Greetings to my friends and colleagues! I write a few months after what must surely be the queerest AHA annual meeting to date, for better and … in other ways. We knew that this would be a highly contentious conference for LGBTQ historians and their allies, ever since that moment in 2008 when California LGBTQ and labor organizers launched a boycott of the Manchester Grand Hyatt in San Diego, the annual meeting’s co-host hotel, owing to Doug Manchester’s financial support for Proposition 8 and to the hotel’s alleged labor practices. From that point forward, LGBTQ historians and their allies faced a bewildering array of political and personal choices, starting with the choice of lobbying the AHA to pull the annual meeting out of the Manchester, but at the risk of the Association losing hundreds of thousands of dollars. Once the AHA decided to keep the annual meeting at the Hyatt, and to organize a mini-conference on historical perspectives on same-sex marriage inside Doug Manchester’s hotel, more choices arose: participate in or attend sessions inside the boycotted hotel; move sessions to other nearby locations; join the protests outside the Hyatt; stay home from the conference altogether; and/or find other ways to protest Manchester’s homophobia and the AHA’s handling of this controversy? I can think of Committee on LGBT History members who made each of these choices – indeed, many juggled several of these options all at once.

Much already has been written about the annual meeting (I recommend the coverage in Claire Potter’s blog, tenured-radical.blogspot.com, and at InsideHigherEd.com), so I’ll say just a few things in retrospect, as we look forward. First, the mini-conference represented the most extensive inclusion of LGBTQ history in the annual meeting program yet, and that represents a critical success for our members and our field. At the same time, the decision to hold the meeting inside the boycotted hotel forced many members to choose between their historical scholarship and crossing picket lines with which they sympathized – a particularly onerous choice for any historians on the job market and for graduate students making their first appearance on the program. Second, the AHA’s ham-handed handling of many conference details – most notably, the talking points distributed to mini-conference event chairs that unproductively presumed an “us vs. them” division between LGBTQ historians and LGBTQ activists – created severe ill-will among our members in attendance. Likewise, while it was presumably an accident that the AHA staff scheduled the CLGBTH business meeting
for a room that hadn’t existed since the early 2000s, such mistakes further contributed to the perception that the AHA leadership was failing to support LGBTQ historians and their affiliate society. Building a more productive working relationship with the AHA and its incoming Executive Director, James Grossman, is clearly a priority for the Committee on LGBT History.

Additionally, I want to note the diverse range of opinions and positions that CLGBTH members brought to these issues. From last year’s annual meeting onwards, the political diversity of our membership was clear, from those who, looking back at the financial fallout from the AHA’s relocation of the 1995 annual meeting (in response to Cincinnati’s passage of an anti-gay ballot measure), prioritized the fiscal integrity of the AHA to those who critiqued the LGBTQ movement’s current emphasis on marriage politics and were disinclined to get involved with the boycott. After many conversations in San Diego, I conducted an informal survey of CLGBTH members, with an eye toward planning out our next steps. While the evidence I collected is anecdotal, I would like to share some findings and observations.

Some historians expressed their satisfaction with how the AHA struck compromises between LGBTQ historians and the association’s financial considerations. Others expressed their deep displeasure with the security provided to panelists to protect them, as it were, from LGBTQ and labor activists who might potentially disrupt the mini-conference. Some members wrote to me to state they specifically stayed away from the conference because of the AHA’s decision to hold the annual meeting in the Manchester Grand Hyatt, while others noted other professional or personal reasons for not attending. Perhaps most importantly as we move forward, some members called for us to use this as an opportunity to collaborate with other groupings of historians, especially the Coordinating Committee on Women in History, to reform the AHA and make it more responsive to the concerns of its historically marginalized constituencies.

Let me also note that, perhaps not surprisingly, more senior historians were aware of the alternate hotel arrangements made by the AHA, and were generally more satisfied with the AHA’s handling of the controversy. This is categorically not to say that all senior historians were pleased with the AHA – far from it – but rather to note that displeasure and alienation grew more intense for those Committee on LGBT History members still in graduate school, in adjunct positions, working towards tenure, or otherwise in more tenuous positions in the profession. The letters to the Committee on LGBT History published inside this newsletter may not be representative of our entire membership’s take on this controversy, but coming from one Ph.D. candidate and one recent Ph.D., they speak to our charge to make sure the AHA – and our own organization – advocate forcefully on behalf of our most vulnerable members.

Onto happier memories of San Diego... Let me thank everyone who came to our excellent reception – perhaps sixty or seventy people, including both long-time members and historians attending their first Committee on LGBT History event, or even their first annual meeting. I’m also delighted to report that some thirty-five conference attendees traveled four miles off-site to San Diego’s Lambda Archives. Here Frank Nobiletti and Pat Salvatierra gave us an excellent tour of their remarkable holdings, and John D’Emilio, Estelle Freedman, and I discussed both the new OutHistory.org LGBTQ online history project and the debut of our own Allan Bèrûbè Prize for LGBTQ public history. After the conclusion of official business, some of us retreated down the block to Bourbon Street for drinks and good conversations.

While the 2010 annual meeting recedes into the past, our work moves forward. Inside this edition of the Newsletter, you will read details of our announcements of the 2010 Committee on LGBT History awards. Marc Stein, Nick Syrett, and Ellen Zitani worked hard reviewing this year’s nominees and submissions, and our congratulations go out to Howard Chiang and Shaun Halper, co-winners of the 2010 Gregory Sprague Prize for best paper by a graduate student in LGBTQ history; to Whitney Strub, winner of the 2010 Audre Lorde Prize for best article in LGBTQ history, and Cristiano Berco, honorable mention for the Lorde Prize; and to OutHistory.org and the Polk Street Oral History Project, the two winners of our inaugural Bèrûbè Prize. Our call for submissions for the 2011 John Boswell and Joan Nestle Prizes, for best book and best undergraduate paper in LGBTQ history, respectively, appear inside this newsletter as well.

As many of you noticed at one point or another, our original website went down late last year, but we are back online at http://www.clgbthistory.org/. The restoration of our original website is a prelude to a major overhaul in our online operations. Ian Carter is spearheading this transformation, to bring us into the Web 2.0 era, so that we can more easily update our website and make it easier for members to share syllabi, add their dissertations, publications, and other works to our resource lists, promote conferences, put panels together, etc. This project will align neatly with the work of other Governing Board members to update those resource lists, and to better promote the Committee on LGBT History throughout the historical profession, in other scholarly fields, and in the broader public arena.

The nearing end of the academic year brings all sorts of endings and beginnings to mind. First, I want to thank Jen Manion for her past work as Book Review Editor for this Newsletter, and to publicly recognize Emily Hobson for stepping forward to lead this critical work for the next two years. Also, as their terms draw to a close, I want to express my deep gratitude to Martin Meeker and Susan Stryker for their three years of service on the Governing Board, working on issues that span from developing the Bèrûbè Prize and running the website to representing the CLGBTH on the AHA Task Force on LGBTQ Historians and spearheading our name change in late 2008, respectively.

Finally, I want to draw your attention to the ballot inside on pages 21 and 22, where you can read about our three outstanding candidates running to serve on the Board for the next three years. Please make sure to return your ballot to me by June 30th, 2010.

Wishing everyone all the best,
Ian Lekus
Chair of the Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History
The Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History, an affiliate society of the American Historical Association, is pleased to announce the winners of the 2010 Gregory Sprague, Audre Lorde, and Allan Bérubé Prizes.

The Gregory Sprague Prize, underwritten by the Gerber/Hart Library in Chicago, is awarded for an outstanding paper or chapter on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer history completed in English by a graduate student during the previous two years.

The 2010 Gregory Sprague Prize is awarded to Howard H. Chiang (Princeton University) for “Epistemic Modernity and the Emergence of Homosexuality in China” and to Shaun Jacob Halper (University of California at Berkeley) for “Fashioning Gay-Jewish Identity in Interwar Prague: The Case of Jiri Langer (1894-1944).”

Chiang’s essay is an outstanding and original examination of two early-twentieth-century Chinese sexologists whose “scientific” arguments about homosexuality were linked to processes of modernization and nationalism. While contributing most directly to the historicization of sexual science in China, Chiang’s impressively researched essay also makes effective interventions in our understanding of the transnational circulation and transmission of sexual “knowledge.”

Halper’s essay is an excellent and distinctive exploration of an early-twentieth-century Jewish writer from Prague who, in his personal life and his intellectual work, tried to reconcile homosexuality and Judaism. Making unique contributions to Jewish studies and Central European studies, Halper’s impressively researched essay encourages new ways of thinking about sexuality in relation to religion, science, ethnicity, and nationalism.

The Audre Lorde Prize is awarded for an outstanding article on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, and/or queer history published in English in the previous two years.

