (and I really would have liked to see more of that), about what gay and lesbian priests and princesses, poets and paupers have achieved against all odds. Crompton cannot fathom a couple like Harmodius and Aristogeiton for our time: "In the modern world the expression 'homosexual hero' would strike most people as an oxymoron" (31). Maybe not. Mark Bingham, a passenger on United Airlines Flight 93 that crashed in Pennsylvania, has become a gay 9/11-hero. If Crompton had continued until the 21st century, I feel we would have had a more balanced picture.

The tome ends with a massive bibliography, and the more than one hundred illustrations complement the text nicely. Every time I teach "Gay and Lesbian Literature," I put it on reserve as a reference-work.

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Michael J. Rosenfeld, *The Age of Independence: Interracial Unions, Same-Sex Unions, and the Changing American Family* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007).

Reviewed by Charles W. Gossett, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

"Age," in the title of this book, has a double meaning. On the one hand, "age" refers to the post-1950s era that saw the confluence of movements for African American civil rights, women's rights, and gay rights that continues to the present. On the other hand, "age" refers to one's chronological age at the time one chooses to live apart from one's parents and other family members. What Rosenfeld argues is that in this new era, people leave home at an *earlier* age than was true in previous generations and, as a result, are less constrained by "family governance" in the choice of mates than their parents and grandparents were. These loosened family ties, particularly the ability to date without having to have the "dates" scrutinized by one's parents, allowed individuals

more freedom to choose partners from different races or partners of the same sex – and many did. Further, the occurrence of these changes comes at quite a distinct period that is easily identified by census data such that there is an obvious "before" and "after" period justifying the idea of a new "age."

Rosenfeld is a sociologist, not a historian, and the core of his argument is built around careful analysis of data from the U.S. Census describing not only the number of interracial marriages and, since the 1990 census, same-sex partnerships, but also the chronological age at which individuals stopped living with their parents and/or set themselves up as heads of their own households. From 1880 until 1940, between 60% and 75% of all single men aged 20-29 were living with their parents; for women, the figure hovered around 70% for the entire period. The percentages plunged dramatically after World War II, so that by the 2000 census, only 40% of men and 35% of women that age were living with parents (Figure 3.2, 52). Likewise, the percentage of single young adults heading their own households stayed between 2% and 5% from 1880 to 1940 after which it rose rapidly so that in 2000 about 28% of single young men and 36% of single young women headed their own household (Figure 3.3, 53). Rosenfeld notes the increased media coverage about young people who are moving back in with their parents in their 20s and 30s, but he correctly notes that it is precisely because it is so unusual that it has become newsworthy. He might also have emphasized that many of the stories in the media are about young adults moving back into their parents' homes after having established their "independence" for several years, and that is different from never having left home.

This is clearly an important finding that was only made possible by the fact that data from the earlier censuses has now been put into electronic formats that allow scholars to manipulate data from two centuries ago the same way they do the most recent data. Rosenfeld is an incessant miner of the data he has. One element he looks at is the higher numbers of students going to college (and implies that many, if not most, left home to do so) which increased dramatically after WWII. He speculates, probably accurately, that not only did going to college free one from parental supervision but that colleges in the 1960s abandoned the practice of *in loco parentis* which further allowed for, if not fostered, the individual's ability to choose a non-traditional partner. Somewhat frustrating, however, is that this is all presented as speculation with no reference to any



other scholarly work on the changing nature of the relationship between college administrators and students. This discussion is followed by a chapter that demonstrates that, in fact, the number of non-traditional unions (marriages in the case of interracial unions; “cohabitation” in the case of same-sex couples) rises dramatically. The next chapter creatively analyzes data related to geographical mobility, urbanization, immigration status, and education as ways of looking at the likelihood of someone entering into an interracial or same-sex union.

The next three chapters are somewhat disappointing, perhaps because they take Rosenfeld outside his area of expertise. Chapter 6 is a summary of the “history of childhood” in the U.S., but the most interesting part is when he reverts to his strengths and analyzes census data to show that children today are far more likely to have the privacy of their own rooms today than in earlier times. Chapter 7 is the political science chapter wherein he analyzes public opinion polling data showing increasing tolerance for gay rights and Chapter 8 is a review of the jurisprudence surrounding individual privacy rights, including birth control and homosexuality. It isn’t that there is much glaringly wrong with the information in these last few chapters, but rather when compared to the innovative and creative material in the early chapters, this material seems “old hat” to scholars who would be the most likely to pick up this book.

