Greetings, friends and colleagues. First on my agenda is to thank all of you who supported the CLGH at the AHA conference in Atlanta. We had a delightful trip on Friday evening to the Bell Tower of the Historical Oakland Cemetery, where Kevin Kuharic (Restoration and Landscape Manager) alerted us to the socioeconomic histories of the cemetery before Jodie Talley (graduate student at Georgia State) filled us in on its queer inhabitants, markers and visitors. The CLGH’s Saturday evening reception at the Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History similarly was successful. Before a sizeable group, Kerrie Cotton Williams (AARL Archivist, Ph.D. NYU), William Holden (Emory LGBT Studies Librarian) and others welcomed us to Atlanta and invited us to investigate their burgeoning archival collections. Wesley J. Chenault (Archivist at the Kenan Research Center/Atlanta History Center), was critical in both the planning and implementation of these events; he was also a delightful host for the CLGH in Atlanta.

The popularity of our evening social events stemmed, I believe, from the intellectual energy that was produced during the conference itself. The CLGH co-sponsored five sessions plus had a number of members participating on non-CLGH panels. Once I learned who these people were and when/where their panels were taking place, I encouraged others to attend. But for future AHA meetings, if you are delivering a paper related to the history of sexuality, please ask your panel organizer to consider a CLGH co-sponsorship. If co-sponsored by us, your panel will be listed in the program with other CLGH-related sessions and events (leading to increases in interest, audience members and knowledge about the scope of lgbtq work in history).

Finally, although the CLGH Business Meeting was poorly attended to say the least (it seems members were much more interested in the intellectual and social events, understandably), we were able to move forward on several business agenda items. Many of these items you will see in ballot form either in this newsletter issue or in the fall. Our esteemed treasurer, James Rosenheim, reported a deficit in our annual operating budget. After comparing CLGH
due with those of our peer affiliate societies, he proposed to raise and modify our dues structure. The deficit is due, in part, to increased costs for the newsletter and AHA reservations as well as decreases in income from annual membership dues. To address this and other membership issues, I am proposing to amend the bylaws so that the CLGH can add the position of Secretary. The Secretary will oversee our membership database and will take proactive measures to collect annual dues and to increase the membership-at-large. Many of our peer affiliates have a similar position (see affiliates list via the AHA website). Please vote on the dues modification and on the amendment to the bylaws in this issue. In the Fall 2007 issue, we (the Governing Board, the Newsletter Editor, and the Book Review Editor) will propose two important name changes: one for the CLGH and one for the Newsletter. We are in the process now of gathering feedback, and I will begin a listserv conversation on name changes in advance of the Fall 2007 ballot. Until then, my very best wishes to you all.

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS BY MEMBERS


Coleman, Jonathan. The Gay Gods: Homosexuality in Greco-Roman Myth; We Have to Hang Someone: The Execution of Ellison Mounts.


Kennedy, Hubert. Reading Gay History: Selected Essays and Reviews (print edition available on: lulu.com).


Millan, Isabel. Review of The Night is Young: Secuality in Mexico in the Time of AIDS by Hector Carrillo for CLGH. (forthcoming)


Potter, Claire B. Queer Hoover: Sex, Lies & Political History (forthcoming in Journal of History of Sexuality.)


Verstraete, Beert. Latin, Greek, various classical civilization courses (teaching); gender and sexuality in the Greece-Roman world, the classical tradition in the west with Vernon Provencal (co-ed.); Same-Sex Desire and Love in Greco-Roman Antiquity and in the classical tradition of the West (Harrington Park Press, 2006).

Special Section: Museums and Archives

Schwules Museum, Berlin
Karl-Heinz Steinle

The Schwules Museum – the “Gay Museum” that was the world’s first institution of its kind – was founded in 1985 by students of history, art history and sociology. Dedicated to the goal of exploring the various manifestations of homosexual life and collecting and putting on display related materials, the museum is funded exclusively by private donors and supported by the registered association “Verein der Freunde eines Schwulen Museums in Berlin”. All revenues come from admission, membership fees, sales of books and pictures, as well as donations. A team of 30 staff, for the most part volunteers, are currently involved in the museum’s exhibition and archival activities.

The Schwules Museum has staged 100 exhibitions to date, and brought out 25 publications. In addition to major projects like “Goodbye to Berlin? 100 Years of the Gay Movement” (1997), “The Persecution of Homosexual Men in Berlin” (2000) and the many exhibitions mounted by guest curators, the museum has developed themed series of exhibitions relating to individual biographies, to homosexual groups in the 1950s and ’60s, and presented homages to movie stars, writers or intellectuals enjoying idol status among homosexuals.

The dual approach of the Schwules Museum combines biographical inquiry with everyday-cultural history. We maintain intensive contacts with individuals who remember certain historical periods and furnish us not only with first-hand information but frequently also with private documents or even entire collections. Thanks to the museum’s collection of works of art and photography, it is possible to outline the visual codes used to articulate homosexual subject-matter in various historical periods.

In December 2004, the permanent show “Self-Confidence and Persistence. Two Hundred Years of History” took up residence on a separate museum floor, accompanied by the appearance of a publication with the same title. The flexible exhibition concept sends visitors round 55 display units with integrated partition walls allowing the presentation of topical research findings and recent additions to the collection. The opening of the permanent exhibition firmly established the Schwules Museum within the museum landscape of Berlin.

In regard to its future development, the museum intends to intensify cooperative projects with women, and also to increase its focus on GLBTQ themes. A country-specific series of temporary exhibitions currently in development is due to open in fall 2008 with a show relating to African art. In order to encourage young curators, a separate exhibition space is being set up as a platform open to new questions and innovative forms of communicating content. We hope that the resultant dialogue will bring impulses and inspiration for future museum projects, and at the same time attract the involvement of young historians and art educationists. The project was launched in summer 2006 with “Intimate Spaces,” a series for which two young curators from Berlin and New York invited ten international artists to evolve their own Live Art concepts with visitor participation during the museum’s regular opening hours.

The museum intends to complete by the end of 2007 its acquisition of the Sternweiler Collection, one of the most internationally noted private collections relating to homosexual cultural history. The collection comprises 7,000 separate items or groups, among them many unique engravings and paintings testifying to the depiction of homosexuality in artworks produced between 1500 and 1950, and also entire estates including that of the artist Richard Grune, whose work deals with his
incarceration in prisons and concentration camps in the period 1935-45. Grune's legacy further includes a valuable historical discovery, namely the private correspondence he conducted from a concentration camp. "Male – Female," an exhibition opening in summer 2007, will highlight a further focal point of the Sternweiler Collection by showing two hundred photographic works relating to the developmental history of nude photography in Germany and the USA between 1870 and 1960.

More information on the Schwules Museum is available at www.schwulesmuseum.de; please address all e-mail to kontakt@schwulesmuseum.de.

Leather Archives & Museum, Chicago Illinois
Jennifer Tyburczy,
Department of Performance Studies,
Northwestern University

What could it mean to collect and exhibit alternative sexual histories? What could it mean for public history projects? For queer sexual politics? For creating institutional spaces for remembering queer eroticism? The Leather Archives & Museum (LA&M) raises all of these questions.

With its slogan, “Located in Chicago and serving the world,” LA&M positions itself as the national home for the memories and histories of leather/levi culture. Started by Chuck Renslow in 1991 in a small Clark Street storefront near the leatherbar, The Eagle, LA&M assumed its new abode on 6418 N. Greenview in 1999. It now offers eight publicly accessible gallery spaces, a 1,425 sq. foot archive, a 164-seat auditorium, and a 600 sq. foot library for the preservation and study of leather history.

LA&M is almost completely funded, run, and maintained by those in the leather/kink community in and around Chicago. The collaborative efforts of LA&M’s 300+ members and volunteers, its status as a tax-exempt charity under section 501c(3) of the federal tax code, and the vigorous fund-raising and administrative skills of past and present directors like Joseph Bean (1997) and Rick Storer (current) eventually enabled the administrative team to officially retire the mortgage on the Greenview building in 2005.

