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### CLGH

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### Chair's Column Karen C. Krahulik

Greetings, friends. My first order of business is to thank everyone who participated at this year's AHA annual meeting. I realize I have a biased point of view, but I certainly felt as though LGBTQ intellectual and social energy had permeated the conference in its entirety. We had a terrific turnout at both of our receptions, the one on Friday night we co-sponsored with the *Radical History Review (RHR)* and the one on Saturday featured local activists and historians. On Friday night, in addition to celebrating the newly published queer issue of the *RHR*, we had the pleasure of honoring Martin Duberman, who later that evening received an "Award for Scholarly Distinction" from the AHA (the other two award winners in this category were Anne Firor Scott and Jack P. Greene). John D'Emilio was gracious enough to nominate Martin, and at the Friday night reception D'Emilio, facing a robust crowd of radical historians, recounted Martin's notable accomplishments. Governing Board member Mark Meinke, of the Rainbow History Project in Washington, D.C., orchestrated the Saturday night event, which also welcomed an energetic crowd. The legendary Frank Kameny was in attendance and we heard from a number of DC activists including: Earline Budd (Transgender Health Empowerment) and Atul Garg, Yassir Islam, and Divya Guru Rajan (representing Khush). These events were flanked by numerous panels—a total of 8—that addressed new scholarship in the field of LGBTQ studies. Last, but not least, was our annual business meeting. Governing Board Members, Susan Stryker and Lisa Hizirjian, facilitated a discussion on a possible name change for the CLGH, (see page 19).

Also in this issue are three ballots that I trust you will consider seriously. The first asks you to approve a change to our by-laws so that we may create a new award in public history in honor of the late Allan Bérubé. We are working with the LGBT Historical Society of Northern California in this endeavor, and we are thrilled to see it coming to fruition. The second asks you to select two new governing board members. Rotating out this year are Lisa Hazirjian and Horacio Roque Ramirez. Please join me in thanking Lisa and Horacio for their dedication to the CLGH. I will miss them! And the third asks you

*Continued on Page 2*

to nominate a new chair for the CLGH (the vote will take place in October). As many of you know, my three-year term as chair will conclude at the end of this calendar year. If you or someone you know is interested in being nominated, but desires first to know more about the position, please do not hesitate to contact me directly by email or telephone. It has been a pleasure for me to assume this responsibility, and I am honored to be in the good company of former chairs such as Leisa Meyer, Marc Stein, Vicki Eaklor, John D'Emilio and several others.

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## Prizes 2008

### 2008 CLGH Prize Committee

#### **Sprague Prize:**

Zeb Tortorici, "Heran Todos Putos': Sodomitical Subcultures and Disordered Desire in Early Colonial Mexico," *Ethnohistory* 54:1 (2007)

Tortorici's article examines a case of a sodomy trial in rural early colonial Mexico. Tortorici's archival work is impressive and he places his work within the context of both American early modern colonial history and early modern European history. Through careful reading of the linguistic vocabulary in the trial record, Tortorici challenges the existing equation in the study of pre-modern homosexuality between masculinity and activity on the one hand and femininity and passivity on the other, and argues for a more nuanced understanding of the sodomitic reality in early modern Mexico and beyond. Equally important is Tortorici's complication of the notions of order and disorder in Colonial Mexico and early modern Spain. Here, too, his work invites historians to rethink their categories and their conceptualization of major categories.

#### **Lorde Prize:**

Claire Bond Potter, "Queer Hoover: Sex, Lies, and Political History," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 15:3 (2006)

We are happy to award the Lorde Prize to Claire Bond Potter for her careful and sophisticated analysis of the rumors and gossip surrounding J. Edgar Hoover's homosexuality. Potter asks not whether Hoover was or was not a homosexual, but how to do the history of gossip and homophobia, and how to "write

history in which facts and truths are – and are not – at issue." As such, the article opens new ways to think about history of sexuality and homosexuality. Potter suggests that the "outing" of Hoover in the late 1980s was not about LGBTQ people and their history as much as it was about using gossip and homophobia to talk about politics and power. This important observation connects LGBTQ history to political history, and reminds historians of the degree to which Cold War America politicized the private sphere. Potter's article challenges not only the current historiography of "Gay Hoover" and Cold War U.S.A., but also all historians to rethink the nature of their sources and the questions they ask.

#### **Special honorary mention:**

Gillian Frank, "Discophobia: Antigay Prejudice and the 1979 Backlash against Disco," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 16:2 (2007)

Gillian Frank's article is not archival per se, but his essay is a very important contribution to gay and lesbian history of the 1970s. While much is known by now about the advance and success of campaigns for gay rights, less work has been done on the parallel advance of homophobia. Frank studies the late 1970s, a period that has yet to garner attention from LGBTQ historians, and examines in detail the realm of popular music and the competition between Disco and Rock and Roll, a topic that has so far been overlooked. We found his topic important and his arguments very compelling. While we decided to award the prizes to two articles that are more archive-based, we want to use this opportunity to recommend his article to LGBTQ historians.

The 2008 Prize Committee was chaired by Moshe Sluhovsky, Professor of History, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Visiting Associate Professor of History, Brown University. It also included Christolyn Williams, Assistant Professor, History, Westchester Community College; and Phil Tiemeyer, PhD Candidate, Dept. of American Studies, University of Texas at Austin.

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## **The Committee on Lesbian and Gay History | Prizes 2009 Call For Nominations**

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.  
(Published in 2007 or 2008.)

**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.  
(Completed in 2007 or 2008.)

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:

John D'Emilio  
Gender & Women's Studies [MC 360]  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
601 S. Morgan St., Room 1802  
Chicago IL 60607-7107

Amy Sueyoshi  
Assistant Professor in Ethnic Studies and Human Sexuality Studies  
1879 41st Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94122.

Red Vaughan Tremmel  
Ph.D Candidate—Univ. of Chicago  
5630 S. University 216 East  
Chicago, IL, 60637

**The Committee on Lesbian and Gay History (CLGH) awards the following prizes.**

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.)

The Gregory Sprague Graduate Student Prize for an outstanding published or unpublished paper, article, book chapter, or dissertation chapter on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, and/or queer history completed in English by a graduate student.  
(Even-numbered years, covering previous two years.)

The Audre Lorde Prize for an outstanding article on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, and/or queer history published in English.  
(Even-numbered years, covering previous two years.)

## Remembering Allan Bérubé

Following are remarks made by Nan Alamilla Boyd at a May 17, 2008 Memorial to Allan Bérubé held at the GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco. Author of the pathbreaking *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two* (1990), Allan was a long-time member of CLGH.

In preparing for this event, Lynley Wheaton from CLAGS [Committee on Lesbian and Gay Studies] in New York City sent me two slide shows. One is of still photos of Allan with little embellishment, and the other is of Allan's life in Liberty, New York, where he spent the last eight-or-so years of his life. This is a part of Allan's life I did not know too well, and it struck me, as I watched the sweetly annotated slides, that he had developed a whole separate life there, a different life than the one I knew, filled with people I didn't know. Somehow, before he died, he'd already moved on to somewhere else, which feels strange because as I mourn him, I mourn the loss of his life here in San Francisco. I need to remember him in San Francisco because his life here was so tremendously important to me and to so many others.

To me, Allan was an exceptionally special person. He ranked right up there with my grandma, who was my all-time favorite person on the planet. I know he was much more important to me than I was to him (and that's ok), but we shared some significant events. I met him in 1991, after I'd gotten a small grant to start an oral history project here at the GLBT Historical Society. Allan took me under his wing, taught me the basics of oral history methods, helped me draft my release forms, let me practice on him, reminded me to check twice that I'd turned on the machine, and set me up with my first few interviews. Those interviews became the foundation for my book, and that's all well and good, but what Allan did for me was much more significant: he befriended me and mentored me through my 20s, when I felt so alienated, mostly by class, and was certain I didn't belong in academia and had no business trying to write a history of queer San Francisco.

Between 1991 and 1993, we spent time together once or twice a month, sometimes for whole days, visiting new cafes in the Mission, talking about working-class culture, our families, and the books we were reading. We hung out together in the GLBT Historical Society's archives or at the *Out/Look* offices, went to movies, celebrated each other's birthdays, and

cruised used bookstores. I remember we drove out to Walnut Creek one Sunday to videotape José Sarria performing a 1990s version of one of his famous operatic brunches (Allan was a meticulous archivist). Basically, I glommed on to him and he kind of graciously let me. I think he liked me, enjoyed my company, but I loved him. I totally fell in love with Allan. I would never have made it through grad school without him. I just didn't have the confidence, and he gently prodded me along, seemed to respect me and believe in me, and I needed that.