The 2010 Audre Lorde Prize is awarded to Whitney Strub (Temple University; Rutgers University-Newark beginning fall 2010) for “The Clearly Obscene and the Queerly Obscene: Heteronormativity and Obscenity in Cold War Los Angeles,” published in American Quarterly in 2008. Strub’s well-written and creatively researched essay offers an outstanding local study of how obscenity law was used to police same-sex sexuality and privilege heteronormative sexual expression. While historical studies that focus on constitutional law typically emphasize the liberalization of obscenity law in this period, Strub persuasively demonstrates that, as a practical matter on the local level, police and prosecutors targeted physique magazines, homophile publications, bookstores with gay-themed materials, and movie theaters that showed queer films. Strub thus encourages new attention to obscenity within LGBT studies, while also making original contributions to our understanding of the sexualization of post-World War Two urban geographies and Cold War politics.

For this year’s Lorde Prize, an Honorable Mention is awarded to Cristian Berco (Bishop’s University) for “Producing Patriarchy: Male Sodomy and Gender in Early Modern Spain,” published in 2008 in the Journal of the History of Sexuality. Berco’s article is an excellent study that uses sodomy case records to argue that penetrative same-sex sex was understood by many to be compatible with patriarchal power.

The Allan Bérubé Prize, underwritten by the GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco, is awarded for outstanding work in public or community-based lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer history.

This year’s inaugural Bérubé Prize is awarded to OutHistory (founded by Jonathan Ned Katz, staffed by Lauren Gutterman, produced by the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies at the City of University of New York Graduate Center, and funded by individual donations and grants from the Arcus Foundation), and to the Polk Street Oral History Project (produced by Joey Plaster with the support of the GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco, the California Council for the Humanities, and the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies).

OutHistory (OutHistory.org) is an extraordinary website that features a wide range of LGBT historical materials and exhibits generated and produced by a diverse and ever-growing collection of students, scholars, and others interested in LGBT history. With impressive accomplishments during its short life and even greater potential for growth in the future, OutHistory is a deserving recipient of the inaugural Bérubé Prize.

For different reasons, the Polk Street Oral History Project (www.glbthistory.org/PolkProject) is equally deserving. Based on a study of a San Francisco neighborhood in transition, this project has consisted of a multimedia exhibit, a radio documentary, an oral history component, and a set of community-based conversations. The well-designed web-based elements provide ample evidence of the project’s sensitive explorations of race, class, gender, and sexuality; its focus on homelessness, poverty, drugs, and AIDS; and its interest in the voices and experiences of LGBT youth, immigrant, transgender, poor, and working-class cultures.

The 2010 Prize Committee was chaired by Marc Stein (York University) and included Nicholas Syrett (University of Northern Colorado) and Ellen Zitani (City University of New York Graduate Center)
QUEER IN THE ARCHIVE

None on Record: Stories of Queer Africa (NOR)
http://noneonrecord.com

Jennifer D. Williams, New York University

None on Record: Stories of Queer Africa (NOR) is an oral history project that was founded in 2006 by Selly Thiam, a lesbian of Senegalese descent living in the United States. After the highly publicized murder of Sierra Leonian LGBT activist FannyAnn Eddy, Thiam began collecting the oral histories of queer, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Africans on the continent and throughout the African Diaspora. NOR’s mission is to document the hopes, struggles, challenges, and joys of being a queer African. Since its founding, NOR has expanded to a six-person production crew, collected approximately fifty stories from queer Africans living on the continent and abroad, set up satellites in South Africa and Senegal, and received funding to establish an additional site in Nairobi, Kenya during the summer of 2010. NOR is not just an audio documentary, however. It supports and encourages media literacy in local African communities as a way to empower queer Africans to produce archives in their own voices that can serve as counternarratives to the dominant discourse about QLGBT Africans.

Among the approximately fifty interviews that make up NOR’s archive are activist Bev Ditsie’s recollections of being the only black South African to speak at Johannesburg’s first Pride March in 1990; Kenyan playwright Nick Mwaluko’s discussion of his transition from female to male after migrating to the U.S.; and popular Senegalese singer Pape Mbaye’s account of being outed in his home country and attaining refugee status in the United States. The majority of interviewees are located in West and South Africa, but the launch of the Kenya module is expected to draw more histories from the eastern regions of Africa. Researchers can access interview excerpts at NOR’s website. Full interviews are in the process of being housed offsite in a research collection. Until that time, researchers can contact Selly Thiam directly (at selly@noneonrecord.com) and set up an appointment to listen to the full audio files. A living archive, None on Record continues to expand as more queer Africans go on record. QLGBT Africans living on and outside of the continent are encouraged to contact NOR (at info@noneonrecord.com) to record their stories.

Gerber/Hart Library
1127 West Granville Avenue, Chicago, IL  60660

Kwame Holmes, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Located in the heart of Chicago’s Edgewater neighborhood, the Gerber/Hart Library is one of the premier archives of LGBT history in the Midwest. In an effort to establish a permanent archive for LGBT history, the library was founded in 1981 in a joint venture of the Gay Academic Union–Chicago Chapter, Gay Horizons, and the Chicago Gay and Lesbian History Project. The library was named after Henry Gerber, founder of one of the nation’s first gay rights organizations, the Chicago Society for Human Rights, and civil liberties attorney Pearl Hart.

In addition to their lending library, unique and rare materials are organized into three categories: periodicals, archives, and special collections. The periodicals include a large collection of LGBT community newsletters out of rural to mid-size Midwestern towns including Prairie Fire (central Illinois), METRA (Michigan), Frontiers (Michigan), Heartland (Ohio) and dozens more. Also included are complete collections of local Chicago media including Windy City Times, the city’s largest gay newspaper, and strong collections of other gay publications based in Chicago including Chicago Outlines, Gay Life Chicago, Chicago Free Press, Night Spots, Chicago Pride and the Chicago Gay Crusader. Gerber/Hart holds a number of Chicago’s LGBT art ‘zines with an emphasis on local women’s literary and artistic collectives including METIS, an independent lesbian press that went out of business in 1989. For scholars looking for hard copies of material traditionally available to researchers only on microfilm, Gerber/Hart holds major collections of national periodicals including After Dark and The Advocate. The library’s archives division houses the papers of important individuals in Chicago’s LGBT history as well as the organizational materials for activist organizations based in Chicago and as well as a few national groups. Organizational papers include those of Mattachine Midwest, Illinois GLBT Taskforce, 1987 Committee on the March on Washington-Chicago (CMOWC), and IMPACT (an early HIV-AIDS advocacy organization). Gerber/Hart is also the national repository for Lutherans Concerned-North America, a critical LGBT Christian organization. The special collections division houses important ephemera and regalia gathered from key moments in Chicago’s LGBT movement history.
Gerber/Hart archives and special collections are not available for browsing and as of this writing do not contain a finding aid. President and head archivist Karen Sendziak offers in-depth reference interviews in person, over the phone, or via e-mail and works tirelessly to provide researchers with, in her words, “curbside service” to archive and special collections materials. The library contributes to the John D’Emilio Prize, an annual award given to the best video documentary on LGBT history by students in Chicago Public Schools. The library also contributes to the Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History’s Gregory Sprague Prize. A number of major publications credit the Gerber/Hart library for critical assistance including Marcia Gallo’s Different Daughters: A History of the Daughters of Bilitis and the Rise of the Lesbian Rights Movement, published by Carroll & Graf in 2006, and David Carter’s Stonewall: The Riots That Sparked the Gay Revolution, published in 2004 by St. Martin’s Press.

REGIONAL FOCUS: ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Wesley Chenault, Auburn Avenue Research Library

In February 2010, a survey in The Advocate magazine listed Atlanta as the nation’s gayest city, a claim which shocked some and delighted others. For many, the city’s queer past remains little-known, compared to histories of larger metropolises. One way this is changing is through recent efforts by multiple institutions to acquire and promote LGBTQ primary sources.

Atlanta is home to several repositories that collect, preserve, and make available LGBTQ archival materials with a particular emphasis on the American South. Among them are the Kenan Research Center at the Atlanta History Center (KRC), Emory University’s Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library (MARBL), and the Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History (AARL). Together the collections document known and lesser-known personalities, organizations, and events that shaped Atlanta, Georgia and the Southeast.