He concludes with a chapter on the future of the American family in light of the emergence of same-sex marriage, though I didn’t leave with a very clear sense of what he thought that future might look like. Nevertheless, Rosenfeld has made excellent use of newly available census data and his arguments are important for any debates about why the gay and lesbian rights movement emerged when it did or why same-sex marriage became such a dominant issue in the 21st Century.

Anne Enke, *Finding the Movement: Sexuality, Contested Space, and Feminist Activism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007).

Reviewed by Felicia Kornbluh, University of Vermont

Anne Enke’s *Finding the Movement* is a provocative, original, and important book about a subject that has often been documented and about which scholars tend to hold strong opinions. Enke manages two remarkable feats: she says something fresh and new about the so-called “Second Wave” of the U.S. women’s movement, and she historicizes the limitations of that movement along axes of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and gender expression without trashing its leading activists or its other chroniclers. Her great contribution to the scholarship is to add the dimension of place, or locality, to the study of the Second Wave. While *Finding the Movement* is not primarily an urban history, Enke focuses on three Midwestern cities as the sites for her study, and she focuses within these cities on the literal spaces in which what she calls “feminist movement” occurred. She argues that the history of feminism is all about space and place: activists named and challenged the politics of existing civic and market-oriented spaces, they took ground in such spaces and transformed them, they created new spaces, and they formed their self-understandings and collective programs for change through their engagements with particular spaces.

The most impressive part of Enke’s book is its introduction. Her argument is sufficiently broad and ambitious to suggest to the reader dozens of ways in which it could be imported unchanged, or tweaked slightly, into scholarship on other social movements in the post-1945 United States, or to identities and movements in other places at other times. While obviously having learned from important books such as Christine Stansell’s *City of Women*, Mary Ryan’s *Women in Public*, and Sarah Deutsch’s *Women and the City*, she offers a distinctive take on the relationship between gender and geography. Enke treats space as a source of feminist activism and political identities, as much as an object or product of feminist contestation. She treats “the consolidation of identities as an effect of spatial practices” which means that women who have thought of themselves as bar dykes, or simply as feminists, have come to see themselves in these terms through their experiences in particular spaces—the spaces where “bar dykes” are, or in which “feminism” has happened (9). Enke distinguishes her analysis from that of

Sara Evans and Harry Boyte, and the scholarship on social movements that has employed their idea that “free spaces” were central to movement formation because, she argues, “even feminist spaces were not ‘free,’ for as they consolidated the signs of feminism, they sowed the seeds of hierarchy within the movement, particularly around race, class, sexuality, and gender expression” (6). While this seems somewhat unfair to Evans and Boyte, Enke’s reminder about the exclusions that always accompanied solidified identities and the locations that bred such identities is a very welcome one.

Enke joins many other scholars in calling for a move away from the study of familiar feminist organizations and toward the study of so-called ordinary women who created and sustained feminist practices and whose lives were changed by feminism. Although her method and argument are different from those of Linda Gordon and Rosalyn Baxandall, she concurs with them in concluding that the feminist second wave was the biggest and most sweeping social movement in U.S. history. By focusing on places rather than on organizations, she gains perspective on many women who participated in the feminist movement without ever joining the National Organization for Women or National Black Feminist Organization.

Perhaps unavoidably, given the strength of Enke’s analysis, the individual chapters of *Finding the Movement* are, while wonderful, less fully satisfying than her introduction. Several chapters discuss women’s engagement with the spaces of the private, for-profit and nonprofit marketplace. Enke brings attention to bear on lesbian bars, the “dollar parties” that were their working-class and African American alternatives, women’s bookstores, coffeehouses, and credit unions. The bars, in particular, have already been the focus of scholarship, e.g., the fantastically productive work of Madeline Davis and Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy. Enke slights somewhat the fact that other historians have already discovered the central role of these spaces in the creation of lesbian community and suggested that lesbian meeting in the bars led to the emergence of feminism, while directing her attention to parts of the story that Kennedy and Davis did not emphasize, such as the *creation* of lesbian or women’s nighttime spaces and the segregation that occurred at their doors even as they also offered havens for butch and fem women in post-World War II cities. (see especially p. 27)