After he moved to New York for the CLAGS Rockefeller, I followed him, the next year, and we spent a lot of time together there, too. I was with him when he got the call about the MacArthur Fellowship [awarded in 1996]. We threw an impromptu pizza party at Jonathan Ned Katz's house and endlessly discussed what it meant, what money and recognition meant, and how he could now stop worrying about basic living expenses and finish the project on the Marine, Cooks and Stewards Union he had been working on. In the slides from Liberty he looks relaxed and happy, in his element, and I like to imagine him that way. It's comforting to me because often, when I spent time with him in the early 1990s, he was worried or sad, struggling with money, struggling for recognition, struggling with his own loneliness. And while this is where we connected, it's not where he ended up.

I mourn the loss of this beautiful man, his brilliance, his sweetness, his emotional depth. I wish I could have said these things to him before he died -- how much he meant to me, how much he gave to me, and how grateful I am for his existence. I'm glad he found some peace in Liberty, but he should also know, and it should be known that San Francisco is forever transformed by his presence. These archives [at the GLBT Historical Society] are a living testimony to who Allan was: a collector, a giver, a grassroots activist, a playful thinker, and a historian. Thank you to everyone for coming together this afternoon to celebrate the life and creative work of Allan Berube.

Thank you.

Nan Alamilla Boyd

May 17, 2008

## D'Emilio Marks Anniversary

Yasmin Nair

John D'Emilio's book *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* was published by the University of Chicago in March 1983. To mark the 25th anniversary of the book, Gerber/Hart Library, 1127 W. Granville, hosted a tribute to D'Emilio's work and career Sun., March 16. The event included a panel discussion with presentations by local scholars Cathy Cohen and Ramon Gutierrez, both of the University of Chicago, and Michael Sherry of Northwestern University.

Panelists' comments focused on the influence of the book on their own research and teaching, and the changes in the field since its publication. Cohen spoke about first reading it while a graduate student at the University of Michigan, and about feeling a "visceral connection" to both the book's research and the communities it spoke to and about. Referring to the acknowledgments section of *Sexual Politics*, she noted that D'Emilio had not drawn exclusively upon academics, but had worked with scholars, writers and activists. For Cohen, this spoke to the fact that intellectuals needed to "work in alliance" with a broader community in order to achieve "real political transformation."

Ramon Gutierrez contextualized shifts in the historical understanding of local queer politics since the publication of D'Emilio's book, especially in relation to race, ethnicity and gender. Homophile movements like the kind described in D'Emilio's book are seen in terms of a shift: from being defined by sexual acts to being defined by sexual identity. But, Gutierrez pointed out, analysis establishes a binary between gay and straight that doesn't play out the same way across communities of color. Addressing the politics of accommodation of early gay groups, Gutierrez pointed out that this reflected and came about in large part because of the homophiles' complicity with heterosexual patriarchy. Michael Sherry's comments focused on the role of *Sexual Politics* in his own teaching career. He spoke about constructing syllabi for gay history courses in the early 1970s, when the field of gay history was emerging. For him, the appearance of *Sexual Politics* meant that he could now direct students to a work that contextualized what he wanted to teach: "gay history made sense."

Event co-chairs Timothy Stewart-Winter and Thomas Adams read from tributes sent by queer scholars across the country, including Alisa Solomon and George Chauncey. John D'Emilio concluded the evening's presentations by reflecting upon the early days of collecting material for his project and of often relying upon the private collections of individuals. He pointed out that while much has changed in terms of the acceptance of marginalized communities' histories as fit objects of study by large institutions, local queer organizations like Gerber/Hart need to be sustained to ensure that LGBT history archives are preserved.

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## REVIEWS

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Marc Epprecht, *Hungochani: The History of a Dissident Sexuality in Southern Africa* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004).

Reviewed by Steeve O. Buckridge, Grand Valley State University.

Marc Epprecht has produced an excellent comprehensive study of the history and traditions of homosexuality among black Africans from the pre-colonial era to the present in southern Africa. Epprecht is an Assistant Professor of History at Queen's University, where he is actively engaged with an outreach program to gays and lesbians in Zimbabwe. Focusing on Zimbabwe, the author explains that *Hungochani* means homosexuality in chiShona, the nation's dominant indigenous language, and that the term was adopted in the 1990s by gay rights activists in the region. Epprecht notes that similar linguistic terms existed in other parts of southern Africa, and argues that this suggests that homosexuality was part of the early African experience. The principal subjects in this study are gays and lesbians, or the *dissidents*, a term the author ascribes to them to be provocative and to reflect the struggles and the ideals to which gay rights organizations aspire.

This study is timely due to the current backlash and oppressive measures against homosexuals in Zimbabwe by both political and religious elites. As such, the pursuit of equality is more difficult in Zimbabwe, even though there have been significant changes and accomplishments regarding gay rights in neighboring South Africa. In this enormously stimulating text, Epprecht both challenges and dispels the notion that homosexuality in southern Africa is a foreign element or "white man's disease," and that such sexual behavior is an example of "a new form of western imperialism" that has corrupted African traditions (4). Epprecht's study also tackles the homophobic statements of regional leaders such as President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, who set this tone in a 1995 speech that described gays and lesbians as "worse than pigs and dogs" (4). This kind of hate rhetoric has created an atmosphere where gays and lesbians are subject to blackmail, job discrimination, police harassment, family ostracism and even violence. In response, Epprecht declares, "my original goal was to test the homophobic and xenophobic claims of

certain Zimbabwean leaders against the empirical evidence" (vii). However, his challenge does not only address bigots like Mugabe, but takes on those in the west who rush to "judge and patronize" Africans on this topic (6). Epprecht's goal is to be subversive, to 'queer up' the issues, more specifically to "query, to problematise, to destabilize homophobic and heterosexist as well as just plain sexist and racist discourses around identity and politics in southern Africa" (23).

Epprecht meticulously examines the data and traces the extent of same-sex activities back to pre-colonial times and, with sophistication and ease, he elevates to new heights the ongoing debate about the origins of homosexuality in Africa. Epprecht's diligent analysis of the sources and traditional practices compels the reader to reevaluate previous scholarship and old notions of sexuality and to address crucial questions central to this topic such as, "What kind of same sex sexual behavior existed in southern Africa before colonial rule and how did traditional societies regard or cope with them? Where did the antecedents of the term *hungochani* come from and how precisely have their meaning changed over time? What are the origins of today's homophobia and the myth of the really heterosexual African? What relationship exists between the history of class formation and conflict on the one hand and changing ideals, norms, practices and dissidences around sexuality..." (23).

Epprecht admits that the quest for answers to these questions can be a daunting task, particularly during the colonial period, where due to colonial conventions, sources are silent, sparse, or heavily tainted with the observers' biases. According to Epprecht, this raises a whole new set of methodological challenges for the researcher. For instance, how does one penetrate this wall of silence? How does one access the evidence? Epprecht recommends queer theory as the solution. The great promise of queer theory is that it "directly addresses itself to these questions and to the tasks of locating and deciphering often-cryptic sources around sexuality issues" (12). Although researchers must be careful not to misread the evidence, queer theory has been proven to be very successful in accessing hidden sources and revealing the underlying meanings. Epprecht adds that since the 1970s, queer historians have shown the usefulness of this approach by building on the works of Michel Foucault and using queer theory to examine the development of specific homosexual subcultures in different countries at different historical periods.

Epprecht argues that Europeans introduced homophobia, not homosexuality, and that dissident sexualities have contributed immensely to the socio-economic and political development of southern Africa. Epprecht does not leave his readers stuck in the past but bridges the past with the present. He examines the emergence of modern-day gay and lesbian identities with the introduction of capitalism, colonial rule and Christian education. He concludes by reiterating the findings of earlier pioneer works in the field, and reminds us that Africa is assuredly complex and diverse as other parts of the world. Furthermore, historical evidence reveals that black African men and women in earlier times made a “wide range of sexual decisions in response to the full gamut of human emotion” (223).

This book is extensively documented, and relies on a remarkable array of primary and secondary sources to provide unique insights into the world of southern African homosexuality. These sources include government documents, court records, literary sources, cave paintings, films, church records, and interviews conducted for the Gay Oral History Project in Zimbabwe in 1998, as well as documents from the Gay and Lesbian Archives. This study provides a fresh perspective on topics ranging from capitalism and colonialism in Africa to the role of Christian education in southern Africa. Epprecht’s narrative style is elegant and fluid, and the text is clearly organized and well presented. Particularly useful are the glossary of terms, the detailed map and the fascinating photographs banked at the beginning of the book. The study is divided into eight chapters, followed by the conclusion and two extensive appendices that address sources and methodologies and include sample interviews from the Gay Oral History Project.