North of downtown in the Buckhead neighborhood, the Kenan Research Center at the Atlanta History Center is a public research center offering a multitude of resources for the study of LGBTQ history and culture in Atlanta and the South. The Atlanta Lesbian and Gay History Thing Papers and Publications, 1957-1994, consists of local and national gay and lesbian publications, business records, social and political organizational records, personal papers, and materials pertaining to gay rights and HIV/AIDS. Augmenting this collection is the LGBT Serial Collection, 1970-2004, comprised of local and regional publications, including Cruise, David Atlanta, ETC, and Southern Voice. Other processed collections include the Black and White Men Together Records, 1982-1996, Atlanta’s Unspoken Past Oral History Project, 2004-2005, and the Jeff Askew and Guy Dobbs Photographs, 1946-1978. Online access is available through Terminus, the library and archives catalog, and Album, a database of digitized photographs, finding aids, and subject guides, and vertical files (http://www.atlantahistorycenter.com/). While the papers of local activists María Helena Dolan and Gil Robison and personality Billy Jones are currently unprocessed, an archivist can arrange access. Hours of operation, directions, and parking and staff contact information is available through the organization’s website, under the Kenan Research Center tab.

Close to Druid Hills, Emory’s MARBL maintains an online resource guide to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender studies (http://marbl.library.emory.edu/conduct-research/research-guides). While some of MARBL’s queer collections are national in scope and subject, others pertain to events, people, and places from the Southeast. The papers of Atlanta activists David Lowe and Ed Stansell document their participation during the late 1980s and 1990s in ACT-UP, Atlanta Campaign for Human Rights, AIDS Atlanta, Southeastern Arts Media Education Program, the Gay and Lesbian Rights Chapter of the ACLU of Georgia, and the Atlanta Lambda Community Center. Researchers should consult MARBL’s webpage for hours of operation, directions, parking, and user information (http://marbl.library.emory.edu/). Unprocessed collections are available for research.

Anchoring the west end of the Sweet Auburn historic district in downtown Atlanta, AARL holdings include African American LGBTQ organizational records, publications, and personal papers and document individual lives and community formations from the 1980s to the present. Recent acquisitions include the records of ZAMI, a non-profit for lesbians of African descent, and In the Life Atlanta (ITLA), the official sponsor of Atlanta Black Gay Pride; the personal papers of community activists Aida Rentas and Duncan Teague; and the African American Lesbian and Gay Print Culture Collection. In February 2010, the Research Library launched an LGBTQ oral history project, beginning with Brenda Banks, former deputy director of the Georgia Archives and a former president of the Society of American Archivists. AARL finding aids for processed collections are available online (http://www.afpls.org/aarl). To access unprocessed materials patrons must contact the archivist or library research associate. General information about directions, staff, and hours of operation is on the Research Library’s website under the Contact tab.


McCarthy, Timothy Patrick. “Barack Obama: America’s First Gay President?” The Huffington Post (October 9, 2009).


Reviewed by Aaron Lecklider, University of Massachusetts, Boston

As historians studying LGBT identities have grown increasingly attentive to intersections of race, gender, and sexuality in the United States, the Harlem Renaissance has become increasingly central to developing a narrative of modern sexuality. The cultural products of black and interracial Harlem in the 1920s and 1930s offer rich rewards to scholars who have attentively noted the compelling sites of sexual and racial cross-pollination in this dynamic time and space. Shane Vogel’s important contribution to the growing literature on the Harlem Renaissance, “slumming” literatures, and urban sexualities both builds upon and pushes this scholarship in exciting new directions. *The Scene of Harlem Cabaret: Race, Sexuality, Performance* uncovers and convincingly interprets a dazzling archive of interdisciplinary sources - literary texts, memoirs, performances, maps, photographs, sociological writing, and jazz songs, to name but a few – to persuasively argue that the intimate space of the cabaret, in both its literary and its theatrical forms, offers a significant key to understanding the dynamic practices, performances, and texts of the Harlem Renaissance. Ranging freely from the fiction of Claude McKay to the performances and memories of Lena Horne, *The Scene of Harlem Cabaret* is a beautifully written and carefully researched study of the “cabaret school” within Harlem of the 1920s and 1930s, where “black writers and performers of the Harlem Renaissance turned to the scene of Harlem cabaret to critique the racial and sexual norms of uplift ideology and to articulate alternative narratives of race and sex” (195).

Vogel explicitly sets out to “broaden what has become an increasingly narrow, increasingly normative understanding of the gay and lesbian Harlem Renaissance” (19). He accomplishes this task by setting his sights on “a Harlem Renaissance not containable by finite identity categories or exclusive characterizations” (22). The “scene” of Vogel’s title is a significant feature of his analysis, conveying as it does a “double sense as both a frame of performance and spectacle circumscribed by certain theatrical andspectatorial conventions” and “as a hot spot, a sphere of activity, a place where things happen” (83). Vogel’s central goal is to explore the role of cabaret scenes in shaping the aesthetics of familiar figures within the Harlem Renaissance as well as of practices within the community of Harlem more generally.

Though historians should be interested in Vogel’s readings of literary texts, his analysis of cabaret performance and spectatorship proves especially compelling as it systematically interprets a rich archive of evidence of the “unsystematic ways that Harlem’s everynight life was experienced” (79). In Vogel’s analysis, the cabaret – especially in its after-hours incarnations, following “last call” ordinances initially issued in New York City in 1907 – offered a space for rethinking public (criminal) intimacy and for posing a queer alternative to the sociological gaze that made Harlem’s subjects into objects of slurring and scholarly study. Vogel is also interested in exploring the relationship between black and “white-marketed” cabarets, noting how performers negotiated the politics of cabaret spaces where the stage, the audience, and the dressing rooms were embedded in cultural discourses about race, sexuality, and modernity. He attentively unpacks how “cabaret performance conventions and situational obligations apply differently depending on one’s location in the nightlife economy” (91).

Though the forces of segregation and repression exacted a toll on the utopian possibilities contained in Harlem nightlife, the cabaret’s complicated history and performance conventions threatened to undo the racial and sexual taxonomies of the day. After-hours clubs “shaped the emergence of a modern gay and lesbian community, but [their] relationship to the urban underworld more broadly created opportunities for momentary contact, public intimacy, and affective exchange” (112). Far more than writing a history of the making of modern homosexual identity, Vogel “marks a time of subjective possibility that could include but always exceeds the closures of ‘sexual identity’ as such” (113).

Vogel’s book is separated into five chapters. The first two, grounded in somewhat traditional historical and performance archives, offer detailed analysis of Harlem cabarets of some renown in New York, including the Cotton Club and Small’s Paradise, but also the Nest Club and other smaller venues. The following three chapters focus on literary representations of, and performance practices within, these nightclubs. In his provocative re-readings of Harlem Renaissance literature, Vogel shows how “writers and performers of the Harlem Renaissance used the cabaret to imagine and enact alternative possibilities for racial, sexual, and socioeconomic subjectivities that resisted the normalizing imperatives of uplift ideology” (36). He is particularly skillful in reading established figures such as Langston Hughes and Claude McKay who, he argues, “were acutely aware of the logics of racial, sexual, and gender normativity that were aligned under the banner of uplift” (13).
One of the most significant contributions of The Scene of Harlem Cabaret lies in Vogel’s use of performance studies methodologies to challenge the way histories of sexuality are written. The reader is left feeling she has truly visited the cabarets Vogel describes, and this level of insight does important work to reframe familiar literary works and performances. This becomes particularly evident in Vogel’s final chapter, when he brilliantly dissects Lena Horne’s “impersona.” Horne’s refusal to allow audiences intimate access to herself, defying audience expectations in the cabarets where she performed, allowed her to “elude the discursive confines that limited her sense of self” and “gave her insight into the ethical spaces constituted through performance” (193). Vogel’s expert analysis of performance allows him to access an archive that complicates Horne’s space in U.S. cultural history in a way that her recordings alone cannot permit, showing that Horne “worked to unperform the sexual subjectivity that her audience expected of her” (180). In Horne’s performance, Vogel finds an even more complex use of the cabaret space, as “to counter the violence of intimacy that organized cabaret performance – the demand to make herself affectively available – Horne in turn created a psychic fourth wall that served as a substitute for the theatrical fourth wall missing from the nightclub” (181).

Vogel’s willingness to take scholarly risks allows him to offer a compelling analysis that complicates what many have assumed they know about the Harlem Renaissance and the history of sexuality. “To queer the Harlem Renaissance,” he writes, “is to recognize the social and literary places where lines of sexual and racial identifications might be frustrated or undone and new social and psychic alignments made possible; spaces and practices that exceed and expand identity, rather than to contract it” (22). This project might seem counterintuitive within a field of inquiry that has often taken as its primary task the placing of contemporary sexual identities in a longer history. Yet Vogel insistently refuses to contain his inquiry to limited taxonomies or cartographies that his subjects would not recognize. Rather, he finds in the nightlife, underworld, and sexual intimacies of Harlem a compelling alternative to both uplift ideology and conventional sexual histories. His work is groundbreaking in both method and analysis. Scholars looking to better understand the attraction of the cabaret to artists and writers of the Harlem Renaissance – as well as for ordinary visitors to after-hours clubs and individuals seeking out same-sex affairs in 1920s and 1930s black Manhattan – will find much of value in this fine study. The Scene of Harlem Cabaret is always an engrossing read and represents a bold contribution to the history of race, sexuality, performance, and literature in the United States.