Enke discusses the specific hierarchies that were expressed in all of the commercial spaces she considers. She seems especially critical of projects such as the Feminist Women’s City Club in downtown Detroit, which failed because its progenitors sought a wealthy white constituency, and the wealthy white women did not really want to hang out in downtown Detroit. She offers a very interesting, although hurried, discussion of how conventional legal and cultural ideas about private property – and its relationship especially to male dominance – shaped and was challenged by the movement to create domestic violence shelters. However, she does not consider the potential contradictions between feminist politics and market-based, especially for-profit, commercial activity. Enke argues, as I also have argued, that market-based institutions were sites of exclusion and of women’s politics that mattered as much to many as the exclusions and battles against exclusion that occurred over ballot boxes, jury boxes, and other paradigmatically public spaces. Still, without suggesting that Second Wave efforts to create and sustain private-sector women’s spaces were the wrong wars fought in the wrong places, Enke might have reached new insights into big theoretical questions about sex, gender, and capitalism by considering more systematically what went wrong with projects such as the Feminist City Club, with several of the other feminist institutions that did not survive through the 1970s.

In addition to her treatment of institutions we usually call “private,” Enke also discusses locations we usually think of as “public.” She argues that geographic locations she identifies as “civic spaces,” especially ball fields in the middle of Midwestern cities, were vital loci of feminist politics. As in her discussion of gay and lesbian bars, Enke begins with an instructive discussion of the ways in which baseball or softball fields were marked by gender well before women started to demand equal access to them. She then explores the history of women’s efforts to play ball and visibly to occupy this egregiously mainstream space—efforts that were often met with profound resistance, and even violence. One fascinating chapter examines closely the history of the Motown Soul Sisters softball team in Detroit. Enke explores the gendered and racialized politics of this exceptional team’s emergence, and also studies the ways in which the fan culture that surrounded the team interacted with black nationalist and lesbian community formation in the 1970s. Consistent with her emphasis elsewhere on the simultaneity of identity formation and exclusion, she also offers

plenty of data about the ways in which the Motown Soul Sisters and other softball teams—like the professional women’s sports teams of the twenty-first century—tried to downplay the presence of woman-loving women in their ranks and to feminize their players’ images.

The most challenging aspect of Enke’s book is her suggestion that the identity of the feminist was not only created through spatial practices but also particularized, inclusive and exclusive, in much the same way as other particularized, spatially linked identities from the Second Wave era. Thus, while bowing to the Second Wave as the most wide-ranging post-war social movement, Enke also acknowledges the truth in the claims of feminism’s most trenchant critics: that this movement was never universal, and its claim to represent all women always rang hollow to many of its supposed constituents. Enke even suggests that the category, “all women,” was a specific and locationally oriented one (236).

“All women” and the feminism that aimed to support and speak for them existed in certain spaces, such as women’s coffeehouses, in the 1970s. Many people who were born female, and who were also African American, working-class, big-haired, southern, butch, or whom we would today call “trans,” did not feel at home in such spaces or among the kinds of women who gathered under the “all women” banner. Some were even turned away at the door, as was one of Enke’s informants, because she did not look like a woman to the doorkeepers. (see p. 253)

Anne Enke’s *Finding the Movement* is not the kind of excellent book that battens down all of its hatches and proves every point within an empirical inch of its life. It is, instead, the kind of excellent book that challenges settled ways of thinking, inspires new interpretations, and makes the reader think about a whole host of potential new research projects. I could not recommend it more highly.

Richard Cleminson and Francisco Vázquez García, *‘Los Invisibles’: A History of Male Homosexuality in Spain, 1850-1939* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007)

Reviewed by Ellen Zitani, Hunter College, City University of New York

Following in the footsteps of those historians such as Dan Healey and George Chauncey who have written histories of male homosexuality around the turn of the twentieth century, Richard Cleminson and Francisco Vázquez García’s study of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Spain fills in a historiographical gap and opens doors to future research in Spain on this topic. Their book mainly makes use of medical, legal, criminal, sexological, psychological, and educational sources. After examining these “official” discourses on homosexuality, the authors then compare them to those found in various novels in order to examine the lived realities of homosexual subcultures in Spain. Additionally, their study focuses on issues of nationalism, effeminacy, and masculinity in order to compare homosexuality in Spain with that of other European countries.

Their introductory chapter serves as a useful essay (perhaps especially for undergraduate teachers) on the challenges facing practitioners of the history of sexuality. The authors’ first pages discuss everything from the problems with following the Foucauldian timeline too closely, to the issue of reading “desire” in sources, to the dangerous urge to neatly categorize sexual roles and gender conceptions into a clear system. They are quick to say that their analysis will be “conscious of the possible multiplicity of terms, personages and representations of ‘homosexuality’ at one time” (7). Therefore, they state that the traditional *marica* (effeminate fairy) and *maricón* (active penetrating partner) coexisted with newer categories (e.g., invert, uranist) named by the medical community. “[I]t is possible that the old model of the active/passive sodomite held strong in Spain well into the twentieth century” while co-existing with the “modern” homosexual, they explain (10).