Marc Epprecht’s study is rich in information and valuable to scholars and students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. More importantly, it makes major contributions to the fields of African history, queer studies, cultural studies, gay and lesbian history, women and gender studies, anthropology and sociology. Overall, *Hungochani* is a superb book, which more than adequately fulfills its promise.

Tanya Erzen, *Straight to Jesus: Sexual and Christian Conversions in the Ex-Gay Movement* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006).

Reviewed by William B. Turner, Emory Law School

*Straight to Jesus* is a participant-observer study of one ex-gay ministry in California. This is one of those books that one is very pleased to see someone have written. Erzen provides any number of fascinating insights into the world of ex-gay persons and their supporters. Although her primary research and the content of the book focus heavily on the New Hope residential ex-gay program, she provides extensive historical and contemporary cultural context as well. She is well versed in the debates over the “social construction” of lesbian/gay identity and incorporates that material into the study without being annoying about it.

Erzen demonstrates that both sides of the LGBT civil rights debate misunderstand the individuals who participate in ex-gay ministries. She explains that ex-gay persons themselves, at least those at New Hope, rarely expect to achieve complete cessation of same-sex attraction and activity. In other words, so long as Christian conservative leaders continue to rely on the ex-gay movement as a major vehicle for their anti-gay activism, they will continue to invite embarrassments such as ex-gay poster boy John Paulk’s visit to a gay bar in Washington, D.C. a few years ago. Instead, Erzen’s ex-gay participants emphasize redemption as a key element in Christian belief in order to sustain the expectation that sincere acceptance of Jesus as one’s personal savior means that one is always free to repent of individual lapses and rededicate one’s self to chastity.

Erzen holds a Ph.D. in American Studies, but her research method is plainly anthropological. She discusses the issues of method and conceptualization that arise when an ethnographer writes about a group whose views she disagrees with (see pp. 6-7). She tells the story of an early conversation with one of the leaders of New Hope, who made it very clear that they hoped to save Erzen’s soul. Equally important, it turns out, was the fact that New Hope needed help updating and maintaining its website, which Erzen was qualified and willing to do. She traded her work on the New Hope website for access to New Hope participants, with whom she gradually cultivated friendships during a year of work for the organization. Obviously, this arrangement raises epistemological and political questions, but I think

the results more than justify Erzen's decisions about research method.

As a good ethnography, *Straight to Jesus* effectively weaves together a running story about New Hope, and one cohort of men who lived there while participating in the ex-gay program, with various forays into greater detail about related topics. Chapter One provides a fascinating and very helpful historical overview of the ex-gay movement in the United States. I was quite surprised to learn that Open Door, the church with which New Hope ministries is officially affiliated, has its roots in the Jesus movement of the early 1970s, when large numbers of hippies and other counterculture folks joined charismatic Christian churches. This perhaps explains why the Protestant activists in Exodus International, probably the most famous ex-gay group, do not much interact with the Catholics of Courage, as the hostility of theologically conservative Protestants toward Catholicism persists (This is also a point on which the ex-gay grassroots apparently differs from Focus on the Family, the anti-gay organization that sponsors "Love Won Out" ex-gay conferences. When I attended a "Love Won Out" conference, a featured speaker was the Catholic psychologist Joseph Nicolosi, and other speakers emphasized from the podium the availability of literature specifically aimed at Catholics.) Erzen also notes a Jewish ex-gay organization, JONAH, *Jews Offering New Alternatives to Homosexuality* (46-49). She gives a brief account of the famous episode in which a leading figure at Exodus fell in love with a volunteer. They were on a trip together at the time, and apparently interpreted the fact that the hotel put them in a room with only one bed as a sign from God (34).

Chapter Two begins the overview of New Hope's residential program for aspiring ex-gay men, interleaving it with an extended discussion of the theology underlying the movement, including historical information about the development of evangelical Christianity. The chapter also provides the example of one person who gave up being ex-gay and now attends an evangelical church in San Francisco where the worship style is similar to Open Door, but which openly promotes the belief that God loves her LGBT children just as they are. Erzen points out that, despite their opposing positions on the political spectrum, these two churches have statements of faith that are nearly identical (78).

Chapter Three, "A Refuge from the World," emphasizes the effort at New Hope to be all-encompassing for participants. Having begun an explanation of New Hope's extensive rules in Chapter Two, Erzen expands on them and offers more detail about how the rules play out in the lives of specific participants. Participants have to find jobs in the vicinity and frequently rely on a sympathetic temp service. Employment presents a particular difficulty at the beginning of the program, because during the initial period, participants are not supposed to go anywhere without the company of two other persons.

Chapter Four, "Arrested Development," explains the scientific claims on which "reparative therapy" for lesbians and gay men rests, and places the current debate into the historical context of scholarship on sexuality since the late nineteenth century. Erzen also discusses the opposition between advocates of "reparative therapy" and the mainstream psychiatric and psychological establishments, which oppose such therapy. She provides a useful overview of the contretemps that erupted in 2000 over the "study" by Robert Spitzer claiming to demonstrate that ex-gay conversion was genuinely possible. Spitzer's claims attracted considerable attention because he had participated in removing "homosexuality" from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual in 1973. Erzen notes that his research on successful ex-gay men consisted solely of thirty-minute telephone interviews with persons whom he contacted at ex-gay conferences. Two-thirds of his respondents lived in California, and eighty percent were Caucasian (131).

Chapter Five provides more detail about individual narratives of healing and conversion, which Erzen explains are central to the experience of New Hope participants. Finally, Chapter Six compares the experiences of New Hope participants with the representation of the ex-gay movement that leading Christian conservatives offer for political purposes. Erzen notes a number of important discrepancies, not least that most individual participants are far less sanguine about achieving total, lasting change to heterosexuality than are the likes of Focus on the Family.

*Straight to Jesus* is not without flaws. One puzzling and disappointing omission is the total absence of any discussion of social class. I found ample evidence to indicate that class is an important component of the identities of many ex-gay



participants, but Erzen largely fails to develop this point. For example, she asserts of one New Hope participant that she suspected he was an imposter – he was Methodist, not fundamentalist; he had divinity school training and the knowledge of critical theory, including queer theory, that such training implies; he defied both the Biblical literalism and the house rules of New Hope. It seems obvious that class is an important component of what made this individual different from the other participants, but Erzen completely fails to discuss that possibility. Regardless, anyone who wants to understand LGBT politics in the United States during the post-World War II period must read this book. Overall, I highly recommend this fine book.

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**Steve Estes, *Ask and Tell: Gay and Lesbian Veterans Speak Out* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).**

Reviewed by Jay Hatheway, Edgewood College

[Reviewer's Note: In 1975-76, the reviewer was court-martialed for a violation of Article 125 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, i.e., the sodomy statute. He was subsequently separated under conditions of less than honorable. In 1978, the reviewer and Leonard Matlovich joined legal forces with the ACLU and attempted a two-pronged attack: Matlovich challenged the regulations banning gays in uniform while the reviewer mounted the first challenge to the constitutionality of said statute.]

*Ask and Tell: Gay & Lesbian Veterans Speak Out*, by Steve Estes, an associate professor of history at Sonoma State University and volunteer interviewer for the Veterans History Project, is a compilation of over fifty oral interviews of American gay and lesbian veterans from WWII through the current war in Iraq. In this well-written book of intensely personal accounts of life in the military, Estes is concerned with two primary issues: the forced silence of gay and lesbian soldiers in the aftermath of the 1993-94 "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" legislation, and the "collective amnesia about the patriotic service and courageous sacrifices of homosexual troops" (2). To rectify this situation, Estes tells us that *Ask and Tell* is specifically intended to fill gaps in the existing literature on gay and lesbian soldiers by allowing gay and lesbian service people to speak for themselves in the "only oral history project to include the stories of veterans from World II to the

wars in Afghanistan and Iraq," to include, for the first time, service academy alumni and flag officers (3). The intention of these interviews is twofold, Estes informs the reader in his introduction: 1) to counter those critics who assert that gay and lesbian soldiers are both "atypical" not "battle-tested" and 2) to "provide a forum for the interviewees to give their own testimony about 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' policy and its legacies for the U.S. military" (3-4).

*Ask and Tell* consists of an introduction and nine chapters broken down by era, from WWII in Chapter One through "Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq" in Chapter Nine. There are two appendices, one on "Oral History and Editing Interviews," and another that lists the interviewees. This is followed by extensive and well-documented notes, and an index. Selected photographs of the interviewees, sprinkled throughout the text, allow for the development of a sense of intimacy with those interviewed.