Reviewed by Rudi C. Bleys, independent scholar

The Sexuality of Migration, published after the author’s death at the age of 36, is a “multimethod, interdisciplinary, and boundary-spanning study of Mexican men who migrated to the Los Angeles metropolitan area” (xvi), focusing on how migration and sexuality interact. The book consists of previously published chapters and articles as well as unpublished work, all brought together by the editors Nancy A. Naples and Salvador Vidal-Ortiz, who have succeeded in making it read as a seamless text. In their introduction, the editors describe the components and merits of Cantú’s multidisciplinary approach, which draws together scholarship on positionality, transnationality, “border crossing,” and diaspora, and a materialist analysis of the “queer political economy of migration,” confronting discursive analysis with empirical evidence on the economic and political structuring of social networking, community and household patterns, and sexual practices and identities.

Cantú’s central argument is “that sexuality, as a dimension of power, shapes and organizes processes of migration and modes of incorporation. In turn, the contextual and structural transitions that mark the migration experience impact the ways in which identities are formed,” lending immigrants’ sexual identities “multiple and shifting meanings” (21). Cantú critiques research that considers sexuality to be extraneous to the economic motives and considerations presumed to provoke migration. He focuses on the experiences of men who have sex with men, self-identified “gays,” and “queers” – all volatile categories that stress the complexity of the border-crossing migration experience — in order to unveil “the heteronormative power infused not only into U.S. immigration policy but also into the academic discourses on migration itself” (26).

Traditionally, the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) listed homosexuality as a reason for exclusion from immigration. This policy was ended in 1990, by which time the INS targeted HIV-positive people instead. Yet in order to be granted asylum and, eventually, gain access to U.S. citizenship as a homosexual, one now had to prove that one held an identity as homosexual and had a “well founded fear of persecution” in the land of origin. The creation of a new class of “gay asylees” was embedded in a much larger process of cultural “othering,” locating homophobia in Mexico (and elsewhere) as against the U.S., where the human rights of homosexual men and women were defined as assured. Gaining asylum thus implied a rejection of Mexican identity and an essentialization of an otherwise more fluid understanding of sexuality.
Cantú critiques strategies developed by organizations such as the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) and the Lesbian and Gay Immigration Rights Task Force (LGIRTF) that seem to exclude queer men and women who are not involved in monogamous binational relationships. He finds that IGLHRC, LGIRTF, and other organizations effectively downplay their clients’ homosexuality by emphasizing the universality of human rights to “love” or enjoy “freedom from persecution,” and that ultimately, the issue of freedom of movement becomes silenced by calls for marriage rights (69-70).

Cantú’s critique of LGBT immigration and asylum strategies is deepened by his analysis of changing economic, social, and cultural conditions within Mexico. Social scientists have too often overlooked processes of historical change and have drawn a static, culturalist picture of Mexican sexual culture, dominated by the traditional “machismo/marianismo” model. When applied to homosexual practices, this boils down to a stereotypical and timeless image of men who have sex with men, but identify as “heterosexual” because they adopt an exclusively insertive role during sexual intercourse (activos), versus maricones, vestidas, and others who allow themselves to be penetrated and identify (and/or are identified) as homosexual (pasivos). Against this, Cantú notes that in Mexico as in the U.S., capitalist development, urbanization, and increasingly intense participation in globalization processes, especially in tourism, media, and the Internet, have given rise to new sexual identities. In particular, he notes the rise of an identity no longer based on sexual role but instead on sexual object choice (so-called internacionales or gays). Gay tourism, cautiously supported by the Mexican tourist industry, seems to have accelerated this process towards gay visibility and its ties to an LGBT movement, particularly in the large metropolises of Ciudad de Mexico and Guadalajara.

Cantú also details the opportunities that emigration produces for men who experience same-sex desire, including those who reject the common connotation of homosexuality as effeminacy while feeling “marginalized by the heteronormative definitions of masculinity reproduced through and embodied in the traditional family” (140). For these men, physical distance allows them to, on the one hand, maintain good relationships with their families of origin and, on the other hand, develop a “gay” lifestyle not compromised by the “sex/gender power axis” prevalent in rural and small town Mexico. Their arrival in the U.S. is facilitated by so-called “landing pads,” alternative and often single-sex households that provide a platform not only to find long-term housing or employment, but also to make a long yearned-for “journey to the self.” Migration provides access to a chosen family of shared affinities and relationships of both material and emotional support, and “It is precisely in this type of living arrangement that many men discover the space that transforms the way they think about themselves and their sexual identities” (135). Once these men manage to make a living and financially support their parents and family at home, it becomes easier to also “come out” to them and be accepted.

New challenges arise, however, as life in the United States contains risks as well: isolation, alienation, racism within the gay community, homophobia within the Latino community, and HIV/AIDS. The last issue especially has been a site of targeted interventions in prevention and care. Here, too, a tendency exists to explain the health problems of Latino gay men as rooted in “machisto” culture, but Cantú holds that experiences of poverty and racism are equally if not more important. Holding that “cultural arguments fail to give an accurate analysis even on a purely cultural level,” Cantú instead stresses the importance of a “political economy framework that examines the multiple and intersecting dimensions of gender, race/ethnicity, culture, class, and migration” (161).

To conclude, The Sexuality of Migration is a rich and compelling study, relevant for historical and social scientific research well beyond the topic of Mexican experience. We regret the author’s early death, yet remain assured that his many insights will contribute to a better understanding of the “queer political economy of migration” not only of Mexicans, but many other people as well.


Reviewed by Jacqueline Murray, University of Guelph

Desire is an ambitious volume with the goal of tracing the evolution of sexuality in European civilization from antiquity through the 1980s. It is a book that is aimed at non-specialists, students, and the general public who will enjoy its broad strokes and the grand sweep of change over time. For scholars and students of the history of sexuality, however, the leaps of time may prove too dramatic and the errors and generalizations too numerous. As is almost always the case with a work that tries to cover 2500 years of history in fewer than 250 pages, there is much with which to quibble.

Using traditional chronological markers – the Reformation, the Enlightenment, or World War I, for example – Clark traces different and competing views of sexual desire: on one hand a powerful creative force for utopian transcendence, on the other a dangerous polluting force of denigration. Within this frame,
there are inclusions and omissions that need to be interroigated, while recognizing the impossibility of writing a grand survey that does equal justice to every time and place. Antiquity is included because of the importance of Plato to subsequent interpretations of same-sex desire. The conquest of Mexico and sexual practices among the Aztecs are used to illuminate the intersections of sex, race, and imperialism. Far less persuasive, however, is the justification to omit completely the early Middle Ages, given “page limits” (12). One might well wonder if this decision was based on the challenges involved in studying the period for a scholar more comfortable with the nineteenth century.

There is a modernist tilt to the book, with chapters covering the seventeenth to twentieth centuries all longer than those discussing the premodern world. This is also reflected in the Suggested Readings that conclude each chapter, which are uneven in terms of both the quality and the quantity of works listed. For example, the chapter on the Victorians lists twenty-six items for further reading, twice as many as other chapters and three times more than for the chapter on Judaism and Christianity, surely among the most significant influences on Western sexual mores. Three of the nine books listed on Judaism and Christianity are over twenty years old; the two reading lists on the Middle Ages are redundant and three authors’ names are incorrect. Many of the most reliable and recent sources are relegated to the notes that appear at the end of the volume. This structure is a real loss for readers as it renders a very fine bibliographic resource, supported by a formidable body of scholarship, difficult and inaccessible. It also furthers the subtle means by which some topics and some historical periods – especially the deep past – are marginalized by the academy while the modern is privileged.

Placed together in the same chapter, Greek and Roman sex and desire are discussed separately, although the similarities and echoes of values and lifestyles are made apparent. The standard tropes of ancient sexuality appear: Greek men were expected to penetrate, Roman men’s sexuality was dominant and aggressive, ancient women were either respectable matrons or prostitutes. The usual sources appear as well: law and philosophy, Greek vase painting, and Roman satirists. But we are left to wonder about the challenges of studying a culture so different and so distant. How representative are Greek philosophers of the society as a whole? How do we know what the Roman satirists really meant? What were the actual experiences of women, released from the caricatures of wife or whore?