Not surprisingly, no government aid was received to purchase the building. “This has been a grassroots fundraising effort since day one,” said LA&M President Chuck Renslow. “Our history is now safe behind walls owned by and controlled by the Leather community.” That this community project emerged in Chicago was not a random occurrence; with a known past for embracing leather communities of various sexual orientations and practices as well as a tactical location in mid-America, a Chicago residence for LA&M maximizes accessibility for leatherfolk from all over the United States.

Most of LA&M’s collection consists of US-based artifacts, though international donors or artifacts acquired from international tourism are never turned away. In fact, no donations are ever turned down. LA&M’s acceptance and preservation of anything and everything kink and leather is one of the defining distinctions between them and other museums that preserve and display sexual history. LA&M, like the Lesbian Herstory Archives in Brooklyn and the GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco, collects artifacts from the everyday life experiences of BLGT people (heterosexual, or pansexual, practitioners are also represented in LA&M). It does so, however, with the intention of publicly sharing its collections in the museum, at leather events throughout the country, and through artistic and sexually practical on-site gatherings. Focused attention to issues of love, sex, (alternative) sexuality, eroticism, and queer community formation also contributes to LA&M’s unique status as a museum, an archive, and a research institution.

While the majority of the erotic artifacts in LA&M’s collection depict gay white male bodies, LA&M collects, preserves, and exhibits the sexual histories of women, people of color, and transgender kinksters as well. Recently, LA&M (with the guidance of exhibit curator Alex Warner) put together a revamped “Women of Leather” traveling Exhibit. Recently archivalist Chuck M. found and dated a leather sword sheath (1840s), one of LA&M’s oldest artifacts, which was probably and violently applied to the bodies of black slaves on a nineteenth-century plantation. Using the leather sheath as a centerpiece, Chuck M mounted an exhibit that pedagogically engages the distinction between consensual erotic play and nonconsensual torture.

As a public history project and homage to the people and practices of kink, BDSM, fetish, and leather cultures, LA&M provides visitors and researchers with a rare opportunity to experience a venue in which queerness and institutional display space intersect. While queer history continues to be marginalized within the museum and academic world, queer sexual history, particularly when it incorporates alternative sexuality practice,
encounters even greater obstacles for establishing legitimate and respected cultural spaces. “It is during times of great social stress,” Gayle Rubin reminds us that, “sexuality should be treated with special respect.”1 Leaning on the civic and pedagogical ethos of the museum as a genre of spatial aesthetics and historical value, the placement of sex in a museum demonstrates the effort to do exactly that. While LA&M is only one of several museums in the US that monumentalize the sexual in a public space, it is distinct from these projects in its overt and consistent dedication to queerness, alternative sexuality, and the everyday lives of those who live, love, and play kinky.

Leather Archives and Museum
6418 N. Greenview Avenue
Chicago, IL 60626
www.leatherarchives.org


2007 John Boswell Prize Announcement

The Committee on Lesbian and Gay History (CLGH) is pleased to announce the winner of the 2007 John Boswell Prize for the outstanding book on lesbian/gay history (published in 2005 or 2006):


In reaching its decisions, the Prize Committee prepared the following commendation:
“In this rich and densely researched book, Meeker explores how young women and men learned more about their homosexuality, particularly if they were living in small and isolated places where gays and lesbians were not openly visible or apparent. He argues that three innovations in communication helped individuals to see themselves as members of larger sexual communities: the rise of a homophile movement in the 1950s, broad public interest in homosexuality created by the media in the late 1950’s and early 1960s, and the emergence of gay and lesbian self-published guides, gossip sheets, and magazines that circulated broadly and help forge a sense of large community and eventually of its political possibilities. In sum, this book marvelously charts the connections among desire, identity, and community.”

The 2007 Prize Committee was chaired by Ramon Gutierrez and included Jennifer Evans and Daniel Rivers.

Call for Submissions for 2008 CLGH Prizes

The Committee on Lesbian and Gay History, affiliated with the American Historical Association, will award two prizes in 2008:

The Gregory Sprague Prize for an outstanding PAPER or CHAPTER on lesbian/gay history written in English by a graduate student at a North American institution (the Sprague Prize is underwritten by the Gerber/Hart Library, Chicago, IL);

The Audre Lorde Prize for an outstanding ARTICLE on lesbian/gay history written in English by a North American.

Papers and chapters written and articles published in 2006 or 2007 are eligible. Materials may be submitted by students, faculty, authors, readers, or publishers. Self-nominations are encouraged. Published articles by graduate students may be submitted for both prizes. Please indicate whether submissions are for the Sprague Prize, the Lorde Prize, or both.

The deadline for submissions is December 1, 2007. Submissions should be sent by electronic copy to all three of the following 2008 CLGH Prize Committee Members:

Chair: Professor Moshe Sluhovsky
Professor of History, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Visiting Associate Professor of History, Brown University
msl@mssc.huji.ac.il

Christolyn Williams
Assistant Professor, History
Westchester Community College
cartwill@earthlink.net

Phil Tiemeyer
PhD Candidate
Dept. of American Studies
University of Texas at Austin
philaustin@gmail.com
Governing Board Nominations for 2007-2010
Term:

Matt Johnson
Matt Johnson has been a CLGH member since 2000. He holds a Masters in Anthropology and History from the University of Michigan, and in June 2007 will receive his Masters in Library Science from Queens College (CUNY). Formerly cataloging assistant at the Brooklyn Museum Library and library consultant to the International Resource Network, a Ford Foundation-funded digital networking initiative of the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies (CLAGS), Matt is currently employed as taxonomy analyst at Accoona, a web search engine.

In addition to regularly reviewing books for the CLGH newsletter, Matt has published original research on eighteenth-century German medical interpretations of intersexed bodies (in the Canadian Bulletin of Medical History) and on the ethnography of gay men’s work in the field of HIV-related behavioral research (in the edited volume Sexual orientation discrimination). His MLS thesis, on the development of information retrieval vocabularies for materials in GLBT studies, will be excerpted in the forthcoming volume Radical cataloging. He has authored numerous articles for the online encyclopedia glbtq.com, and has presented papers and moderated sessions at various professional meetings as well as community forums.

Matt is committed to bringing his expertise in library and information science as well as in historical and ethnographic research to collections which are focused on archiving, preserving, and disseminating materials on sexuality. He is a member of the Leather Archives & Museum’s Teri Rose Library committee, where he is collaborating on a project to improve subject access to leather, BDSM, fetish, and kink materials in library catalogs. As a CLGH board member, he hopes to strengthen ties between academic queer historians, information professionals, and community history projects, as well as cultivate professional research interest in topics which often fall outside the purview of canonical GLBT histories.

Martin Meeker
Martin Meeker is an Associate Academic Specialist with the Regional Oral History Office, UC Berkeley, and a member of the board of directors of the GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco. After receiving his doctorate in U.S. history from the University of Southern California, Meeker taught in the history department at San Francisco State University and in the departments of history, undergraduate interdisciplinary studies, and American Studies at UC Berkeley. He has published numerous reviews and encyclopedia articles and has essays published in the *Journal of the History of Sexuality* and the *Journal of Women’s History*. His book, *Contacts Desired: Gay and Lesbian Communications and Community, 1940s-1970s*, published by the University of Chicago Press in 2006, was awarded the 2007 John Boswell Prize from CLGH.

Stephen Stillwell
Although GLBTQ Studies have not been my own main academic concern, as both a gay man and an historian, they are of obvious interest to me. I have a 2002 doctorate from the University of North Texas and have taught there and at the University of Texas at Arlington. My long-term partner and I made a decision several years late to partially retire. We now live in Arizona; where I pursue a number of academic endeavors. My main interests have been in Britain and the Middle East and I have done some research into the gay males who served “King (or Queen) and Country” as imperial administrators. I presented a paper at a regional conference on some of my preliminary findings in this research. Additionally, I have been a guest lecturer at a number of sociology classes on GLBTQ issues. I have also written reviews of nearly a dozen books on GLBTQ subjects for four different journals, including our own newsletter. Before embarking on my career as an historian, I worked as a librarian and was quite active in the American Library Association’s GLBTQ group over
the years. I would like the chance to work as hard for CLGH as I did for the ALA group some years ago.