On all accounts, Estes has produced a successful text, replete with drama, bravery, and a breath of military experience that demands recognition and respectful praise from the American public. A short historical essay that briefly contextualizes how the military perceived homosexuality for the era under review prefaces each chapter. Similar in style to Mary Ann Humphries' *My Country, My Right to Serve*, Estes then allows the soldiers' stories to unfold in a naturalistic fashion against the background of the period. Unlike the journalistic narratives found in Randy Shilts' *Conduct Unbecoming*, the readers of *Ask and Tell* can almost hear these men and women relate their myriad and powerful stories of service and commitment in spite of the U.S. military's anti-gay attitudes.

The strength of the text, however, resides less in the related experiences of the veterans of WWII, Korea, the Cold War or Vietnam (which have been covered in greater detail in other works), but rather more in those of the service academies, the Gulf War, and more recent U.S. military engagements in the Middle East. Furthermore, the inclusion of racial and ethnic minorities as well as women is thoroughly refreshing and long overdue. At least ten women are interviewed, and Chapter Five, "The Women's War for Inclusion," is completely dedicated to the experiences of servicewomen from the 1970s to the 1990s. The experiences of successful flag officers is yet another welcome development for in the stories of these officers we see for the first time the careers of honorable people performed under very

trying conditions with respect to their personal and professional lives.

By the end of the book, it is blatantly apparent to all but the most bigoted or ignorant that not only is “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” a colossal failure, but it is also a mischievous policy that is detrimental to the armed forces of the United States. Other than rank discrimination based upon the groundless myth that the presence of homosexuals is detrimental to the morale of the service, gay and lesbian service personnel have served their country in an exemplary fashion and without prejudice to their sexual orientation. What else can one ask of a soldier? The real horror story, of course, is the continued presence of a policy that ultimately excludes men and women from full participation in an institution that ought to be representative of “all the people,” and establishes instead a soldier with secondary citizen status, an unconscionable situation for those who put their lives on the line.

Therein, however, is the one weak point in the text. For all of the good deeds we read about, one can only wonder why, given such overwhelming evidence that gay and lesbian soldiers are as professional as their straight brothers and sisters-in-arms, the services hold so tenaciously to the ban on the open presence of homosexuals in uniform. Certainly in a book as moving as this, one might offer a few analytical insights into the rationale and logic of an obviously irrational policy. Estes does suggest that “morale” and “security” concerns may have driven policy in the past. Nevertheless, in the last few decades, as homosexuality has been generally accepted into the mainstream and as fewer Americans express concern with the presence of gays and lesbians under arms, one must look elsewhere for why the military continues to justify its policies. Two areas that require further examination are those of image and recruitment. For too long, homosexuality has been associated with sin, predatory behavior, and weakness. Might “ma” and “pa” be reluctant to have a son or daughter enlist if there were “known” homosexuals on the loose? Would the armed forces be able to project an image of strength and virility in the war against terror when many of those we confront in Iraq and Afghanistan are themselves virulently homophobic?

Over and above these concerns, *Ask and Tell: Gay and Lesbian Veterans Speak Out* provides a powerful and revealing insight into the practical application of a failed policy upon the lives of men and women

whose stated goal was to serve, with honor, dignity, and justice.

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Tirza True Latimer, *Women Together/ Women Apart: Portraits of Lesbian Paris* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2005).

Reviewed by Leslie Choquette, Assumption College

This excellent study of the visual culture of lesbian Paris between the wars focuses on four very different artists—Romaine Brooks, Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore, and Suzy Solidor—all of whom centered their creative practice on their lesbian identities. In the 1920s, the lesbian, like the *garçonne* and the flapper whom she resembled, was an emblem of modernity. Embracing and mythologizing lesbianism enabled these women to defy traditional gender expectations and achieve success as both modern women and modern artists.

Romaine Brooks, a wealthy American expatriate, used portraiture and self-portraiture to recode the modern artistic genius as an upper-class lesbian. Her lesbian revision of the nineteenth-century iconography of the dandy and the *flâneur* empowered the privileged lesbian and transformed her into Baudelaire’s painter of modern life. Latimer, an art historian, provides a nuanced discussion of Brooks’ *Self-Portrait* of 1923, a work personally significant to the author, as it was for Brooks herself. Like the images of male *flâneurs*, this “portrait *psychologique*” (Brooks’ own description) strikes a “proprietary pose vis-à-vis the urban scene” (53). Yet the artist humorously substitutes vaginal for phallic imagery. Unlike her straight or gay male counterparts, Brooks’ lesbian dandy “displays no cane, no crop, no maulstick, not even a tightly furled umbrella. Her right hand, instead, lightly fingers the gap in her jacket” (55). Latimer’s reading of Brooks’ *Azalées blanches* (1910), while perceptive, would have been stronger had she noted that Brooks was not the first modern artist to present “an alternative to the (traditionally fecund and voluptuous) female nude” (51). Manet’s iconic *Olympia* (1869) was clearly the intertext for *Azalées blanches*, and by assuming his mantle, Brooks was defining herself as the artistic genius par excellence, the preeminent painter of modern life.

Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore, amorous and artistic partners for four and a half decades,

collaborated on avant-garde multi-media projects in which lesbianism was the central problematic; they embraced same-sex desire as their Muse. One of their earliest works, a photographic restaging of Flandrin's *Jeune homme nu assis au bord de la mer, figure d'étude*, with Cahun as the young (wo)man (c. 1911), offered "a lesbian critique of an important male homosexual reference while demonstrating solidarity with male communities" (73). At the same time, like Brooks' portraits, it created an alternative to dominant-culture representations of women. Latimer shows how Cahun and Moore, in the 1920s, deployed mirror imagery to critique psychiatric discourses that stigmatized both feminine and homosexual sexuality as narcissistic. Their portraits from that era affirm narcissism "as a *productive* rather than sterile mechanism" (93) and reclaim Narcissus "as both a feminist and a homophile signifier" (92). While Latimer discusses Cahun's and Moore's dialogue with psychoanalysis, she does not mention their equally important engagement with surrealism, which deserves attention as well.

The fourth artist, Suzy Solidor, was the only self-made woman among these lesbian cultural figures. The illegitimate daughter of a Breton cleaning woman, she enlisted in the ambulance corps in World War I, before becoming the kept woman of Yvonne de Bremond d'Ars, a lesbian socialite and antiques dealer. Ten years later, she broke with Bremond d'Ars to launch her career as an entertainer. As the impresario of *La Vie parisienne*, a chic night spot, from 1932 to 1946, she capitalized on her role as bisexual *femme fatale*, while maintaining personal control of her image and career. Like Sarah Bernhardt and Colette before her, Solidor "negotiated the celebrity's safe passage as both a 'loose woman' and a 'free woman' (a woman without boundaries, a woman out of bounds)" (131). Through her night club act and albums such as *Paris lesbien*, she brought lesbianism out of the rarefied environment of the salons frequented by Brooks or the vanguard movements to which Cahun and Moore adhered "into the brightly lit and highly commercial world of popular culture" (135).

*Women Together/Women Apart* provides an excellent introduction to the work of these four artists while showing, more broadly, how lesbians envisioned and represented themselves in interwar Paris. It errs, however, in suggesting that lesbians could not and did not "imagine and image themselves" on an international scale prior to this period (5). Paris, in fact, had recognizable

gay and lesbian subcultures by the mid-nineteenth century, often characterized by the type of cross-dressing that Latimer associates with the 1920s and 1930s. Gay and lesbian artists played prominent roles in the burgeoning entertainment industry, whether in the theater or in the cafés-concerts and musical halls. They frequently performed in drag and used innuendo that was clearly understood by the cognoscenti. In addition to the entertainers who exploited their sexuality for commercial ends, there were artists—fewer in number than in the 1920s, perhaps—for whom lesbian desire served as their Muse. Louise Abbéma's moving portrait of herself with Sarah Bernhardt (1879) commemorated the first anniversary of their liaison, Augusta Holmès' *Vers elles* (written for the 1889 World's Fair) became a lesbian anthem, and Renée Vivien's entire oeuvre (she died in 1909) revolved around the love of women. Indeed, some of the significant works discussed in *Women Together/Women Apart* were created before World War I, such as Brook's *Azalées blanches* and Cahun's and Moore's pastiche of Flandrin. By the turn of the century, Paris Lesbos also included an international caste of upper-class women. Renée Vivien (née Pauline Tarn) was raised in England by a British father and an American mother and moved to Paris in the 1890s, as did Romaine Brooks' future partner, the American heiress Nathalie Barney. *Women Together/Women Apart* therefore underestimates the historical continuities linking interwar lesbians with their predecessors in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Paris. As a portrait of lesbian Paris in the 1920s and 1930s, however, it remains invaluable.