The frameworks against which the author invites us to assess sexuality assume a problematic progression from ancient to modern. The themes of male-male sexual relations and prostitution are woven throughout the chapters, particularly those moving from the Renaissance to the early twentieth century. With the Enlightenment, pornography is added to the mix, and in the twentieth century eugenics, abortion and birth control, and extra-marital sexual activity receive attention. These subjects must be juxtaposed against somewhat prurient discussions of premodern topics. For example, Clark foregrounds bizarre and marginal manifestations of medieval desire such as the mystics’ accounts of sucking Christ’s foreskin, the psychotic sexual fantasies of the Malleus Maleficarum, or various Aztec practices that left the Spanish with a fascinated revulsion. There is little sense of sex as a quotidian activity in the premodern world. For the deep past, especially in those societies that do not have the same aura of familiarity that renders antiquity comfortable and familiar, many manifestations of sexuality appear sensationalized. The deep past is othered and exoticized while a presentist framework assures the reader that things are getting better – or at least more familiar – whether through the pornography and prostitution of the nineteenth century or the free love and sadomasochism of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.

It is difficult to know what the general reader will make of Desire: A History of European Sexuality. Will the paucity of context leave them in a quandary or is that the preoccupation of the historian? For example, will someone without a religious background understand why the views of Paul are the main focus of the chapter devoted to the first five centuries of the Common Era? What will the non-specialist make of references to the theorists Deleuze, Guattari, and Lacan, who are mentioned without explanation or even first names (209)? How will general readers respond to images that are not interpreted or linked to the text? For example, the illustration of Tlaçolteotl (95) would benefit from an explanation that she was the Aztec goddess of both wives and purification and also of adulterers and sexual misdeeds.

It is an almost thankless task to take on the job of writing a history as complex as the history of sexuality across 2500 years. One cannot be a specialist in every period and complicated judgment calls are required to render such a volume coherent, representative, and provocative. I have read this book from the critical perspective of a medievalist and have noted certain strengths and weaknesses; scholars of other periods will arrive at others. This is inevitable for a survey, but it is important that the specialist’s eye not overshadow a historical introduction for general readers. Despite the flaws, Anna Clark has made an important contribution to the discipline by producing a volume that will encourage readers to delve more deeply into the important questions surrounding human sexuality.

Reviewed by Annette Morrow, Minnesota State University, Moorhead

In *Marcus Aurelius in Love: The Letters of Marcus and Fronto*, Amy Richlin presents a newly edited and translated collection of forty-six romantic letters between the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180 CE) and his tutor Marcus Cornelius Fronto (c. 100-170 CE). A professor of classics at UCLA, Richlin specializes in Latin literature, the history of sexuality, and feminist theory and her breadth of knowledge is well represented in this text, including her introduction.

For a reader who is interested in Marcus Aurelius, male genders, Roman attitudes toward illness and the body, or ancient letter writing, this text is a superb reference work. It is also quite useful for teaching. Richlin begins with a thorough introduction aimed at a general audience, and does not assume the reader has prior knowledge of this particular set of letters. Keeping her audience in mind, she includes detailed notes on each epistle, a concordance that allows scholars to correlate her translation to other collections of the letters (including Haines’s Loeb translation). The volume also includes an extensive bibliography for further reading and an index. By discussing historiographical issues in her introduction, Richlin not only contextualizes the world of Marcus Aurelius for the reader but also adds to the reader’s ability to view Marcus Aurelius less as a saintly hero and more as a realistic figure of his time. In order to do this, she gives a concise definition of pederasty (*paiderastia* — “boy-love”) and contrasts it to the more modern notion of pedophilia. Specifically, she underscores the point that boys participating in *paiderastia* activities were not considered children (pp. 10-11). To further contextualize the letters, Richlin’s introduction also demonstrates some of the complexities of *erastês* (lover) and *erômenos* (beloved) relationships by advancing the voice of the *erômenos* partner, hitherto absent in literature. Richlin’s explanations add to the richness of the epistles themselves, and historians and students of sexuality and those who are interested in gender differences among men will find much of value here.

The introduction also includes textual criticism. Richlin recounts the 1815 discovery of the correspondence by Italian philologist Angelo Mai (1782-1854) and the subsequent technological disasters that eventually rendered the manuscripts illegible. These calamities opened the doors for a variety of editions of the texts, based on Mai’s notes of what he had seen prior to the texts being damaged. The letters have been difficult to interpret due to a lack of dates, jumbled pages, and missing epistles. Richlin redresses and explains some of these problems, noting that she has arranged them in as close to a chronological order as possible, dating them roughly between 139-148 CE, and observing that the letters were not well known in antiquity, hence the problems with transmission.

Marcus Aurelius and Fronto were part of a bilingual culture and were fluent in both Latin and Greek. Their correspondence reflects this, with most of the letters between them written in Latin with a smattering of Greek phrases. Richlin renders the Greek phrases into French in order to both demonstrate the bilingual nature of the letters and to more easily highlight the authors’ movements from one language to the other. She notes that she has been as faithful as possible in her translation of the Latin, and renders the slang (and humor) of the day into something more recognizable for a modern audience. These updates make the letters much more accessible for teaching.

By translating and contextualizing these love letters for a new audience, Richlin hopes to present these texts for discussion among historians of sexuality and to “open up a conversation” on the interplay of power relationships in the Roman world (8). She notes that although the relationship between Marcus and Fronto was certainly rife with eroticism, the question of whether or not they were actually physical lovers becomes less significant than the “demonstration of the interconnections of love within other Roman systems: family, pedagogy, rhetoric, philosophy, literature, sex/gender, body, history” (8). The letters themselves are a treasure-trove of information, offering the reader a glimpse into an intimate relationship between men during the height of the Roman Empire. Thus, *Marcus Aurelius in Love* serves as a delightful reference on Roman correspondence and culture for scholar and student alike.


Reviewed by Caryn E. Neumann, Miami University of Ohio

Slumming is the voyeuristic, often demeaning practice of crossing racial and class lines to step into the world of the less-privileged other. In *Slumming: Sexual and Racial Encounters in American Nightlife, 1885-1940*, Chad Heap argues that slumming played a crucial role in shaping race, sexuality, and urban space in the United States from the mid-1880s to the outbreak of the Second World War. As thousands of well-to-do Americans mixed with working-class immigrants, Chinese immigrants, and African Americans in Manhattan and Chicago, they publicly engaged in same-sex and cross-racial relationships. By doing so, slummers con-
tributed to a new social order structured primarily around an increasingly polarized white/black racial axis and a hetero/homo sexual binary.

The denizens of late nineteenth-century cities did not invent the idea of slumming. Since at least the mid-1830s, New York’s wealthier residents and occasional sightseers would walk the streets and examine the low-down dives of immigrant and working-class New York. However, in the mixed landscape of the nineteenth-century walking city, such ramblers would usually only walk a few blocks in their own neighborhoods to examine a patch of poverty and illicit activity. After the 1850s, the increasingly hierarchical arrangement of urban culture and space transformed such casual walks into special visits to wholly distinct districts.

Heap opens his book by tracing the shifting cultural geography of slumming. In the mid-1880s, affluent white New Yorkers and Chicagoans found a new type of recreation by forming “slumming parties” to explore the immigrant and working-class districts of their cities. Copying the latest London trend, they would gather a small group of male and female friends, hire a police escort, and embark on their adventure. These individuals had no particular interest in improving the lives of the poor but were content merely to sightsee. “Fairy” entertainers were part of the spectacle; these female impersonators became a must-see, at least for affluent men. Heap theorizes that the attendance of white middle-class men at an extraordinary number of resorts featuring fairy entertainers suggests that some men sought out sexual favors from the female impersonators. The resorts attempted to promote such encounters by permitting the fairies to walk around and solicit the customers.

By the end of the nineteenth century, red-light districts overlapped the areas where immigrants and blacks were able to locate housing and jobs. Heap argues that the association of the slum with the sex district was not accidental, but rather reflected native-born whites’ preconceived notions about the new arrivals. Having decided that prostitution and sexual indiscretion were an inevitable part of city life that could best be controlled through spatial confinement to select neighborhoods, many native-born whites assumed that these same neighborhoods should become home to those groups whom they believed were “naturally” inclined to such illicit behavior.

As red-light districts were closed in the era of Progressive reform, well-to-do pleasure seekers moved to the more respectable environs of the cabaret. In a series of three slumming vogues that ran, successively, from the mid-1910s into the early 1940s, parties visited first the bohemian tearooms, then the black-and-tan cabarets, and finally, the speakeasies and nightclubs frequented by cities’ increasingly visible lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations. Heap finds that slumming vogues helped to define the emergence of new sexual and racial identities, including both heterosexuality and homosexuality.

In the bohemian tearooms and cabarets of New York’s Greenwich Village and Chicago’s Towertown, slummers discovered an exotic new diversion. Bohemians’ rejection of the traditional gender roles of the male breadwinner and the female homemaker in favor of more radical presentations as carefree “long-haired men” and “short-haired women” undermined the relevance of gender performance and presentation as defining markers of sexual normality. By doing so, bohemia helped create new heterosexual norms.