Susan Stryker
Susan Stryker earned her Ph.D. in United States History at the University of California at Berkeley, subsequently held a Ford Foundation/Social Science Research Council postdoctoral fellowship in sexuality studies at Stanford University, and later served as executive director of the GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco. She teaches from time to time at Bay Area colleges and universities, and holds various research appointments, including a core staff position at the Somatechnics Research Centre in the Department of Critical and Cultural Studies at Macquarie University in Sydney, and a research associateship at the Centre for the History of European Discourses at the University of Queensland in Brisbane. In 2006-07 she also holds a Meyers Research Fellowship at the Huntington Library in San Marino, and is Martin Duberman Fellow at the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies, City University of New York Graduate School. In addition to numerous scholarly articles on transgender theory and history, Dr. Stryker is the author of two works of popular nonfiction, *Gay by the Bay: A History of Queer Culture in the San Francisco Bay Area* and *Queer Pulp: Perverted Passions in the Golden Age of the Paperback*, both Lambda Literary Award Finalists. With colleague Victor Silverman, she co-wrote, directed, and produced the Emmy Award-winning public television documentary, *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton’s Cafeteria*, based on her own research into the history of transgender community formation in the San Francisco Bay Area. In 2006, she co-edited *The Transgender Studies Reader*. She is currently working on two longterm projects, a book manuscript, *Sex Change City: Urban (Trans)Formations in San Francisco*, and a film about 1950s transsexual celebrity Christine Jorgensen’s work as a filmmaker, *Christine in the Cutting Room*.

Reviews


Reviewed by William Pencak, The Pennsylvania State University

Only a decade ago, anyone hoping to teach the alternative sexual history of early America would have been limited to a few documents (e.g., the letters of John Laurens and Alexander Hamilton, Jeff Withers and James Hammond), a handful of sodomy cases, stories about pirates (e.g., Mary Read and Annie Bonney), and perhaps some speculations about what appears to be a portrait in the New-York Historical Society of a rather dowdy middle-aged woman who may or may not have been cross-dressing New York Governor Lord Cornbury. Now thanks to the superb books by Richard Godbeer (*The Sexual Revolution in Early America*) and Claire Lyons (*Sex Among the Rabbite*), a special issue of the *William and Mary Quarterly* (January 2005), and an article by John Mur- rin on bestiality (*Pennsylvania History*, supplement, *Explorations in Early American Culture*, 1998), the field is far richer. The excellent although very different books by William Benemann and Thomas Foster make it richer still.

Benemann’s book is a survey of love and friendship between males in early America up until early nineteenth century. After a discussion of gender among Native Americans, who honored berdaches (anatomical men who displayed appearances and characteristics normally gendered female), he uses the existing scholarly literature and freshly interpreted primary documents to show the likelihood of same-sex encounters among sailors, soldiers, and frontiersmen, where women were scarce or absent for long periods. He is especially adept at using songs and poems (such as sea shanties and the works of Davy Crockett) to make a persuasive case that men were attracted to each other. Benemann also does a fine job summarizing eighteenth-century British literature with same-sex themes available in the colonies (e.g., Tobias Smolett’s *Roderick Random*), compares American sexual practices to those in Europe, and shows a thorough knowledge of this body of scholarship as well.
Two chapters stand out and exemplify Benemann’s own excellent manuscript research. One is the fascinating story of Baron Von Steuben, probably forced to leave Europe on account of his sexual relations with young men, which he then resumed with two of his younger officers at Valley Forge, William North and Benjamin Walker (who in turn were interested in each other), dividing most of his fortune between them in his will. In another chapter, Benemann tells how during Jefferson’s presidency, British diplomats Anthony Merry and Augustus John Foster seemed physically attracted to American men, with Foster lavishing inordinate attention on Wa Pawni Ha, a young Sac Indian who visited Washington. The eccentric John Randolph of Roanoake and gutter journalist James Callender (who wound up floating in the James River after accusations of molesting a young man) complete this fascinating chapter.

Benemann has an excellent chapter on all-male organizations such as the Tuesday Club in Annapolis, the Masons, and the Sons of Liberty. With the latter, he connects the forms of revolutionary protest to European and pre-revolutionary American rough music and charivari. Political undesirables received extra-legal punishment such as beatings, riding out of town on a rail, and tarring and feathering otherwise reserved for sexual deviants (e.g., wife beaters, adulterers both male and female, old men who married young women). Benemann shows that the adult Sons of Liberty were behaving like boys, shouting and parading in the streets, burning their targets in effigy much as they did on Pope’s Day with images of the Pope and his imps. At the same time, the real boys of Boston were always a large part of their crowds, both as good cover (to prevent being fired upon) and in the press (so the mobs could be considered boyish pranks). The small role women played in the American Revolution compared with their revolutionary sisters taking part in the French, Russian, and Latin American revolutions suggests the peculiar and exclusionary world of male comradeship in early America. Women were assigned a specific sphere, to be mothers and educators of children and moral guardians of the republic, but barred from participation in public life.

Benemann’s book does not (as its title implies) discuss women’s own literary and household circles (where they consumed literature and tea rather than liquor), which scholars such as Carla Mulford and Susan Stabile have superbly discussed, although they have not investigated the evidence of sexual attraction (which may simply not exist). However, when it comes to the sexual practices of groups such as the Mormons, the Oneida community, and the Shakers, Benemann is able to describe both male and female attraction that could not be expressed in traditional heterosexual marriages.

Benemann attributes same-sex desire either tentatively or plausibly as the evidence suggests. For instance, he is aware that flogging appealed to the sadomasochistic impulses, and knows well the extensive contemporary literature that ranked homosocial friendship above heterosexual love as the noblest of impulses. Overall, Benemann is cautious and his judgments sensible. An excellent bibliography completes this well-written book. Those seeking to learn the state of the field as of 2006 could find no better guide to the subject.

Foster’s book is both narrower and wider in scope: narrower, in that it concentrates on Massachusetts between the Glorious Revolution and the late eighteenth century, and broader, in that it is a general history of sexual thought and practice in the Bay Colony. Foster discusses the normal sexual expectations and behavior of men and women: Massachusetts allowed divorce if men failed to consummate their marriages, committed adultery, or betrayed the marriage covenant by abusing their wives (In a few cases, wives were the offending parties). Foster has thoroughly gleaned court records, personal papers, and newspapers for accounts of sexually connected crimes (e.g., buggery, sodomy, extramarital sex), concluding that the harsh penalties in law were seldom executed in practice given the difficulty to discover private behavior and the unwillingness of friends and relatives to subject those they knew to those penalties. These case studies are also revealing of the language eighteenth-century people used to describe sexual encounters.

Foster is especially good at integrating Massachusetts practices with the descriptions of sexual activity in guidebooks, novels, and news items transmitted from Europe to Boston. Among his interesting insights is that Massachusetts, despite a small black and Indian population, regarded interracial sex with far more disdain than, say, Pennsylvania, a fact that might be attributed to the Puritans’ special fear of the Devil (or “black man”, as he was frequently called during the witchcraft trials) and persistent Indian wars throughout the eighteenth century. That there were many lower-class interracial marriages (or unsanctioned unions) in coastal New England was another reason these were regarded as sources of potential disorder.

One of Foster’s several fine analyses has considerable present-day relevance: the treatment of the city of Sodom as discussed in Puritan sermons. Far more
knowledgeable about the Bible than contemporary fundamentalists who equate the sin of Sodom with homosexuality, the eighteenth-century ministers more correctly focused on the city’s pride and overall decadence. Foster also demonstrates the fear of bachelors and effeminately behaving men in a society that treasured the family as a bastion of order. Unencumbered and unrestrained by family obligations, they were seen as selfish and extravagant people whose very visible presence in American cities, especially New York, threatened the civic virtue, the selfless devotion to society and state, that political thinkers believed necessary for a republic to survive. John McCurdy’s forthcoming book on bachelors will examine this class of men in other places and into the early republic.