Chapter Two begins with an analysis of medical sources on inversion and the medicalization of homosexuality – a process the authors metaphorically equate with colonization. Chapter Three follows suit by discussing the effect of sexology in Spain, as both chapters look at the evolving ideas and conceptualizations of homosexuality as a result of the sexologists both in Spain and abroad. The authors

find that in early twentieth-century research, older ideas of vice and contagion overlapped with newer models of pre-disposition and homosexuality as a congenital condition. Additionally, there was significant renewed interest in the “homosexual question” from 1915 to 1939, with a flurry of writing from the medical, sexological, and criminological fields on questions of nation-building, decadentism, “modernization,” eugenics, birth control, and sexual morality. Using Foucault’s concept of biopower, Chapter Four turns to that other institution, the academy, and its place in producing knowledge and disciplining bodies. The authors explore the discourse of panic surrounding the masturbating child and examine the perceived links between onanism and homosexuality as they relate to children and their educators, to priests, to family members, and to each other. Here, the context of nationalism becomes evident, as there is clear emphasis in the discourse on creating healthy children, who would then become useful citizens in a “deviance-free” nation-state. Also notable in this chapter is a discussion of “donjuanism” and its supposed dual Moorish and Catholic constructs. Seen as both foreign and racial, the character of Don Juan is also made possible because of the idea of sin. Contemporaries saw the invert as having the same twinned constructions – both foreign and prone to evil.

Chapter Five addresses the theme of “national decadence” and its link with effeminacy. The authors find that Spain experienced a crisis of masculinity directly linked to the years of the “Disaster” - the loss of its last colonies - which manifested in social and political concerns that were grouped under the ideology of *regeneracionismo*. While the authors’ study is one of men’s history, they point to the solution found in regenerationist texts which looked to women as the hope for the nation. Women were seen as less prone to decadentism and degeneracy than the Spanish male; the Spanish mother presumably wouldn’t succumb to the desire to have only one child so frequently seen in bourgeois French mothers (180). Additionally in this chapter, a literary analysis reveals the use of the word *maricón* to mean not “homosexual,” but “weakness, indecisiveness, and effeminacy” (188), further illuminating the panic surrounding masculinity.

Many readers might pick up this book and flip right to Chapter Six, “Homosexual Subcultures in Spain,” expecting to find detailed accounts from police records, travel guides, and novels. Yet because of the lack of Spanish sources that have allowed historians

of other countries to paint vivid pictures of queer sociability and subcultures in, for example, London, New York and Paris, the authors here rely on a slim selection of novels, memoirs and regional press articles to examine how the discourses from the previous chapters actually affected the quotidian lives of homosexual men. The authors seek to analyze the self-awareness within homosexual subculture and the extent to which the medical and legal discourses “colonized” Spanish homosexuality. But the beginning of this chapter discusses how criminologists who focused on male prostitution equated the practice with homosexuality. The authors find evidence of male brothels that point to cross-class relationships among men. One source discussed at length is a work in criminal pedagogy by Max Bembo that discusses how male prostitutes in Barcelona “believed that they were the only real homosexuals in the city” (228). I immediately thought of Don Kulick’s anthropological study of *Travesti* in Brazil – a group who likewise sees themselves as the epitome of homosexuality – suggesting that both groups consciously ranked members of their subculture by homosexual identity. One of the most enlightening sections of this chapter discusses the parties in which newcomers would be subjected to initiation rights, while marriages and births were mimicked as rituals, not unlike in the British molly houses.

The authors’ sources have more or less dictated the chapter outline of this book. They acknowledge that a large portion of their sources came from medical or psychiatric discourse; legal sources are scarcer because homosexuality was not criminalized in this period. This question of sources opens the doors to future research in the history of homosexuality in Spain, as one critical aspect missing from this book is a more in-depth look at homosexual subcultures. Such an analysis could be obtained from examining more letters or diaries, tourism guides to cities like Barcelona, or from looking into less obvious legal cases such as those against persons accused of unnatural/immodest acts or public indecency. Perhaps future researchers will uncover the trail to these sources. Overall, this study fills an important gap in the historiography of modern European men’s homosexuality while making a valuable contribution to discourse on the intersections between nationalism, masculinity, and effeminacy.



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