The most popular slumming vogue involved white interlopers venturing into the black districts of the cities. Many visitors used these trips to challenge the bounds of sexual respectability and to contest popular notions of racial difference. Black-and-tan nightlife maintained much of its spark until the Great Depression, when it declined in the face of a new slumming craze focused on the increasingly visible presence of lesbians and gay men. By the early 1930s, race-mixing was not enough to draw the affluent crowd, although black-and-tan cabarets tried to capitalize on the new development by presenting African American lesbian and drag entertainers in elaborate floorshows.

The last of the slumming vogues came into full flower despite the economic constraints of the Depression. Known as the “pansy and lesbian craze,” this vogue created a spectacle of homosexuality, fueled by the public’s growing curiosity about the many lesbians and gay men who had begun settling in residential urban enclaves in the 1920s. Part of a broader cultural trend in which lesbian and gay characters and topics became surprisingly common in fiction, plays, and films, the pansy and lesbian craze provided slummers with an occasion to visit some of the nightspots identified with this sizable new urban population. Against an emerging understanding of urban homosexuality, visitors began to think of themselves as heterosexuals as society adopted a non-reproductive norm. Thus, through slumming, the contrast between a homosexual and a heterosexual identity sharpened.

During the pansy and lesbian craze, wealthy white men were not the only ones to exploit the cover that slumming provided for homosexual experimentation. Their female counterparts also used this vogue to gain easy access to casual same-sex encounters. In part, this development was a direct result of white middle-class women’s growing sense of independence and their increased participation in urban public amusements. However, it was also a product of the rapid spread of specifically lesbian-oriented cabarets during the late 1920s and early 1930s.
While the practice of slumming never faded entirely from American urban culture, this once-popular pastime dwindled into near-obscurity in the years following World War II. To shore up their position atop American racial and sexual hierarchies and to distance themselves from the dangers increasingly associated with postwar U.S. cities, affluent whites redirected their leisure pursuits inward – toward their suburban communities and homes. In doing so, they more firmly grounded the dichotomies of blackness and whiteness and of heterosexuality and homosexuality in the physical and cultural landscapes of America.

Despite a somewhat repetitive organization, this is an important book that adds a significant new dimension to our understanding of the history of sexuality. In particular, Heap has shown that standards of heterosexual masculinity emerged in part through slumming. In describing how a search for mere entertainment transformed the ways in which Americans understood sexuality and race, Slumming adds significantly to both urban history and sexuality studies.

Peter Hennen, Faeries, Bears, and Leathermen: Men in Community Queering the Masculine (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008).

Reviewed by David Palmer, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

In her 2005 work In a Queer Time and Place, Judith Halberstam called for a new emphasis in queer scholarship. "[W]e have become adept ... at talking about 'normativity,'" she wrote, "but far less adept at describing in rich detail the practices and structures that oppose and sustain conventional forms of association, belonging, and identification." Peter Hennen's Faeries, Bears, and Leathermen: Men in Community Queering the Masculine addresses this scholarly deficiency. Using participant observation, interviews, and archival research, Hennen offers a rich description of varying, often complicated ways in which three self-identified gay male subcultures in the contemporary United States both challenge and propagate historically constructed ideas about homosexuality and gender inversion.

Devoting one chapter to each gay male subculture under study, Hennen shows how faeries, bears, and leathermen present unique responses to the femininity effect, a term he uses to refer to an inherited social landscape that links same-sex male desire with effeminacy (8). As Hennen argues, faeries appropriate effeminacy and flamboyance as strategies to challenge dominant ideas of masculinity. They embrace a "subject-subject" consciousness over patriarchal notions of "subject-object" relations; claim a "fae," feminine spirit; and dress in drag. But Hennen holds that these and other strategies fail to disrupt the gender binary because they relegate femininity to parody. Meanwhile, bears – men with hairy bodies in all sizes – eschew femininity by adopting personas as "normal," blue-collar men who happen to be sexually attracted to other men. Yet, bears do not simply seek to uphold "masculine" attributes. Through the institutional use of "bear hugs" and bear cuddling practices, bears challenge the masculine ideal of penetrative sex. Leathermen present themselves as hypermasculine lovers of leather and often engage in bondage, domination, and sadomasochist sexual practices. These men, however, also challenge dominant gender norms by presenting aggressive masculinity as caricature. Hennen underscores that each group's collective identities and associations, both sexual and nonsexual, are intimately tied to their performance of gender. Through this point, he illuminates the inescapable importance of gender in shaping the construction of contemporary sexual identities.

The greatest payoff of Hennen's book is its ethnographic work. Its strength lies in Hennen's detailed, fair-minded analysis of his subjects drawn from his participation as a member of the respective communities. By embedding himself within the worlds of his subjects – assuming a faerie name (2), getting "woofed" at by a bear (3), or flogging a man in leather (6) – Hennen cultivates an empathy that would have been unlikely if he had assumed the role of outsider. This empathy strengthens his analysis, enabling him to better anticipate the complex ways in which members of each group respond to the effeminacy effect. While the lives of faeries, bears, and leathermen provide a revealing window into contemporary negotiations of sexuality and gender, their stories are seldom covered with the careful attention they warrant, making Hennen's analysis invaluable.

Hennen is less convincing when he moves away from his data to consider some of the broader implications of his work, as he does in discussing HIV/AIDS. He argues that by calling into question hegemonic masculine, heteronormative ideals of penetrative sex as the gold standard of sexual fulfillment, faeries, bears, and leathermen might encourage more gay men to practice safer sex. Thus, he suggests that a better understanding of the effeminacy effect may help researchers, community activists, and public health officials address HIV/AIDS more effectively among gay men. Hennen might be on to something, but the issues involved in HIV/AIDS research and safer sex practices are more complicated than he suggests, and his random, usually unexpected mentions about the applicability of his findings to HIV/AIDS research appear arbitrary.
Hennen’s underdeveloped discussion of HIV/AIDS points to a larger structural problem of his book: its lack of focus. By opting to discuss not only the effeminacy effect but also collective identities, postmodernism, the role of intentionality, race and class, and social movement theory, Hennen’s analysis sometimes appears to be everywhere and nowhere at once. The problem is not just one of excess ambition, but poor organization as well. His second chapter, which explores cultural and historical perspectives on effeminacy, reads as a background survey with no clear argument and no apparent relevance to the ensuing chapters that focus explicitly on faeries, bears, and leathermen. Hennen’s use of historical analysis would have been more effective if he integrated the insights of Randolph Trumbach, George Chauncey, and others throughout the book, the better to highlight the historical volatility of “the effeminacy effect,” a concept Hennen ultimately finds hard to explain with precision. By not identifying what “effeminacy” or “masculinity” actually entail in any given moment, or how these concepts have both changed and stayed the same over time, readers are left wondering exactly how, to use his terms, faeries, bears, and leathermen “subvert” or “sustain” gender and to what effects.

Ultimately, Hennen’s analysis is limited by his failure to consider the impact of these groups’ gender performances upon society at large or, for that matter, within the broader “gay community.” He draws his research findings from visits to a faerie weekend sanctuary, a bear camp, and a leather camp – each a site secluded from outside social interaction. His arguments about how these groups challenge dominant ideas of gender would become more compelling if he showed how the practices these groups cultivate in their private getaways become expressed in more public arenas, such as the workplace or the grocery store.

Finally, despite some attempts to historicize his subjects, Hennen’s explanation of how faeries, bears, and leathermen developed as distinct subcultures remains wanting. Why did these three gay male subcultures all develop in the mid- to late-1970s and then mature in the 1980s? To what extent did the growing visibility and toleration of gays within U.S. society during this time allow the subcultures of faeries, bears, and leathermen to develop? By not addressing these sorts of questions, Hennen misses the opportunity to explore some of the broader currents influencing his subjects’ claims to identity and their performances of gender. Because he does not account for broader cultural changes, Hennen’s analysis of the three groups’ formation and growth appears insular at times.

Despite these drawbacks, Faeries, Bears, and Leathermen is a worthwhile read for scholars of sexuality and gender. Hennen adds to our understanding of how sexuality and gender are intimately connected in modern society, and he shows that attempts to challenge or uphold dominant ideas of either are more mixed than absolute in practice. Finally, in taking his subjects seriously, Hennen helps to usher in a new era of queer scholarship – one that reckons with the unconventional lifestyles of unconventional individuals.