Foster’s research suggests some tantalizing possibilities that he, or another scholar, could explore by injecting some political and religious controversy into a study of this sort. It would be fascinating to know whether the conflict between pro-British Anglicizers who sympathized with royal authority, prospered economically, and looked favorably on the Enlightenment and the Anglican Church and the more Puritanical party that stood for the Assembly’s rights and blamed the economic problems of the Boston area on their adversaries resulted in some sexual attacks either veiled or direct. For instance, the salacious cartoon that appeared on January 7, 1751 in The Boston Evening Post (alas, not reprinted in the volume) attacking the Masons as sodomites occurred at a particularly interesting time: over the previous four years, Boston had seen the great impressment riot, the emergence of a protest newspaper (The Independent Advertiser) against a war that cost thousands of lives and much money, the controversial conversion of the province’s paper currency into specie, and the burning of both the capitol building and Speaker of the House Thomas Hutchinson’s Boston home. We can learn the names of the Masons: were there any political dimensions to the satire or other Masonic-related literature?

Similarly, it would have been useful had Foster looked at masculinity in the revolutionary era. Are there sexual aspects to attacks on loyalists, assertions of manly behavior in protecting an America sometimes depicted as a naked Indian woman in cartoons—who better to defend her than Indians at the Boston Tea Party? — and the lyrics of songs such as verses of “Yankee Doodle” comparing the masculinity of patriots to shirkers and British soldiers? And what about the sexual subtexts of sermons such as Jonathan Edwards’ Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, where the wrath of God, held back like flood waters by a dam, are set to burst forth on the sinner? Here, too, in the mutual recriminations of Old and New Lights, might be more grist for Foster’s mill.

Nevertheless, these are not really criticisms so much as a satisfied reader wishing Foster had done even more. I offer these suggestions in the hope that they may be considered in the course of further research.


Reviewed by Eric Ledell Smith, Historian, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

When I first heard of this book, my first thought was that it would probably be a textbook for college courses on gay and lesbian studies. Indeed, with the exception of Jewelle Gomez, all of the contributors are college professors. The editors explain that the essays of this anthology by seventeen men and women grew out of the 2000 “Black Queer Studies in the Millennium” conference at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. So the book takes its title from the conference, which then poses immediate questions for the reader: for example, why “black” instead of “African American”? Although a recent survey of black LGBTs reveals that most of them loathe the term “queer,” the writers in this text champion it like it is not a problem. African Americans have always been sensitive about how they wish to be identified.

Nevertheless, the editors tease the reader with this dichotomy in that the book is divided into four parts, “each of which activates the tensions between “black” and “queer” (7). The first part looks at why the disciplines of black studies and queer studies have evolved separately. The second part looks at “the ways in which the black queer body signifies within the American imagination” (10). In the third part, the editors examine “what is at stake when black queer pedagogy is mobilized in the academy” (12). The final section is called “Black Queer Fiction: Who Is ‘Reading’ Us?” The book also has a foreword by Sharon P. Holland, an introduction by the editors, a bibliography and an index.

It is interesting to note that much of the tone and content of Black Queer Studies resembles the first part of the 1998 anthology, Inside Academy and Out: Lesbian/Gay/Queer Studies and Social Action by editors Janice L. Ristock and Catherine Taylor. In
Ristock and Taylor’s book, much attention is given to queer studies and pedagogy. It is almost as though the authors in *Black Queer Studies* are engaged in a conversation about how to justify teaching Black Queer Studies. This conversation no doubt is carried over from the 2000 conference where various aspects of popular culture are examined as means to teach classes about black queer studies. The contributors rely very heavily upon writer James Baldwin and his works, despite the fact as Maurice O. Wallace notes, Baldwin did not want to be called “gay.” Films such as Marlon Riggs’s *Black Is...Black Ain’t*, television shows like *Spin City*, photographers like Robert Mapplethorpe and even rap singer/actress Queen Latifah are analyzed in an effort to use popular culture as a means of teaching black queer studies. When social science is brought in as part of black queer studies, the results are not convincing. For example, Charles I. Nero’s “Why Are the Gay Ghettoes White?” poses by way of its title a very important point about the marginality of black gay and lesbian people in this country. But Nero’s comparison of the gay neighborhoods of San Francisco with New Orleans takes up only half of his article; the other part is devoted to analysis of motion pictures and television shows with black gay characters. It is clear that this is what Nero is really into. His sociological treatment of “gay ghettoes” is very disappointing in light of the fact that numerous American gay and lesbian bars still practice subtle forms of racism.

Unlike the 1998 book, *Inside the Academy and Out*, *Black Queer Studies* avoids the topic of AIDS and HIV infection among gay African American men. In the index there are exactly only five references to these topics for a book of 374 pages. No scholarly book on the black gay and lesbian community today can afford to sidestep this issue. Of course, it is more comfortable and romantic to talk about blacks in film and television than to speak of gay and bisexual black men dying of AIDS due to unsafe sex, drugs, and other unhealthy behavior. How do we reach them? How do we teach them responsible behavior? How do we mentor them to survive the psychological emasculation they face in both the black and the gay community for being gay?

*Black Queer Studies* is a well-edited anthology of essays for the classroom but it does not address the everyday issues facing black gay men and black lesbians.


Reviewed by Susan Freeman, Minnesota State University, Mankato

The Stonewall Riots offer a story of heroism: queers fighting back against intimidation by police and corrupt bar owners. The tale is captivating and full of drama, especially when told from the perspective of eyewitnesses and participants. “Telling human stories,” as Martin Duberman chose to do in his 1993 *Stonewall*, appeals to curiosities about the lives of individual participants in social change. Likewise, David Carter’s *Stonewall* centers on the paths of people, mostly gay men, who joined together in rebellion on a hot summer night in New York City’s Greenwich Village.

The expression of militancy by Stonewall Inn bar patrons on June 27, 1969 ignited a movement of gay liberation in the United States and worldwide. However much historians might qualify the significance of the Stonewall Riots in the development of gay and lesbian activism, it remains a story worth telling. It’s hard to imagine that Carter’s book won’t generate a Hollywood screenplay, and there’s no question that its appeal extends beyond the academy. *Stonewall* is a handy text for activists, students, and historians alike, and not just for the threads of the human-interest story it weaves together.

Carter based his account of the Stonewall Riots on volumes of evidence, including over 100 interviews conducted by the author along with scores of interviews and accounts by other historians. Whereas Duberman’s *Stonewall* centers on six life stories of individuals involved with and peripheral to the riots, Carter’s *Stonewall* highlights a much larger number of key figures in the riots and surrounding events, including street youth, police, Mafia, media, and activists, many of whom Carter interviewed during his ten years of research and writing. The two books have much factual information in common and only a few factual quibbles between them; in fact, Carter uses Duberman’s previous work in nearly every one of his fifteen chapters. Still, the level of detail about Greenwich Village, the Stonewall Inn, the rioting, and activism pre-, during, and post-Stonewall in Carter’s *Stonewall* far surpasses that of Duberman’s. In the end, the two books accomplish quite different things.

In addition to sharing Duberman’s dedication to telling human stories, Carter devotes special care to sketching the geography of the Village, Christopher
Street in particular. The opening chapter to the book sets the scene, and the chapters dealing specifically with the riots return to the “irregular streets and triangular open spaces” (13) that shaped the sequence of events as the rebellion unfolded. In addition to the copious oral histories and geographical evidence, Carter relies on published and unpublished contemporary sources and historical scholarship as well. He does a convincing job of reconciling varying and occasionally contradictory accounts, and his author’s note (following the book’s conclusion) is an illuminating discussion of the process by which he researched, selected terminology, and constructed his narrative. His critique of the simplistic renderings of Stonewall as inevitable and as spawning a gay movement out of nowhere accords well with other scholarly interpretations of the changes in gay life in the second half of the twentieth century.