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Tze-lan D. Sang, *The Emerging Lesbian: Female Same-Sex Desire in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

Reviewed by Howard Hsueh-Hao Chiang, Princeton University

This insightful monograph presents the first full-length English study of female same-sex desire from late imperial to modern China, a long-overdue project that situates the topic of Asian lesbianism in its proper literary and historical contexts. The narrative unfolds in a chronological fashion, moving through four eras divided by significant political breaks, from pre-modern China, through Republican China, to post-Mao China, and ending with Taiwan after the lifting of martial law. Taken as a whole,

the book argues that the cultural and intellectual dimensions of the May Fourth Movement (1915-1927) cultivated the social roots for the conceptual emergence of the modern lesbian in Greater China (including mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan).

Borrowing Michel Foucault's insight in the first volume of his *History of Sexuality*<sup>1</sup>, Sang maintains that the importation of European sexological concepts during the Republican period led to an unprecedented association of female same-sex intimacy "with feminism, on the one hand, and psychobiological abnormality, on the other" (7). Therefore, in dialogue with the existing large body of scholarship on the social rearrangement of women's political roles in the modern Chinese nation-state, Sang shows that the normalization of heterosexual desire among urban Chinese middle and upper classes under the banner of May Fourth modernization was achieved in part through the classification and codification of female same-sex desire as perverse, pathological, abnormal, and unnatural. Her analysis of female homoerotic fictions in post-Mao China (through the works of Lin Bai and Chen Ran) and post-martial law Taiwan (through the lesbian autobiographical writings of Qiu Miaojin) concludes that these literatures exemplify Foucault's notion of "reverse discourse," in which "homosexuality [begins] to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy and 'naturalness' be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medially disqualified."<sup>2</sup>

While relying heavily on Foucault's insight, Sang claims to rework several other influential literary and historiographical arguments to date. For example, in her discussion of the representation of female same-sex intimacy in late imperial Chinese elite literature, Sang observes that Adrienne Rich's notion of "compulsory heterosexuality" is not the most appropriate trope for understanding women's social condition in premodern China.<sup>3</sup> What Sang refers to as the "marriage imperative" more accurately captures the cultural forces that determine a woman's gender conformity. Because the marriage imperative is not primarily concerned with a woman's inclination or fulfillment but sees marriage simply as a woman's duty, according to Sang, "female-female desire does not render a woman defective or make her a gender outcast as long as it cooperates with the imperative of cross-sex marriage. In sum, female-female desire by itself is not taboo; marriage resistance is" (93). Though

persuasive, Sang's point prompts the question of why, to begin with, one would apply and compare Adrienne Rich's formulation, which was articulated during a particular moment of American political history, to the understanding of imperial Chinese society. This is just one of the many instances that reflect Sang's tendency to decontextualize literary concepts, perhaps even oversimplify them, and apply them to historical situations somewhat inadequately.

Much more compelling is Sang's effort to revise the dominant historiographic interpretation of female same-sex love/desire in pre-modern China. Other scholars whose works have thus far focused mainly on the history of Chinese male same-sex relations—including Bret Hinsch, Chou Wah-shan, and Xiaomingxiong—have tended to idealize the social tolerance of both male and female same-sex eroticism in traditional China. Their "post-colonial" argument suggests that the rise of homophobia in modern Chinese societies is almost entirely due to Western influence.<sup>4</sup> The polygamous marriage arrangement of pre-modern China, their argument goes, allowed women to build strong intimate bonds, sexual or not, with one another, and so female-female eroticism fitted nicely into the system. Sang's analysis, however, convincingly dismisses this gross historiographic generalization often based on very little empirical evidence. Sang concludes:

At times, female-female romance was ridiculed and turned into comedy salvaged by wise men. At others, it was lamented as a tragedy, but the women were offered no real hope of escape. It is therefore high time that we leave behind the myth that traditional Chinese society was tolerant of female same-sex relations. Such relations lived on borrowed liberty; their existence was premised on men's control and domestic containment. The suffering was far from trivial for those women-loving women who could not adapt themselves to male-headed marriage and men's sexual demands. (64)

Despite this important revisionist effort, the major problem of the book lies in its recurring self-contradictory styles of argumentation. Sometimes the author is so careful but bold to state the different possible theoretical and historical positions that the reader loses too easily the perspective by which the author actually stands. On the one hand, engaging with the ongoing dialogue concerning the comparative/global history of sexuality, Sang

maintains that what had already happened in the West before the twentieth century in fact later took on a particular significance in the East over the course of the twentieth century: “the lengthy and gradual process by which theories of women’s sexuality produced in the West during the period of industrialization [1600-1900] came to make an impact on and have relevance for the symbolic and material conditions of women in the urban cultures of industrializing and capitalizing China in the twentieth century” (277).

On the other hand, Sang argues that, unlike Foucault’s assertion about the sexual epistemic rupture that occurred in late nineteenth-century Europe, the appropriation and translation of Western sexual science did not result in an abrupt and clear epistemological break in early twentieth-century China (94). Moreover, because she places so much emphasis on the “reorganization, added complexity, and increased topicality” (94) of the conceptual space of Chinese sexuality during the May Fourth era precisely under the influence of Western sexology, as well as its consequential “reverse discourse” effect of the emerging lesbian identity, the reader cannot help but ask: Does Sang, after all, adopt or reject the Foucauldian approach to the study of the historical epistemology of sexuality? If *marriage resistance*, the cultural byproduct of the “marriage imperative,” is the decisive feature of the historical continuity of female same-sex desire in Chinese societies, then doesn’t the task of revealing a “concealed” lesbian identity “before it can be named as such” (72) in late imperial Chinese fiction violate the very historicist project that she claims to endorse?

Nonetheless, the groundbreaking value of this monograph cannot be under-acknowledged. This short critical review has highlighted only a few representative strengths and weaknesses of Sang’s study from a historical and historiographical perspective. More comments could be made, for instance, about the type and the surprisingly low quantity of sources Sang has relied on for her critical chapter on the transmission of sexological knowledge in Republican China.<sup>5</sup> More could also be said about the conspicuous oversight of Hong Kong female homoerotic literature, such as the works of Li Bihua (Lillian Lee) and Huang Biyun, in this ambitious study. Still, this brief review certainly does almost no justice to the various astute and powerful literary criticisms that Sang offers, especially in the second half of her book. Ultimately, the combination of literary and historical

approaches in this project provides a theoretically sophisticated read, which would definitely stimulate more scholarship in this important yet understudied area of study.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (1976; New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

<sup>2</sup> Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 101.

<sup>3</sup> Adrienne Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence,” in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin (New York: Routledge, 1993), 227-54.

<sup>4</sup> See Xiaomingxiong, *Zhongguo Tonxing’ai Shilu [The History of Homosexuality in China]*, rev. and enlarged ed. (1984; Hong Kong: Fenhong Sanjiao Chubanshe, 1997), 7-14; Bret Hinsch, *Passions of the Cut Sleeve: The Male Homosexual Tradition in China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 163-171; Chou Wah-shan, *Hou Zhimin Tongzhi [Postcolonial Tongzhi]* (Hong Kong: Xianggang Tongzhi Yanjiushe, 1997), 319-47; and idem, *Tongzhi: Politics of Same-Sex Eroticism in Chinese Societies* (New York: Haworth, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> On this point, see my forthcoming article, “Epistemic Modernity and the Emergence of Homosexuality in China,” under review, *Twentieth-Century China*.

<sup>6</sup> A recent promising example is Wenqing Kang, “Male Same-Sex Relations in China, 1900-1950” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Cruz, 2006).

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James Sears. *Behind the Mask of the Mattachine: The Hal Call Chronicles and the Early Movement for Homosexual Emancipation* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 2006).

Reviewed by Martin Meeker, Regional Oral History Office, University of California, Berkeley

James Sears’s new book on the American homophile movement is not at all unlike the movement itself: verbose, unsure of itself, mired in personality conflicts, likely to be misunderstood, but ultimately more interesting and effective than first impressions might evoke. This minutely detailed and overly long book – it comes in at nearly 600 pages – looks at the homophile movement writ large but also through the biography of Hal Call, one of the more controversial leaders of the Mattachine Society. The book is presented in four parts. The first sets the stage and introduces the cast of characters of the long gay rights movement. The second section

details the early twentieth century and European origins of that long movement. Section Three offers an in-depth account of the establishment of that movement in the United States. The final section considers some of the notable accomplishments of and challenges faced by the movement through the early 1970s.

The second quarter of the book, "Foundations," is perhaps where Sears makes his greatest contribution. In this section, Sears provides a decidedly different narrative of the origins of gay organizing in the United States than that provided by Mattachine Society founder Harry Hay – and, by extension, the several historical accounts that draw upon Hay's biography, which emphasizes bohemianism and communism (not to mention Hay himself) as the necessary precedents to the establishment of the first gay rights organizations in the U.S. This version proposed that Marxist prescriptions for the politicization of the oppressed gave rise to the novel idea that homosexuals constituted a distinct minority that should organize on its own behalf. Sears, however, proposes a very different narrative. Rather than follow the direct line from Hay to the Mattachine Society, Sears looks into the early twentieth century and across the Atlantic to Germany for an alternative schema.