Reviewed by Chris Talbot, University of Northern Colorado

Julian B. Carter’s book is a refreshing exploration of how whiteness became normal and invisible as a racial category through its conflation with heterosexuality and marital love. His work disputes prevailing accounts of whiteness as an empty racial category formulated only over and against racial “others.” For Carter, whiteness is plenty full, but it speaks its name in the power-evasive and race-evasive terms of “normal” heterosexual love. This leads Carter to intriguing methodological choices, as he elects to focus neither on racial borders nor sexual margins, but rather the “claustrophobic subject of normality’s internal descriptions and definitions of itself” (18-19). Thus, the essential characteristic of early twentieth-century whiteness is not its emptiness, but its power- and race-evasive normality.

Carter’s first section offers readers a racially-inflected analysis of the late nineteenth-century disease neurasthenia. This diagnosis, Carter argues, was unique to whites who were overwhelmed by the pace and overstimulation of modern civilization. Ironically, the weakness that neurasthenia betrayed actually bolstered whites’ proprietary claim to civilization and racial fitness; such a diagnosis only made sense for a race positioned at the pinnacle of evolutionary progress. Only modern white people possessed tempers developed enough to be made nervous by the evolution of their own advanced civilization. Carter shows that neurasthenia discourse translated white racial weakness into strength, consolidating white racial dominance as natural, self-referential, and distant from dynamics of power and inequality. However, since evolutionary theory held that no other race was capable of taking up the burden of civilization, physicians argued that to meet the demands of modernity, whites must channel their sexual urges on behalf of the future of the race.

In the early twentieth century, neurasthenia diagnoses gave way to the consolidation of white racial power through the conflation of sexual and racial “normality.”

The second section and centerpiece of Carter’s work examines how discourse about the perceived breakdown of marriage and family consolidated white normality as marital sexuality. Those who argued that marriage was disintegrating under the crushing weight of modernity saw two problems: first, the removal of work from home had driven the sexes apart; second, white American men and women had internalized the detached values of the machine age. Marriage supporters argued that a modern, eroticized, and marital heterosexuality could rescue marriage, family, and the nation from the dangers of modernity without compromising the advantages of that evolution. Marriage advice manuals urged modern whites to eroticize the sexual difference that modernity produced so as to make it a point of marital and racial strength and to create a racially powerful progeny. Marital advisors further claimed that it was the evolutionary privilege (and burden) of whites to translate natural sexual desire into the connected intimacies of modern marital love. This produced “the collapse of sexual and racial normality into one another” (98). Modern marital lovemaking became a point of connection in an increasingly disconnected world, and through marital sex, the future of the nation could be saved.

Further, Carter argues, this salvation became imagined in the form of mutual simultaneous orgasm. Marital advisors claimed that the speed of modern life had quickened men’s sexual pace and retarded women’s. Advice manuals called all whites, but especially men, to cultivate the sexual self-control and concern for their partner’s pleasure that mutual orgasm required. Since the pace of modern life left everyone with less time for romance, moderns must cultivate the feelings of marital love that made romantic dalliance imperative. Thus, moderns were called to sex, but specifically to perform a “normal” performance of romantic marital sexuality that was “at the heart of whiteness” (95). In marriage manuals, sexuality was mapped onto race, such that “the more ‘heterosexuality’ talked about itself, the less whiteness needed to say” (98).

Carter’s reading pushes the limits of his sources when he argues that the performance of modern heterosexuality was an act of citizenship that symbolically reenacted idealized relationships among the (white) polity. He claims that modern marital heterosexuality, characterized by just relations between partners, connection across difference, and tender concern for the other, trained its participants for modern citizenship. This point is difficult to read from his sources, and Carter also strains to explain the absence of explicit discourse about race in materials intended, as he claims, to produce racial normality. Here, Carter simply states that marriage manuals displaced analysis of sexual and racial inequality onto power-evasive discussions of differences in sexual timing. This silent displacement coded the performance of normal heterosexuality as the privilege of white Americans.

Carter’s third section examines the transmission of normal heterosexual whiteness to future generations by looking at sex education materials. He argues that between 1910 and 1940, sex education “was an educational technology for implanting the rational and relational values at the core of ideal whiteness in the population at large” (120). Cautionary tales about the risks that venereal disease posed to the health of the nation conflated sexual health with “normal” marital heterosexuality. With “frank reticence,” sex educators attempted to inform children and adolescents about the dangers of “abnormal” sex without arousing the passions or curiosities of their pupils. White youth learned that the normal way to talk about sex was indirect, euphemistic, and metaphorical (through, as cliché as it sounds, discussions of the birds and the bees). By 1925, sex education manuals framed normal heterosexuality as an evolutionary achievement of whites: normal Americans, unlike animals, perverts, and non-whites, talked about sex indirectly and harnessed natural sexual desire into normal, modern, marital, and reproductive sexuality.

As Carter argues, “The sign of a successfully implanted norm is its silence” (152). As The Heart of Whiteness effectively shows, early twentieth-century moderns joined heterosexual love to whiteness by the power- and race-evasive reticence with which both were, and were not, discussed. Unfortunately, readers must wait for Carter’s epilogue to for his convincing censure of empirical and logical approaches to racial equality. Carter argues that combating racism with empirical claims about race and racial groups discourages whites from seeing how whiteness becomes equated with normality. Rather than searching for the truth of racial meaning, scholars are better served by considering how the conflation of normal heterosexuality with whiteness has become a race- and power-evasive technology that obscures white racial power. Carter asks his readers to see the substance of whiteness as moderns constructed it – as “normal” – so that we can combat the strength of that normality and move toward a more just social order.
In 1964, when Life magazine famously named San Francisco the “gay capital” of the United States, the City’s GLBT residents essentially had no history. No survey text identified them. No course included them. They shared only what “leading experts” of the day termed a common “pathology,” not a historic past, which described them as isolated, perverted individuals, not as members of a cross-cultural minority of many communities with affinities and differences.

Less than 50 years later, when San Francisco’s GLBT Historical Society exhibited the record of our past in the heart of the Castro, the most famous gay neighborhood in the world, that historic past had become so extensive, so rich that we could include only a few of the lives and contributions that forged the City’s very queer 20th century.

We choose to explore the Passionate Struggle of the men and women of San Francisco’s GLBT communities during that century through their commonalities, their differences, and their struggles for social, political, and emotional human rights. Rather than present their stories chronologically, we used artifacts, documents, and images from our past to tell them thematically, focusing upon four interrelated topics:

People: how GLBT San Franciscans contributed to our culture and continue to shape it despite social prejudice, political repression, and devastating illness and loss. Some whom we spotlighted risked their...
jobs, their homes, their friends, and their families when they made their private selves known to the public in the fight for our common humanity. Others enriched our lives simply by being themselves. Featuring both the famous and the forgotten, we sought to convey the profound culture of joy and determination they created here.

Places: how individuals, often isolated geographically and suppressed socially, came together to create their own neighborhoods and institutions, where they could live, work, celebrate, worship, learn, play, and support each other during times of great happiness and deep need. Although many districts have been vital for us, we focused on North Beach, the Castro, and the Valencia Corridor to show what GLBT men and women can accomplish when left unhampered to build communities.

Politics: how public action transformed our possibilities for open lives that express our true selves. During much of the last hundred years, we had no political influence, no cultural institutions, few businesses to meet our needs, and little sense of community beyond circles of friends. Political organization, protest, and election changed much of that.

Pleasures: how the men and women of San Francisco’s GLBT communities sought the friendships, compassion, and loving relationships all of us want and how those human desires and their expression both evoked and continue to struggle against political repression and marginalization.

More than anything else, Passionate Struggle showed why our GLBT communities are rightfully proud of the individuals in their past and present, the successes they achieved, and the contributions they made to the culture, politics, and progress of the City, all intrinsically and integrally woven into the fabric of place and people that is San Francisco.

Passionate Struggle was exhibited on Castro Street from November 2008 through October 2009, where it was seen by over 25,000 visitors. The curators were Amy Sueyoshi and Don Romesburg.

It was then updated and exhibited at the Society’s downtown galleries from February 2010 through June.

The Society will be opening its Silver Anniversary exhibit at its new exhibit space in the Castro during the summer of 2010. For more information go to: glbthistory.org
Dear fellow LGBTQ historians and scholars of LGBTQ history,

I recently made the agonizing decision to boycott the AHA conference in San Diego. I had been looking forward to this conference for years because it is so rarely on the West Coast (I live in Southern California). When the AHA announced its “mini-conference” plan a year ago, I was disappointed the boycott was not being respected, but I hoped this alternative might yield some positive benefits. I offered to help in any way I could with the process, but I received no replies, indicating my help was not needed or wanted.