Several claims the author makes challenge common misperceptions about Stonewall’s patrons. While Carter agrees that the bar consisted of a mixed-race and mixed-class crowd, and that it attracted the young and rebellious street kids, he disputes the claims that lesbians and transsexuals were Stonewall regulars. Although ample evidence supports the fact that a butch dyke who resisted arrest on the night of riots played a significant role in the escalation of militancy, it was not the case, he argues, that the bar attracted lesbians as well as gay men. His sources concur that very few lesbians hung out at the Stonewall Inn. (The index entries for “lesbian” do not point readers to this discussion, which can be found on pp. 74-75).

Carter contends that the patronage of transvestites, transsexuals, and drag queens at the bar has been overstated in the years since the riots as well. He attributes this to differences in how the term “queen” has been used since the late 1960s. Most bar patrons, he concludes, were “conventionally masculine,” while a visible minority “ran the gamut from men effeminate in their mannerisms, to scare or flame queens, to a few transvestites and some transsexuals” (77). That said, Carter doesn’t want to diminish the contributions of a single butch lesbian and a handful of effeminate, street youth for being at the forefront of the rebellion.

Carter’s assessment of the role of the Mafia, and particularly the use of the Stonewall Inn to gather information on gay men for blackmail, is compelling, though by his own account, not conclusive. For him, the bar’s shady dealings raise the question of whether Stonewall Inn should remain a symbol for the GLBT movement. It should, he answers, because the events summoned anger and collective action essential to historical and present-day struggles for liberation. And whether or not Stonewall should symbolize the struggle, it’s hard to imagine what might diminish its status as a marker of gay pride in the early twenty-first century – certainly not this book and its in-depth treatment of the history surrounding the Stonewall Riots.


Reviewed by James W. Jones, Central Michigan University

Steven Cohan’s wide-ranging analysis of classic MGM musicals, the movie industry then and now, and the process of reception and re-definition at work today makes for fascinating and often entertaining reading. But Cohan’s analysis has little to do with “camp” as the term is used and understood by most people. The author himself seems aware of this discrepancy as he opens the book with sweeping generalizations such as stating that the MGM musical is today considered an outdated, niche commodity, which he equates with “camp” (1), and goes on to state: “the camp reputation of the musicals produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s—the studio era—is pretty much taken for granted as a consequence of the genre’s cultish value for gay men” (1). Even for an introduction, this seems a bit broad. In the chapters that follow, however, he moves into a much more nuanced approach; yet, the definition of “camp” continually changes until it fades away in an otherwise excellent analysis of fans’ electronic battles to stake claims to Judy Garland in discussion boards of websites.

Although Cohan reviews the literature on “camp” from Sontag through Andrew Ross, Moe Meyer, Esther Newton and others, elements that are generally seen as crucial to the genre disappear in his applica-
tion. He initially defines the term as “the ensemble of strategies used to enact a queer recognition of the incongruities arising from the cultural regulation of gender and sexuality” (1). That is a fine starting point, but that definition evolves into simply spectatorship and performance in the critique of two filmic sequences. Describing “The Man That Got Away” from A Star Is Born, Cohan focuses on Garland’s performance and Cukor’s framing of it, but nothing is mentioned of the lyrics or the song’s role in the film. The reverse is true when he discusses “The Trolley Song” in Meet Me in St. Louis, but the focus of the critique remains on seeing style, performance and presentation as what make these sequences into moments of camp. Lacking are the elements of gender questioning, satire, and the outsider stance. The equation of camp with spectacle is the basis of the first chapter, although the first mention of one truly camp moment is described on pages 55-57: a sequence from Bathing Beauty with Lucille Ball, whip in hand, as tamer of a group of cat-women.

The book does address questions of gender identity in chapter two, and then moves into a useful investigation of the ways in which techniques of camp are used to mask, reinforce and problematize race in several musicals. The next two chapters, comprising about one hundred pages, largely return to the overly broad definition of camp merely as spectacle, as performance, as excess. Such a definition robs the term of its usefulness as a critical tool or an analytical category. In both chapters, one on Gene Kelly and his films and the other on Singin’ in the Rain, even the author admits that these have little to do with camp per se (152, 227). But the chapter on Kelly does provide an excellent analysis of the ways in which Kelly, both on screen and off screen, made a show of his virility and repeatedly portrayed himself as the masculine, ergo heterosexual, male dancer in utter opposition to all other male dancers, who were “sissies.” In this respect, Kelly can be seen as “anti-camp,” one could argue.

In the fifth chapter, Cohan discusses the ideological packaging and commercial merchandising of the three compilations called That’s Entertainment. Although packed with detail and not without illuminating insights, this chapter, like the one on Singin’ in the Rain, appears to look at the films within their “history,” but that history is one circumscribed by the studio lot and the entertainment industry. Completely lacking is any glance toward the social context. For example, when That’s Entertainment I appeared in 1974, the United States was withdrawing from Vietnam, the oil embargo caused a general economic crisis, and one cultural response to the calamitous times was a wave of nostalgia, a wave that That’s Entertainment I rode to financial success. Cohan makes no such connections to that broader context.


Reviewed by Stephen J. Stillwell, Jr., Independent Scholar

The name of the publisher should have been a clue to the missing word in the title. Jackson’s book explores the Canadian gay scene [scene?], the Canadian military, and the Canadian experience during the Second World War. It did not take me long to get over my initial consternation and become engrossed with this dissertation-turned-book. One of the several joys that I found in the book were the homoerotic photographs and pen-and-ink drawings from the time in question, which really completed and complemented the text in so many ways, such as, when those illustrations depicted entertainment units with members in drag or when they showed obvious close physical relationships among men in a unit.

Jackson has reviewed hundreds of personnel records of servicemen and women. He has reviewed records of courts martial, and additionally (and to my mind more interestingly), was able to interview over fifty men and women who were involved in the events of those days, reading their diaries and letters, as well as diaries and letters of others involved who are no longer alive.

The first chapter follows the bureaucratic procedures in the Canadian army, the air force, and the navy as they attempt to establish a sensible policy to deal with homosexuality within their ranks – both what to do with homosexuals as individuals and what to do when a same-sex encounter was uncovered. There was a certain understanding of situational homosexual experiences; but the military officials were unsure whether this was “better” or “worse” than regular homosexual encounters. The policies were mainly directed towards males – probably for two reasons: 1) the numbers in the military are overwhelming tilted in that direction, and 2) as Jackson so aptly put it – women were already not men – and the whole point was to deal with those in the military, who were somehow not “man enough.”
The second chapter details the role of the military police and the military justice system in handling homosexuals, homosexuality, and homosexual encounters. The third chapter is similar in that it covers the role of the military medical establishment, particularly its psychiatrists, in dealing with the same things. In these chapters and in other parts of the book, one thing that stood out was the inconsistency, and in some instances, the downright lunacy, in the way things were handled.

In some instances, men were disciplined by being sent to prison (another all-male environment) for several months and then were returned to their units. In other cases, they might be transferred to units that were more accepting of “misfits.” If the man was adjudged important enough by his commanding officer, everything might just be ignored. Treatment was different depending on the social standing, the educational background, the rank, and the duties of the personnel involved. When charges were leveled, they were inconsistent. If two men were discovered having sex, only one was charged and the other was compelled to testify against the first. Some of the testimony was ludicrous: for example, Jackson reported an instance where one serviceman reportedly turned in another when he realized that the second man might be a homosexual because the second man had spent the last three nights playing with the penis of the man making the report.

Chapters Four and Five are also paired: the former reviews the experiences of men and a few women while serving at military installations or on board ship within Canada and Canadian waters, while the latter surveys those experiences overseas. This section focuses on those forces stationed in Britain (although “England” is always used in the book) during the war and those Canadians fighting in Italy and the Netherlands. It is here that there is the biggest gap in the book. There is no mention of the Canadians serving in Alaska or pre-confederation Newfoundland in North America, nor those serving in Hong Kong, Burma, and the rest of the Pacific and Asian theatre. This may be for lack of primary sources in this area; it certainly was not because there were no homosexuals or homosexual activity in those areas.