During the Weimar Republic, Germany spawned a homosexual rights movement notable for its internal diversity of viewpoints. Sears links the various strands of German homophile activism (the term was used in Germany prior to the U.S.) to three key individuals: "assimilationist-oriented" Magnus Hirschfeld (68); individualistic and spiritualistic Adolf Brand; and "misogynist and fiercely nationalistic" Benedikt Friedlander, who nevertheless is described as closest to what we might today recognize as a liberationist (65). What may seem like an unnecessary detour in a book that ostensibly focuses on the U.S. homophile movement, these chapters establish that the Germans helped to set the terms of debate that would appear time and again, albeit in continually evolving forms, in the gay movement over the next half century. Sears then turns his attention to the transnational elements of the homosexual rights movement, particularly through the key figure of Henry Gerber.

Gerber was born in Germany but served in the U.S. Army during the occupation of Europe following the First World War. While on his tour of duty, he first encountered the German homosexual movement,

read its magazines, and visited Hirschfeld's Institute. Upon his return to the U.S., he resolved to establish something like Hirschfeld's Scientific Humanitarian Committee to aid homosexuals in America. In 1924, along with a few colleagues in Chicago, Gerber founded the Society for Human Rights. This organization was short-lived -- its demise hastened by a member's suspicious spouse who announced the organization to authorities that then shut it down. Gerber, however, was not entirely deterred. In 1930, he took over the pen-pal club *Contacts*, and attempted to refashion it into a homosexual contacts publication and organization. Although he never fully succeeded in that goal, he did actualize what would become a central goal of the 1950s homophile movement: the construction of networks linking isolated homosexuals with one another.

Sears goes further in exploring pre-Mattachine gay organizing. For example, Frank McCourt and Manuel boyFrank also toyed with the idea of establishing a gay rights organization based along the lines of what they knew to exist in Germany. Still others succeeded in establishing organizations and publications in the mid-1940s committed to some vision of homosexual equality, including New York's Veterans Benevolent Association (1945) and Philadelphia's Society for Social Integration (1947). Along with suggesting one plausible direct link between these early manifestations of a gay organizing impulse in the U.S. and the founding of the Mattachine Foundation in 1951, Sears clearly demonstrates that such ideas were afloat and that they were not the sole domain of a single person or ideology.

Still, while quite different from Hay's version of gay history, Sears's focus on German and domestic antecedents to the U.S. homophile movement may be better read as complimentary rather than as a total replacement. What I take away from the sum of the perspectives is that the contextual factors had matured to a point that it was inevitable that a lasting and effective organization would be established. This perspective should not devalue the very real contributions of a Harry Hay, but it might place him better in the context of the many individuals who started in very different places but had developed rather similar ideas about the reality of a homosexual minority and the need for that minority to organize.

The next section, "Mattachine (1950-1953)," is primarily devoted to, in sometimes excruciating detail, the causes of the split that led to the demise

of the Mattachine Foundation (1951-53) and the emergence of the Mattachine Society, eventually led by Hal Call (1953-60s). Much, perhaps too much, has been made of this transition by historians. Sears might be guilty of lingering on this period too long as well, but his diligent research into the ideological debates, personality conflicts, and political context provides readers with new ideas and information. For example, what had previously been cast simply as battle between leftists versus anticommunists or radical militants versus conservatives gets refigured here in light of the multiple debates, both ideological and deeply personal, that erupted at a series of organizational conventions in 1953. Sears shows how fractures internal to the “militants,” along with the tendency of Hay to alienate his allies, weakened the position of the founding group in the face of challenges by the insurgent group. Sears also demonstrates that the insurgent group was anything but united in its ideological outlook, and in its reasons for wanting a new Mattachine “Society” to be established. He argues that debate between the factions was as strident about the issue of national-control versus local-autonomy as it was about more familiar ideological battles over anticommunism or the notion of homosexual difference.

There is little consistency, however, in the use of terms by Sears to describe the activists and their various positions. At times, he throws in problematically anachronistic phrases, such as his description of Hal Call’s politics as “Log Cabin republicanism” (17) – a curious phrase to describe a life-long liberal Democrat. Yet in the midst of such peculiarities, Sears begins to articulate a more precise descriptive vocabulary that challenges historians to move beyond inaccurate but widely used terms such as “assimilationist” or “conservative” to describe Call and his cohort. But Sears could have done better in this regard if he consistently labeled the majority of homophiles what they were: “liberal integrationists.”

The book’s final section looks at the work of the Mattachine Society and, by extension, its long-term leader, Call, from 1953 into the 1970s. This wide-ranging, rambling section explores the formation of the breakthrough organization Council on Religion and the Homosexual; the publication of the first *Damron Address Book*; the founding of Pan-Graphic Press, Dorian Book Service, *Dorian Book Review Quarterly*, and the nation’s first gay bookstore; the dissolution of the Mattachine Society as a national organization; coups of ‘good’ coverage

in the mass media; and Call’s supporting role in the anticensorship movement. It also addresses Call’s involvement in the Prosperos Society of Thane Walker; his engagement with the ideas of Robert Lindner; his development of what can only be described as a sexual liberationist philosophy; and his verbal tribute to a female impersonator for “breaking down barriers of prejudice” (339). This section also includes substantial material on many overlooked but intriguing figures in the homophile movement including Don Lucas, Elver Barker, Wallace de Ortega Maxey, Tony Segura, Ken Zwerin, and James Barr. Not only are their varied and sometimes conflicting political positions detailed, but Sears also devotes considerable attention to their personal associations, sex lives, and the invariable loves, betrayals, and teapot scandals that ensued. Yet by focusing almost entirely on organizational politics and personality conflicts, Sears gives slight attention to what the Mattachine Society actually accomplished. As a result, the book offers little in the way of helping us understand how those feats were possible given the very difficult circumstances.

Finally, readers likely will be challenged by Sears’s many attempts at textual innovation. The achronological arrangement of chapters tends to confuse the historical transformation of Hal Call and the Mattachine Society. The leapfrogging, backtracking structure gives the false impression that the organization was no different in 1963 than it was in 1953. Similarly, the author’s imaginative construction of transgenerational conversations blurs the line between what actually happened and what didn’t. While some of these imaginary dialogs are insightful and worth reading, Sears could have done a better job signaling when he was leading the reader out of historical interpretation and into the realm of historical fiction. As substantial as these critiques are, *Behind the Mask of the Mattachine* deserves to be read and grappled with as it adds needed if sometimes difficult complexity to the bland and often inaccurate historical portrait of the homophile generation.

Beert C. Verstraete and Vernon Provencal, eds., *Same-Sex Desire and Love in Greco-Roman Antiquity and in the Classical Tradition of the West* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 2005)

Reviewed by Annette K. Morrow, Minnesota State University, Moorhead

*Same-Sex Desire and Love in Greco-Roman Antiquity and in the Classical Tradition of the West*, edited by Beert C. Verstraete and Vernon Provencal, is a series of fourteen papers that presents the reader with tools from a variety of disciplines with which to approach the study of same-sex desire in the classical world. It was published simultaneously as *Journal of Homosexuality* volume 49, numbers 3/4. Written for general readers as well as professional scholars who are interested in the history of Greco/Roman notions of sexuality, this book serves as a superb reference work. The editors, who are both scholars of the Classical world, do not assume that the readers have prior knowledge of Greco/Roman sexuality, and provide the reader with a thorough historical context. Keeping the general reader in mind, they also include a table of abbreviations, an index of names and terms, an *Index Locorum*, and a general index. There are also summaries of the papers at the beginning of each article, as well as keywords, numerous pages of notes and bibliographic information. In addition to the textual material, the volume also incorporates numerous illustrations and diagrams. The editors also include a brief synopsis of each article and biographical information of each author.

The Introduction begins with a brief history of the discipline and a discussion of the wide variety of material culture evidence available for scholarship, including art/architecture, religion, and philosophy. Here, the editors trace the development of the notion of "ideal love" through the writings of Plato, and present the work of various authors as they follow that theme through time and examine it through a variety of disciplines. W. A. Percy expands upon this theme of pederasty in the first chapter and adds useful background information. He begins by dividing Greek history into nine segments, beginning with Homer and concluding with the Hellenistic period. By examining vases, sculpture, and literature, he is able to highlight various cultural aspects surrounding pederastic practices c. 630 BCE. Next, Thomas Scanlon examines the relationship of pederasty to initiation rites and to athletic competition in early Greek culture. He concentrates

here on nudity in conjunction with athletics and finds that the athletic culture of Sparta was essential in the spread of pederastic practices in Greece.

Vernon Provencal provides the next analysis by using art and literature to probe the changing implications of the Ganymede/Zeus myth. He begins his discussion by noting the lack of sexual connotation with the earliest Ganymede/Zeus stories and how this changes through time. Thomas Hubbard gives another interpretation of the Ganymede myth in the fourth chapter. By examining both textual and artistic depictions, his premise includes a comparison of the adolescent boxer Hagesidamus to both Patroclus and Ganymede. Charles Hupperts continues the study of ancient art with a discussion of several vase paintings and leads the reader into a discussion of the Boeotians' views of homosexual practice and the ways in which it mirrored that of the neighboring Athenians. As a final offering of the Greek scholarship for this volume, Anne Klink turns away from masculine depictions of same-sex desire by examining homoeroticism in Sappho. She begins by presenting the ancient evidence associated with Sappho, and concludes by lending her support for a non-egalitarian reading of Sappho's same-sex relationships.

The Roman scholarship begins with James Butrica's study and refutation of several current myths surrounding Roman sexuality. John Clark continues the discussion of Roman sexuality with an evaluation of several types of visual representation including wall paintings at Pompeii, and various material culture items. Next, Beert Verstraete analyzes both the Greek and the Roman tradition of same-sex themes in poetry and literature.

The third section of the book underscores continued scholarship on gender and same-sex relationships from the Renaissance period through the twentieth century. The work of Armando Maggi examines homoerotic love in the sixteenth century by comparing and contrasting Plato's *Symposium* with Marsilio Ficino's *De amore* (1484). He continues his study with a thoughtful analysis of Cesare Trevisani's *L'impresa* (1569), detailing the "splendor" of the body as expressed through Renaissance Platonism. Wayne Dynes begins in the eighteenth century, and explores the work of early German philologists who presented their translations of ancient Greek texts without restriction. Because of this lack of censorship, educated German readers were able to access information much more easily



than was possible in England (due to the legacy of “anglophone prudery”). Next, John Lauritsen presents his work on a small group of English Romantic poets, who lived in Italy during 1822. These poets, including Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lord Byron and others, were devoted Hellenists, who worked to express their admiration for all things Greek through both poetry and politics. Donald Mader continues the discussion of poetry, by presenting the work of the “Uranians,” a group of British and American homosexual poets, writing in the late nineteenth century through about 1930. In the final offering of the book, Amy Richlin analyzes the print culture of Greece and Rome in the United States and Europe from 1953-65. In this fascinating article, she traces the beginnings of gay culture by means of the magazine *ONE*. This periodical was instrumental in overcoming a lack of knowledge in the gay community.

For the reader interested in the use of theory as applied to texts, art, and material culture, this book is a treasure. By using such a rich variety of sources, the editors combine the work of many disciplines into an accessible text for anyone interested in the history of Greco/Roman same-sex desire. Overall, *Same-Sex Desire and Love in Greco-Roman Antiquity and in the Classical Tradition of the West* serves as an excellent reference on Greco/Roman culture and society for both scholars and students.

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William Wright, *Harvard's Secret Court: The Savage 1920 Purge of Campus Homosexuals* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005)

Reviewed by David D. Doyle, Jr., Southern Methodist University

Has Harvard University long been a refuge for male same-sex friendships, love, affection, and sexuality? Or rather, has it—and by extension other similar American universities—stood as an intolerant, unwelcoming institution, ready to severely punish any hint of such behavior? According to William Wright's intriguing new work, *Harvard's Secret Court* it was somehow both in early 20th-century America. Despite some serious methodological and theoretical shortcomings in his presentation, Wright has justly brought to light a long-forgotten case that can provide a valuable window into how homosexuality was perceived among the upper classes of the era. In May 1920, a young Harvard undergraduate named

Cyril Wilcox committed suicide at his family's house in Fall River, Massachusetts. After his death, a number of letters were found illustrating his extensive involvement in a homosexual subculture at Harvard—including an affair with an older Boston man. Greatly concerned, Harvard President A. Laurence Lowell established a secret court made up of five academic deans to attack the problem. Over the next couple of years, a number of Harvard young men admitted to some same-sex behavior (although few admitted to “homosexuality”), as well as attending “queer” or “faggot” parties on campus. Ultimately, thirty individuals were interviewed (including local Boston and Cambridge boys and men not affiliated with the school), two assistant professors were summarily fired, and nine students expelled. Rather than an aberrant moment, Harvard pursued the disgraced for generations: as late as the 1950s, letters alluding to their moral failings were still mailed in response to any inquiries—or indeed in some cases, unsolicited. Until discovered by a student writer for the Harvard Crimson in 2002, over 500 pages of interrogation notes and letters remained undisturbed in a Harvard archive.

Long before Douglas Shand-Tucci's contributionist history, *The Crimson Letter*, emerged for confirmation, Harvard University was known to have served as a magnet for men with same-sex desires. Shand-Tucci recounts many devoted professors, students, and administrators who over the years contributed to all that was Harvard. Indeed, the author argues that homosexuality in no uncertain terms represented a much-hallowed tradition at the revered campus along the Charles. The career of F. O. Mattheisen, best documented in Louis Hyde's 1978 volume of letters and writings, is one of the more prominent records of this in recent decades. In his own book, Wright likewise calls attention to this history. In recreating the lives of Cyril Wilcox, Ernest Roberts, Kenneth Day, Keith Smerage, Edward Say, Harold Saxton, Harold Dreyfus, and others, this book points to a subculture that, while hidden, was nonetheless well-established on campus. In particular Ernest Roberts (the son of an influential United States Senator) and his dormitory room parties served as a primary focus for those in the circle. Local young men in makeup and women's clothing, as well as sailors routinely joined in these affairs. Among those implicated at least, there was a great deal of awareness of male same-sex attractions and few examples of tormented or isolated students. Similarly, the students were surprisingly frank in acknowledging sexual behavior.

Although highly skilled at spinning a good yarn, Wright is ultimately too lacking in historical context; thus, while the return of this story to us is invaluable, his book is, at the end of the day, far too limited in its analysis. Despite a facile nod to the extensive historiography in Chapter 19, the book simmers with Wright's anger at the injustice of the case and his inability to historicize it. Comments such as the following that seek to staple our own culture on another time and place are ubiquitous:

The Court apparently never considered that it was pummeling men who were already in a sense, 'down.' The young person new to gayness must first work through the arduous process of admitting to himself he is gay. Then he must struggle with the terrible risks involved with being himself, acting in accordance with the dictates of his fundamental nature. Finally, he is faced with making the giant leap into total openness, to present himself to the world as unashamed, undepraved, unrepentant homosexual (271).

In much the same way, one hundred years of history are summarily erased:

"Few people then, as now, do not have a family member, friend, or associate who is not either obviously gay or openly involved in a same-sex union. In even the finest families, there is a maiden aunt or bachelor uncle who has lived with the same partner for years...Everyone knew of these situations, but they were never discussed. (64).

Turning to George Chauncey's important 1985 article, "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion? Homosexual Identities and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War I Era," can shed much light on the Harvard case. Although Wright mentions the Chauncey piece, he fails almost completely to incorporate its significant findings. In analyzing an infamous 1918 scandal precipitated by an undercover "anti-pervert" Navy operation, Chauncey uncovers a culture in Newport, Rhode Island where gender behavior (inside and outside sexual encounters) determined one's sexuality. Those who assumed an effeminate persona, even to the point of wearing female clothing on occasion, and who took the "female role" during sex were the "queers" or "faggots." Men who had sexual encounters with other men but maintained typical masculine gender behavior—and the "man's role" in

bed—were "husbands," or "trade." These men were viewed by all, inside and outside the subculture, and even within the Navy investigation, as "normal" men. As Chauncey explains, "many more men than queers were regularly engaging in some form of homosexual activity." The very effeminate Edward Say, one of those trapped in the Harvard scandal, is only one of many illustrations confirming Chauncey's analysis: as an effeminate man, Say endured the worst treatment from the secret court. Similarly, the virile and manly Kenneth Day was punished only for associating with known queers—to the Harvard administrators, and even to Day himself—it was inconceivable to include him among that group. When Wright attempts to make sense of this subculture with the anachronistic and simplistic paradigm of the "closeted" and "out" gay man, he cannot understand either individual or group actions. In short, he is not aware that he is in fact viewing another sexual system, one quite distinct from the early 21st century one he knows. When placed next to Chauncey's work, it seems clear that Wright has uncovered a world where a multiplicity of sexual discourses co-exist—including some that have not survived into our own era.