The final chapter is, in many ways, the most important because it deals with the issues raised by many of those who oppose the open and active military service of gay men and lesbians. The chapter both is entitled and discusses “Esprit de Corps, Cohesion, and Morale.” The conclusions here are mixed – sometimes the homosexuality was detrimental to those ideals, sometimes it had no impact either negatively or positively, and sometimes it was conducive and supportive to them. And probably most interestingly, there were even instances when the anti-homosexual moves by the authorities caused harm to those ideas. When discussing these very real and important issues, Jackson increases his scope somewhat and discusses the ancient Spartans, a warlike tribe in Melanesia, and the 1990s scandal in Canada’s elite Airborne Regiment.

The book is rounded out by a short introduction and conclusion, a number of charts in several appendices, a solid bibliography, and an index that could be somewhat more exhaustive. Some scholars will be distressed by the lack of coverage of lesbianism in the book; I feel that it is probably understandable given the numbers involved and the general invisibility of and beliefs around lesbianism in society at the time. Another issue that may cause concern is that I felt that the Navy was given short shrift in the book and that most of the discussion focused on the Army and Air Force. That may be true because that was were the bulk of the resources and willing interviewees lay. Overall, these issues aside, Jackson did a masterful job.


Reviewed by Linda Heidenreich, Washington State University

Gayatri Reddy’s *With Respect to Sex* is the most layered and nuanced study of *hijras* published to date. Like Serena Nanda’s *Neither Man nor Woman*, Reddy portrays hijras, Indian persons who identify as “not men and not women,” as flesh and blood human beings, marginalized people struggling to survive in often hostile environments. Reddy’s contribution to the literature is that she complicates sex and gender, demonstrating how sex and gender are both classed and influenced by religion. Ultimately, a very dynamic image of individuals and community emerges from her text, one where the axes constructing hijra identity include gender, sexuality, religion, respect, class, and kinship. Hijras are located within a larger history and culture of India, and of a larger community of *kotis*, or “female identified” persons who were born biological males.
Reddy's focus is on a specific community of hijras who lived in Secunderabad, in southern India. The community lived under a water tank, and had fewer resources and less status than hijra communities in the neighboring city of Hyderabad. Reddy spent four years getting to know the community living under the water “tanki.” In doing so, she also studied and interacted with other female-identified persons living in the same region.

For Reddy, “female identified men” comprise a variety of different, sometimes fluid identities. Among them are hijras, but zennana kotis, jogins, and kada-catla kotis also people the gendered landscape of southern India. All kotis, according to Reddy, are female-identified. To one extent or another, they perform female gender through dance, dress, and demeanor (e.g., swaying hips when walking). Taking a receptive role in sexual relationships with men is part of performing their gender identity. Yet not all kotis are alike. And Reddy’s mapping of koti identity helps to clarify the unique role of hijras in south Indian society. Kada-catla kotis, for example, wear men’s clothing and sometimes have wives and children. But they also have husbands, and when they congregate together they use their bodies, hips and wrists to perform feminism. Zenanas, like hijras, dance and perform in women’s clothing, but wear men’s clothing when they are not performing, and jogins dress as women, are devout Hindus, and are affiliated with a Hindu temple.

Thus, religion plays a crucial role in hijra identity. As Muslims, hijras are not jogins. Christians and Hindus join hijra communities, and when they do, they embrace Islam. As hijras, they observe both male and female Muslim practices, they are circumcised, they observe dietary regulations, and they adopt Muslim greetings. Some speak of nirvan, the operation to remove their penis and testicles, as a second circumcision, pointing out that they are more Muslim than non-hijra Muslims. Older hijras sometimes go on pilgrimages. Yet, Reddy points out, hijras also embrace some Hindu practices, specifically the worship of Bedhraj Mata or Bahuchara Mata, who watches over them when they undergo nirvan, and through whom they grant fertility to married couples. Thus, the religious identity that shapes hijra identity is both Muslim and Hindu. This layered identity, Reddy argues, is a product of the rich and layered political-cultural history of India.

Reddy’s mapping of India’s long history of religious and cultural pluralism demonstrates how it is that hijras are an integral part of Indian society. Muslim and Hindu cultures together formed rich religious, political and literary traditions where eunuchs could hold positions of respect in royal courts, and where Shiva, the god of destruction, tore off his phallus and threw it into the earth, making the earth fecund. In telling of India’s rich history and culture, Reddy does not romanticize the past, nor does she romanticize the position of hijras in Indian society. While the presence of hijras can be mapped in Indian literature as early as the fifth century CE, their status, like that of eunuchs, has been marginalized. During the colonial era, they were categorized as criminals, arrested on the streets and pushed off of their traditional lands. Today they are both respected and denigrated by the dominant culture. Thus families invite them to bless their homes with fertility, yet the earnings of hijras are so small they live in poverty, and most of their families disown them.

Yet it is izzat, or respect, that is central to hijra ways and identity. And one of the things that makes Reddy’s work so important is the attention that she pays to respect in constructing hijra identity. In this her work joins that of anthropologists such as Tom Boellstorff in his work on Indonesian Waria. It is only recently that scholars of kinship-based cultures have moved away from concepts of “honor” and “shame” to map value landscapes rooted in “respect,” a less sex-centric, more layered approach to understanding community status in many communities. For hijras, according to Redday, izzat is formed along a number of axes. Hijras acquire and maintain izzat from the correct practice of Islam, from rejecting sex, from skilled dancing, and perhaps most importantly, from establishing good kin-networks. A hijra who makes her living performing at weddings, would therefore have more izzat than a hijra who supports herself through sex work. Hijras who are celas, or disciples, have izzat when they are in good standing with their gurus and sister celas. Gurus have more izzat than celas, and so on.

Ultimately, Reddy’s work will be more appropriate for graduate students and professors than undergraduates. It does contain a glossary of useful terms, and a chapter dedicated to telling koti stories in their own words. But the organization of the text sometimes makes it difficult to follow; this, in combination with the very complex and contextual mapping of hijra lives that Reddy provides might make it difficult for undergraduates to fully utilize. For the undergraduate classroom, then the text will be best used selectively, as background for lectures or as chapters in a reader. For advanced students and scholars of South Asia and/or gender, the work will be indispensable.
When was the last time you read an academic article or book that you would describe afterward, in the most positive sense of the term, as a “page turner”? Has it been a while since you’ve happened upon a text that has inspired you to laugh (or at least chuckle), cry (or at least empathize), and think critically about the technologies of race, sexuality, gender, and class implicated in nationalist productions and consumptions of history? I’ve been a lucky butch lately. Not only have I enjoyed delving into Allan Bérubé’s analysis of his own trailer park past in “Sunset Trailer Park,” and Laura Kipnis’s intriguing interview with scholar/performance artist “White Trash Girl,” I also have benefited intellectually and, dare I say, erotically from Erica Rand’s playful and keen assessment of historical sites and souvenirs in The Ellis Island Snow Globe.

Rand’s final product is a scintillating text that analyzes the ways in which four cultural practices (involving migration, money, products, and nation) and three categories of analysis (sexuality, class, and race) become entangled politically in the restoration of two historic sites: Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty. This is not a traditional history book in its methodology or its tone, nor does it pretend to be. Combining archival research with ethnographic observations (called “eavesdropping”), Rand deploys something like “thick description” (à la Clifford Geertz or Jennifer Terry) to analyze people (in the past and in the present) and their products (from historical landmarks to kitschy souvenirs). Trained as an art historian and located institutionally now in women and gender studies, Rand’s project falls queerly in the interdisciplinary realm of cultural studies. The Ellis Island Snow Globe entices its readers to peer deeply, seriously and critically into the heterosexist, racist and consumerist trappings that make legible historic artifacts from the monumental gendering (as butch) and racing (as white, not black or green) of nationalist icons like the Statue of Liberty to the insidious portrayals of “breeder” families on seemingly apolitical keepsakes like snow globes, back scratchers, key chains, and picture frames. A word to the skeptical (and perhaps conventional) historian: harbor little fear, Rand is a clever yet compassionate tour guide who “strive[s] to write in a manner that can be read without undue struggle in various contexts” (35). In other words, critique implied, in the flush of cerebral titillation Rand often races ahead of her less adept charges, but only because she, obviously, is too thrilled to temper her own enthusiasm for cultural awakenings. But she never wanders far, instead consistently if somewhat absent-mindedly glancing over her shoulder to reconnect with readers willing to go a certain intellectual distance.

At the beginning of her book, Rand teases her audience by explaining that this entire academic project started out as a playful bet she made while “on a hot date” with a butch lesbian to visit Ellis Island. “I was...in it for the ferry ride more than the destination,” she writes (2). The bet was about whether or not Ellis Island had the audacity to commodify immigrants’ often grueling if not devastating experiences at the island by selling souvenirs items, such as snow globes. The lesbian who bet that Ellis Island did, in fact, sell snow globes won (you’ll have to read the book to see who gets to be the top in Rand’s first story). The initial narrative evolves swiftly into intense scholarly critique as Rand explores how interactions among sex, products, nation and money complicate contemporary manipulations of historical representation.

Turning to golf balls, photographs and other cultural artifacts, Rand assesses how images of heterosexual nuclear units (man, woman, child) obscure, historically, the complexity of immigrants’ sexualities and genders. Rand locates queer bodies and sexualities in the Ellis Island archives. Yet rather than simply recuperate, for example, female-bodied immigrants who identified and presented as male, such as Frank Woodhull, Rand analyzes “how the idea that breeders make heritage is constructed to be taken for granted” (28). In examining the policing and regulation of “gender at the border” (29), Rand intervenes in the current historiography about “passing women” by arguing for a more nuanced understanding and nomenclature regarding “female-to-male presenters.” Specifically, Rand calls on historians and others to resist the practice of “she-ing” these men by referring to them, categorically, as “passing women” (84-92). In “The Traffic in My Fantasy Butch,” Rand exposes misguided political fury over fundraising practices regarding the Statue of Liberty (i.e., Rand’s...
“fantasy butch”) and asks why those orchestrating and celebrating “Liberty Weekend” in 1986 were not equally outraged over, for instance, Bowers v. Hardwick. She follows this chapter with “Green Woman, Race Matters,” wherein she discusses two critical race analyses regarding the Statue of Liberty: first, that the meanings supporting the Statue as a beacon for immigrants dismisses people whose ancestors did not arrive in the United States by choice; and, second, that contemporary readings of the Statue ignore its beginnings as a tribute to the end of slavery. At the end of her book, Rand rewards us for our dedication to “Ellis Island—the site, the history, the concept,” (260) by analyzing the dynamics involved in the Ellis Island tourist “attraction” entitled, “Decide an Immigrant’s Fate.” She asks, pointedly, “why [the National Park Service would] put into repeated circulation a title that echoes some of the worst policies and impulses occurring today” and in the past both within the confines of Ellis Island and beyond (259).

Rand’s idiosyncratic tendency to make central the ways in which she shops and thinks (not necessarily but sometimes in that order), which I interpret as part of her incessant flirting (a femme eroticizing the practice of critically accessorizing), had the effect of engaging me seriously and thoughtfully with arguments featured in The Ellis Island Snow Globe. I enjoyed the book because it prompted me to think about historical representations; I also enjoyed it because it made me feel like I was on a date. Desire is a good thing, Rand makes clear. But will Rand’s book have the same effect on audiences who do not fall prey to her femme entrapments? Will they read her witticisms as clever and flirtatious, or will they respond to this work differently than did their lesbian and gay predecessors of just a very few years ago in the same classroom,” observes Abelove, a professor of English at Wesleyan. He conceives of his students as “an interpretive community” and then proposes to “interpret them interpreting history” ina decade ago, continues to meditate on a perceived space for lesbian/gay studies need not render less forceful its challenge to the scholarly and critical status quo, so our choice of ‘lesbian/gay’ indicates no wish on our part to make lesbian/gay studies look less assertive, less unsettling, and less queer than it already does.” The introduction concludes with a dedication to “our students, whom we fully expect it already does.” The introduction concludes with a dedication to “our students, whom we fully expect will remake the field of lesbian/gay studies—perhaps beyond recognition—in the years ahead” (xvii).

At the heart of Deep Gossip, Abelove’s first book-length publication since the 1993 edited volume, lies a resonant piece titled “The Queering of Lesbian/Gay History.” This essay, itself first published over a decade ago, continues to meditate on a perceived schism between lesbian/gay and queer. “When my queer students read the major English-language works of lesbian/gay history published since the late 1960s and dealing with the modern emergence of lesbian and gay identity, community and culture, they respond to this work differently than did their lesbian and gay predecessors of just a very few years ago in the same classroom,” observes Abelove, a professor of English at Wesleyan. He conceives of his students as “an interpretive community” and then proposes to “interpret them interpreting history” (43). Tropes of exclusion, marginalization, and liberation from “the closet” had less personal meaning to this generation of students (circa 1995). Yet Abelove’s conviction about the pertinence of “minoritizing” historical narratives shines through, lit from within.


Reviewed by Tirza True Latimer, Yale University.

Henry Abelove’s name is familiar to those of us whose bookshelves and syllabi contain The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader. This tour-de-force collection—which helped to define the field referenced in its title—broke ground in 1993, and, like most of the previously published essays reprinted in Deep Gossip, remains relevant today. The Reader, at the time of its release, provoked criticism from some sectors for its “cautious academicism.” In question, above all, was the decision on the part of Abelove and his co-editors, Michèle Aina Barale and David Halperin, to retain “lesbian and gay studies” rather than “queer studies” in the Reader’s title. Indeed, the anthology’s introduction anticipates this critique: “We have reluctantly chosen not to speak here and in our title of ‘queer studies,’ despite our own attachment to the term, because we wish to establish the force of current usage,” the editors explain. “Just as the project of seeking legitimate institutional and intellectual space for lesbian/gay studies need not render less forceful its challenge to the scholarly and critical...
by an activist’s passion for pedagogy. “I believe I know that far more unites than divides lesbian, gay, and queer,” the piece concludes, like a poem or a prayer (55). This essay, although still intellectually engaging, would benefit from a coda revisiting these questions within today’s more conservative political framework (for example, I have students who shy away from taking courses with “queer” in the title out of concern for the consequences of the word appearing on their permanent transcripts).

Even so, I stand by my assertion that this essay lies at the heart of Abelove’s book – not only for its position at the center of the volume’s table of contents but also for its articulation of the tensions animating a scholarly and theoretical project that brilliantly queers History. With considerable panache, Abelove unravels master narratives and problematizes prevailing cultural myths—all the while retaining a palpable sympathy for pre-postmodern identity politics. “The queer students were interested in destabilizing identity in the past as well as in the present, and ...they wanted the performance of that destabilization to be always primary.” What the works of lesbian/gay history can do, he demonstrates, “is to historicize identity. From historicizing to destabilizing is arguably just a step” (54). This is the claim that Abelove makes, and the step that he takes, time and again throughout this terse but elegantly choreographed ensemble.

The essays collected in Deep Gossip span decades of Abelove’s career. Four out of six have been published elsewhere. The first, “Freud, Male Homosexuality, and the Americans,” originally appeared in Dissent in 1985. A tremendously important intervention into the fields of cultural and intellectual history, and more precisely the histories of psychoanalysis and sexuality, the value of this scholarship endures and time has not dulled its critical edge. “Freud argued, in direct opposition to the homosexual emancipation movement of his own day, that homosexuals constituted not ‘special variety’ of humankind, no ‘distinct sexual species,’” Abelove explains in his current introduction. “I very much wanted to bring that genuinely Freudian lesson into discussion within the lesbian/gay civil rights movement, which was active in 1980 when the essay was composed and has been active since then as well” (xiii). The questions the essay raises about sexual subjectivity and its theoretical representation remain timely. This essay, the most solidly constructed, anchors the reflections and interpretive escapades that follow.