For the scholar of gender and sexuality, the 1920 Harvard case is of great value. Wright has exposed a system (sometimes inadvertently) where a homosexual subculture flourished and where gender behavior—not whom one slept with—determined sexual identity. Within this system, social class also played a role in a way that is not yet fully understood. In much the same way, the historical record indicates virtually all of the parents defended their sons against these accusations—none were banished in disgrace. If future scholars were to use this book as a starting point from which to dig deeper into this early 20th-century sexual system in all of its manifestations, then William Wright will have contributed greatly to the history of gay men and lesbians in America.

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## Name Change Update

As many of you are aware, members of the CLGH have been discussing the possibility of changing the organization's name for several years now. The Governing Board launched a new dialogue on the topic this past year and asked members to provide feedback via email prior to the 2008 AHA meeting in Washington. Unfortunately, we received very little feedback through this method. However, at the 2008 AHA-CLGH business meeting, Susan Stryker and Lisa Hazirjian moderated a lively and productive conversation regarding a possible name change. Our hope was to leave the meeting with 3 or 4 candidates for a new name and to put these up for a vote in the spring 2008 newsletter. Yet several important questions were raised and we decided, temporarily, to table the discussion until further research commenced.

This research had to do with the difference between the CLGH's mission as an advocacy group for lgbtqi historians and its priority of promoting lgbtqi scholarship. When discussing new names, we realized that we needed clarity on our primary purpose--are we a group of similarly identified historians or a group that promotes a certain way of researching and writing history? Should we split up into two groups, one working on advocacy issues and one working on scholarship? Or should we create working groups within one umbrella committee? Similarly, what institutional relationship should the CLGH have with the AHA? Put differently, what role should the AHA play in either lgbtqi advocacy or scholarship?

These questions led the Governing Board to create a yahoo groups listserv so that all members had a chance to weigh in on our priorities (instructions for joining the listserv are below). Let me begin the discussion here by saying that, in consultation with Leisa Meyer (former CLGH chair and current AHA professional division member), I contacted the new chair of the professional division and asked about the AHA's role in terms of advocacy and scholarship. He and Leisa suggested that an official AHA "Task Force" on lgbtqi issues might be the best way, at the moment, to address lgbtqi advocacy from within the parameters of the AHA (other minority groups have chosen this route). If this comes to fruition, it would mean we would have the CLGH running alongside an AHA Task Force. The CLGH's mission, according to our by-laws (see below), designates the CLGH as a group that attends

to both advocacy and scholarship. I believe it can carry on with this dual agenda, and I hope we can find a more inclusive name that reflects our purpose. Please comment on yahoo groups! Our goal is to provide candidates for a new name in the fall 2008 newsletter

Article II. Section I of CLGH Bylaws: The object of this Committee shall be to promote the study of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, and queer topics in the past and present by facilitating communication among scholars in a variety of disciplines working on a variety of cultures. It encourages the development of specialized courses in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, and queer studies as well as the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, and queer topics in general history courses; it supports local history archives and history projects; it coordinates activities with other professional caucuses and organizations; and it seeks to prevent discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, and queer historians.

The CLGH board encourages all members to participate in an online dialogue about changing the name of our organization. Please visit the following website and sign-up for membership--our yahoo groups moderator will add you to the list asap:  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/clgh/>.

The discussion board will be live from now until September 15, 2008. We looking forward to hearing from you!

## CLGH Governing Board Election and Chair Nomination

At the back of this newsletter you will find a ballot to select members of the CLGH Governing Board and submit nominations for the next chair of the CLGH. Please complete this ballot and nomination form and return by **31 July 2008** to:

Karen C. Krahulik,  
Associate Dean of the College, Box 1828,  
Providence, RI 02912.

### CLGH Governing Board Election

There are two three-year terms open. These full-term openings will replace Lisa Hazirjian and Horacio N. Roque Ramirez as they depart from the Board after multiple years of wonderful service to our organization and community. Please join me in extending our deepest gratitude for Lisa and Horacio's efforts. Board members staying on include Kevin Murphy, Mark Meinke, Susan Stryker and Martin Meeker.

Statements from the candidates for these positions follow:

### Governing Board Nominees Statements

#### Julian Carter

CLGH has been helping to make my professional life less alienated since the early 1990s, but I've yet to show my appreciation through service. I wish to redress that omission by serving on the Governing Board.

I got my Ph.D. in U.S. history from the University of California at Irvine (1998) and have since taught at Stanford, New York University, and California College of the Arts, where I am currently Chair of Critical Studies. My work addresses the intersection of race and sexuality in the U.S. since Reconstruction. My first book, *The Heart of Whiteness: Normal Sexuality and Race in America, 1880-1949* (Duke, 2007), brought queer theory and critical whiteness studies together to show that post-Reconstruction ideas about racial whiteness were deeply entangled with and influential upon emerging depictions of heterosexuality as the only relational and erotic mode natural to highly civilized peoples and nations. Currently I am working on two projects. The first is about the way that whiteness figured in the Liberation-era (re)construction of the gay and lesbian past. The second identifies and examines the existence of subject-positions on the margins of

lesbian identity, and seeks to theorize the tension between lesbian identity and lesbian activity in the 1970s through 1990s.

I am motivated to serve on the Governing Board by my conscience: I feel it's time to give something back to the gay/lesbian/queer scholarly community that's fed my mind all these years. I'm at a point in my career where I have time to take an active role in CLGH's self-governance discussions, and also to participate in periodic service projects such as the prize committee. I am especially eager to discuss the resonances of the Committee's name in the present scholarly, cultural, and political environment. For the last five years or so my students have been telling me they feel a need for more contact with a meaningful past than they have been able to access. I am increasingly committed to exploring the reasons they feel disconnected from the gay/lesbian/queer past that I've found so sustaining, and to making that past more available and nourishing to them. My interest in serving on the Governing Board thus expresses an ethical impulse to help sustain the connections between gay/lesbian/queer history and the ongoing life of the community.

#### Jennifer Manion

As a graduate student, I first attended CLGH meetings and events at the 2001 AHA in Boston. Since that time I have enjoyed being a part of the social community of queer historians as well as an intellectual community of those working on the history of sexuality and/or lgbtq people. While there is obviously considerable overlap, I believe the future of CLGH lies in the articulation of this distinction and for CLGH to deliberately engage the issues and needs of both concerns. As a governing board member, I would move to do more organizing of lgbtq historians around issues of homophobia and heterosexism in the profession and at our institutions. I'm also interested in bridging the gap between historians and archivists of our community who work outside of academia with those of us who work within. I've been a lesbian activist for 14 years in a wide variety of community and academic institutions. My research examines the function of race, gender, and sexuality in the organization of the nation's first state penitentiary. Most recently, as a visiting professor of history at Connecticut College, I teach courses in U.S. History, including the history of sexuality. I am also the founding director of the campus LGBTQ Resource Center and develop a wide range of programming, services, and events in that capacity.

**Nicholas Syrett**

I earned my AB in Women's and Gender Studies from Columbia University and Ph.D. from the Program in American Culture at the University of Michigan, where I also completed a graduate certificate in Women's Studies. I am an Assistant Professor of History at the University of Northern Colorado, where I teach classes in U.S. women's history, the history of sexuality, and queer history. My book, *The Company He Keeps: A History of White College Fraternities, Masculinity, and Power*, will be published next year by the University of North Carolina Press. I also have articles forthcoming on manliness in antebellum America and on male homosexuality at 1920s Dartmouth College. I am excited about the possibility of being able to participate more fully in the CLGH. I would bring an interest in both queer history and women's history to the board and expect that my experience in a number of volunteer organizations and various forms of feminist and queer activism would help me with the administrative duties that accompany election to the board. I have enthusiasm for queer history and for being a queer historian; as a board member of the CLGH I would do my best to help foster the possibilities for both.

# **BALLOT**

## **CLGH Spring 2008**

Please return by **31 July 2008** to:  
Karen C. Krahulik,  
Associate Dean of the College  
Box 1828  
Providence, RI 02912

### **Item 1: Governing Board Elections (two three-year terms)**

**Vote for two:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Julian Carter

\_\_\_\_\_ Jennifer Manion

\_\_\_\_\_ Nicholas Syrett

### **Item 2: Chair Nominations**

Nominations are now being accepted for candidates to serve a three-year term (1 January 2009 to 31 December 2012) as CLGH chair. Self-nominations are encouraged. If you nominate someone other than yourself, please be certain that your nominee is willing to serve. Elections will take place via ballot in the fall 2008.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Item 3: Change to Bylaws**

**Vote to change by-law Article VI, Sections 1 & 2 to add the following:**

The Allan Bérubé Prize for an outstanding public history project on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and/or queer history.  
(Even-numbered years, covering the previous two years.)

\_\_\_\_\_ yes

\_\_\_\_\_ no



CLGH

c/o Murphy

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