The title Deep Gossip evoked for me a different kind of project than the one I discovered in “Freud, Male Homosexuality, and the Americans” and the essays that unfold in its aftermath (chronologically, in the order they were written). I expected something more on the order of Gavin Butt’s recent Between You and Me: Queer Disclosures in the New York Art World. While Butts focus’s on the operationality of gossip, how it constitutes and consolidates queer relationships and cultural communities, Abelove deploys the concept somewhat differently. He identifies gossip as an accessible form of knowledge, thus power. “It is an indispensible resource for those who are in any sense or measure disempowered.” Gossip can be described as “deep,” despite its connotations of shallowness, “whenever it circulates in subterranean ways and touches on matters hard to grasp and of crucial concern” (xii). If the relationship between gossip and some of the topics Abelove treats is obscure, knowledge (how it is constituted, transmitted, modified) is always clearly a central concern.

The book’s second essay, “Some Speculations on the History of Sexual Intercourse during the Long Eighteenth Century in England” (completed in 1989) “as the advances, for instance, a new hypothesis about the conventionalization of sexual intercourse. This occurred, the author maintains, in England between 1680 and 1830. Drawing inspiration from pivotal works in the history of sexuality (especially histories of gay and lesbian sexuality), Abelove attempts to demonstrate the historical contingency of sexual intercourse as we understand the term (and the act) today. The essay would have been more convincing if he had fleshed out his thesis more fully. This piece is, to my mind, the weakest in the book—however predisposed I might be to applaud the initiative. This said, the use of “speculations” in the title no doubt excuses the author in advance for his disinclination to elaborate. Yet, phrases like “on some other occasion I should like to say more” (24), “what does seem to me at least conceivable, though I am just speculating in saying so” (26) and “I cannot say that I have such findings to present to you” (27) repeatedly call the reader’s attention to the tenuousness of the argumentation. Similar disclaimers crop up here and there throughout the book, in fact, assuming the character of a literary tic: “I won’t comment in detail” (38), “my object isn’t to provide a full account” (56), “I would like to comment, if only schematically” (71), etc. As I mused on this tic, I came to accept it as a method. The essays no longer seem flawed by systematic abbreviation when viewed as models for practicing queer historicism, rather than models of queer history per se. The impulse to economize, from this perspective, appears generous. And claims left hanging assume the allure of invitations...perhaps to
those students who “will remake the field of lesbian/gay studies—perhaps beyond recognition—in the years ahead.”

“Some Speculations” precedes a piece of writing that more successfully shows off the originality of Abelove’s mind as well as his method, “From Thoreau to Queer Politics” (which appeared in *Yale Journal of Criticism* in 1993). The most audacious (and to borrow the term employed by Thoreau’s critics, the most “eccentric”) essay in the collection, “From Thoreau to Queer Politics” reflects on notions of “nationhood” in relation to, on the one hand, Thoreau’s *Walden* and, on the other, Queer Nation (more precisely the local Salt Lake City chapter to which Abelove once belonged). Here we see what Abelove does best: propose unexpected correspondences that produce, via some psychic and/or intellectual alchemy, new vistas, new schemas, new modes of understanding both history and contemporary experience, dialogically.

The penultimate essay (following up on “The Queering of Lesbian/Gay History”) returns to disciplinary concerns, reflecting, in this instance, on “American Studies, Queer Studies.” This unexpectedly poignant chapter explores the history of the former in relation to the latter. Abelove focuses on E. O. Matthiessen, one of the founders of the discipline of American Studies. A gay man and committed socialist, the once revered Harvard professor took his life in 1950, a victim of the right-wing political campaigns that seized the nation he took as his object of study. “American Studies as a discipline...is a well-received and much-validated set of reaction formations to questions...framed at the start of the discipline’s development but immediately and thoroughly deflected, sacrificed, and repressed, as were the questioners themselves,” Abelove concludes (69). These questions regard the “erotic dynamic, ties affections, affiliations, that bound together the white men” (68) who founded the republic.

*Deep Gossip* concludes with Abelove’s most recent essay, “New York City, Gay Liberation, and the Queer Commuters.” Here, the author posits a kinship between the language of gay liberation and that of literature. He argues that “the rhetoric of gay liberation had been drawn from the queer-inflected anglophone literature of the 1950s and 1960s” produced by authors such as James Baldwin, Elisabeth Bishop, Paul Bowles, Jane Bowles, William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Paul Goodman, Frank O’Hara, and Ned Rorem (xviii). This brings us full circle, in a way, since the title of the book derives from an elegy to Frank O’Hara penned, in 1966, by Allen Ginsberg. Ginsberg praised O’Hara’s ear “for our deep gossip” (xi). Abelove’s attentiveness to “subterranean” registers of poetry and meaning in American culture and his commitment to “matters hard to grasp and of crucial concern” makes this title, in the last analysis, an extremely apt choice.
BALLOT
CLGH By law Amendment and Governing Board Elections – April-May 2007

Please complete this ballot and return by June 15, 2007.

Return to:
Karen C. Krahulik
Associate Dean of the College
Box 1939
Providence, RI, 02912

By law Amendment
Proposed amendment to bylaws: Add the following Section 7 under Article VI: Committees

Section 7: The chairperson, in consultation with the governing board, shall appoint a secretary to manage all meetings and all aspects of membership for the CLGH. The secretary will deliver a written membership report each year.

Approve by law amendment:  Yes: ___  No: ___

Governing Board Elections
The mission of the CLGH Governing Board is to further the goals of CLGH and to assist and advise the CLGH chair. Governing Board members are expected to take responsibility for at least one CLGH project each year.

Select two candidates for three-year terms (15 June 2007 to 14 June 2010).

_____ Matt Johnson  
_____ Susan Stryker  
_____ Martin Meeker  
_____ Stephen Stillwell

Revise Dues Structure:
Due to a $400 annual operating deficit, the treasurer of the CLGH has proposed the following increase in annual membership dues.

The current schedule is thus:

_____ US$5.00 Basic (Student, Retired, Unemployed)
_____ US$10.00 Regular (annual income less than US$40,000)
_____ US$20.00 Regular (annual income more than US$40,000)
_____ US$35.00 Patron
_____ US$150.00 Lifetime

Proposed schedule:

_____ US$20.00 Basic (Student, Retired, Unemployed, income less than US $50,000)
_____ US$40.00 Regular (annual income more than US$40,000)
_____ US$100.00 Patron
_____ US$500.00 Lifetime

Approve Revised Dues Schedule:
Yes __________________
Some-Sex Desire and Love in Greco-Roman Antiquity and in the Classical Tradition of the West

Edited by Beert C. Verstrate, PhD, MA, BA, and Vernon L. Provencal, PhD, MA, BA

“This wide-ranging collection engages with the existing scholarship in the history of sexuality and the uses of the classical tradition and OPENS UP EXCITING NEW AREAS OF STUDY. The book is A MOST IMPORTANT ADDITION TO THE STUDY OF HOMOSEXUALITY.” —Stephen G. Laylay, PhD, Department of Classics, University of British Columbia


A thoughtful collection of fresh insights into male and female homosexuality in the ancient Greco-Roman world and in the Classical tradition of the West.

Becoming a Woman

A Biography of Christine Jorgensen

Richard F. Dobbs, PhD

A fascinating biography of the highly-publicized male-to-female sex change recipient. Christine Jorgensen, and the impact she had on changing attitudes toward gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered persons.


A Choice Magazine Outstanding Academic Title (2009)

Pederasts and Others

Urban Culture and Sexual Identity in Nineteenth-Century Paris

William A. Peniston, PhD


An InsightOut Book Club Selection

Scandal

Infamous Gay Controversies of the Twentieth Century

Marc E. Vargo, MS

“A HIGHLY READABLE . . . informative for people wanting to learn about same-sex controversies.” —Library Journal

A unique blend of biography and gay political history!