As the conference drew closer, I began to have serious doubts about the strategy. My husband and I had a rather brutal Prop 8 experience. In the weeks before the Nov 2008 election, thousands—yes, thousands—of “Yes on 8” signs (supporting the anti-gay marriage position) began appearing in my neighborhood on public property. I contacted various city offices and law enforcement and received the same replies: we don’t have the resources to remove the signs; we have higher priorities. So my husband and I started removing them ourselves. These were illegally posted signs on public traffic medians. We didn’t touch anyone’s yard signs (including the ones right across the street from our house). While my husband was removing the illegally-posted signs one day, he suddenly found himself surrounded by L.A. County Sheriff’s deputies, called an “anarchist” and other more humiliating names, and issued a criminal citation for vandalism. We talked with lawyers and civil rights advocates; they were shocked but pessimistic about fighting it in any official way. Eventually, the criminal charge was dismissed and we both attended an “informal hearing” in which a deputy D.A. scolded us for taking the law into our own hands. When I explained the situation – how the “Yes on 8” side was committing election fraud and that law enforcement was indirectly complicit in this act – he sighed and shrugged his shoulders.

This was in addition to the hateful, vicious, mean-spirited, bigoted lies about gay people being run constantly on TV ads and in quotes everyday in our newspaper. And Doug Manchester, owner of the Hyatt in San Diego, gave $125,000 — more money than I make in years as an adjunct professor with a heavy teaching load — to this hate machine. Despite the same-sex marriage panels and pretense of a happy resolution by the AHA, hundreds (if not thousands—we will not know until the AHA releases data) of AHA members stayed at that hotel, bought their coffee and muffins, their newspapers, overpriced food and alcohol, among much else. Ultimately I boycotted because I could not handle seeing the busy buzz of conference activity as my colleagues fund the next public gay bashing.

I think the AHA blew it on several fronts (and I admit that hindsight is clearer than foresight): 1) not sufficiently exploring other options for getting out of the Hyatt contract, especially regarding Manchester’s flagrant union-busting activities; 2) having the “mini-conference” in the Hyatt itself, in blatant disregard of the boycott; 3) weak publicity, both to fellow historians and the general public, despite a promised “media blitz;” and 4) a general smugness from the executive office about the whole affair that they were doing the LGBT community a huge favor by even listening to the request to boycott the Hyatt. This last point may sound harsh, but I think that the executive office’s public statements bear this out. I appreciate the effort to organize the “mini-conference,” but sadly I think this strategy was “preaching to the choir.” Unfortunately the “Yes on 8” forces do not value reasoned debate. They rely on fear and emotion to sway the electorate.

To me, this is not simply an academic matter. This is about whether I feel safe walking down the street or not. This is about the fact that violent crimes against GLBTQ people were up in L.A. County last year due to the vile rhetoric of the “Yes on 8” campaign, according to the L.A. Times. This is real life outside the so-called ivory tower bubble. Civil rights history shows that economic boycotts are powerful tools of social change. I agree the AHA should not have bankrupted itself over the issue. But it did not try very hard to figure out a creative solution to honor the boycott. Unfortunately, money speaks loudly in our society, and withholding dollars is the most effective way to combat bigotry. Sometimes, words are not enough.

Sincerely,
Craig M. Loftin
American Studies Department
California State University, Fullerton
Dear fellow historians,

This letter is about the recent AHA Manchester Hyatt conflict in San Diego. I want to start by saying that I am not a member of the AHA. In fact, I may never become a member of AHA despite my interest.

My name is Rodolfo John Alaniz and I am a History of Science PhD student at the University of California, San Diego. My interest in the AHA is quite self-explanatory. The AHA is an important economic and social gateway in our academic profession. The rest of my identity may be less apparent, however. I’d like to humbly share my perspective on the recent San Diego Manchester Hyatt conflict (followed by a suggestion).

I’ll try to keep my account brief. I’m quite proud to be an historian, especially since I am the first of my family to graduate from high school. I was born and raised by migrant farm workers, so you can imagine how the labor issue surrounding the Hyatt affected me. The Manchester conflict was about labor rights even if there was no formal legal labor dispute. On top of this, I am also a member of the LGBT community. The Manchester Hyatt’s strategic support of Prop 8 was an effort to limit my and my family’s personal rights. The AHA’s business with the Hyatt indirectly funded this tragic, historical event. Obviously, the situation was complicated in many aspects. However, the perception of this conflict to future historians and the public could end up being much more damaging than the conflict itself.

The conflict hit me the hardest when I read the official response sent out by the AHA. I’m a reasonable person, but the response seemed more defensive than affirming. This was followed by unofficial comments made by members on various websites, many of which were quite disheartening. Members posted comments about how absurd the conflict was and how historians should focus on employment problems in our own profession first. These posted comments pitted the concerns of LGBT historians against non-LGBT historians as though our concerns as LGBT individuals were somehow traitorous to our shared concerns as members of the same historian community. Many members sadly advocated dropping the discussion all together.

Obviously, I share the employment concern with my fellow graduate students. However, these posts lacked perspective. I haven’t had to watch other historians brutally murdered on news broadcasts. There is far less fear associated with being a historian than being gay when I walk around campus in my everyday life. The comparison and opposition of my identity as LGBT/migrant-born and a historian was terribly offensive. Alternatively, I chose to be a historian knowing the economic consequences. Non-AHA historians, such as myself, were left marginalized, disempowered, and without any lasting positive change after the conflict. I felt ashamed to be a student historian for the first time in my life.

From my perspective, I don’t know if I can join the very organization that should be the gateway into my profession. Obviously, the problem is complicated. However, I have a suggestion for the AHA: do something affirmative that creates positive change. Social rights advocates cannot provide the “consumer” perspective in a struggle like this one. I urge the AHA to make this conflict more transparent and to release a statement (to members and the media) saying how its dealings with Manchester have negatively affected the organization. Let us know it was a bad business decision, even if we had no idea how it would turn bad in the future. And please keep potential members (we future historians) in mind. This message has to reach us somehow, too.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Rodolfo Alaniz
PhD student, History of Science
University of California San Diego
Thomas A. Foster
I am a social and cultural historian of early America with an emphasis on gender and sexuality. My interests in the interconnectedness of race, class, gender, and sexuality inform my service, teaching, and scholarship. I've taught courses on early American social and cultural history, lesbian and gay studies, and women, gender, and sexuality at a variety of institutions including Towsen University, the University of Miami, Rice University, and DePaul University. As an associate professor in the department of history at DePaul University, I serve on the advisory boards for the LGBTQ and the Women and Gender Studies Programs. Starting in the fall of 2010 I will serve as the director of the LGBTQ Studies Program. My publications focus on gender and sexuality in early America. In my first book, Sex and the Eighteenth-Century Man: Massachusetts and the History of Sexuality in America (Beacon, 2006), I analyze the sexual component of normative manhood and the varieties of sexual identities in early America. I have edited a volume on same-sex sexuality in early America, Long Before Stonewall: Histories of Same-Sex Sexuality in Early America (NYU Press, 2007). In addition to two articles in the William and Mary Quarterly on early American gender and sexual identity, I have also published op-eds through History News Service on various issues related to gender and sexuality and LGBTQ rights, including political sex scandals (“Sex and the American Politician,” San Francisco Chronicle, 11/12/06), the need for hate crimes legislation (“Time for the Senate to Act” New York Blade 7/13/07, Windy City Times 7/18/07, Chicago Sun Times 8/27/07), and the passage of Proposition 8 (Detroit Free Press 11/13/08). I would welcome the opportunity to serve on the Governing Board for the Committee on LGBT History.

Phl Tiemeyer
I am a 2007 graduate of the Department of American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. Presently I am serving as a Guggenheim Fellow at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC, where I am researching and writing a book on the history of male flight attendants and their challenges to gender and sexuality norms in the US. I also hold a tenure-track teaching position in US History at Philadelphia University in Philadelphia, PA.

I have served the Committee on LGBT History previously as a member of the Sprague and Lorde Prize committees in 2007. As a member of the board, I would prioritize updating the dissertation list, advocating for additional sorts of graduate student support (a stipend to attend AHA, for example), and otherwise making sure CLGBTH remains a clearinghouse for academic activity in our discipline. Over the years, the Committee has provided me with a vital link to other LGBTQ historians, especially as a graduate student just starting out in the field. I want to ensure that we continue to provide such support for other scholars entering the discipline, even more so as the job market continues to worsen and resources for new scholars grow scarcer.

Stephanie Gilmore
I am assistant professor and chair of women’s and gender studies at Dickinson College. I teach courses on lesbian and gay communities, social movement activism, sexual labors, and love/sex/desire; with a group of outstanding colleagues, I am also coordinating the college’s first sexuality studies certificate. I have been an active member of several professional organizations, serving on the A. Elizabeth Taylor (SAWH) paper prize committee and the Lerner-Scott (OAH) dissertation prize committee; next year, I am one of three members of the CLGBTH prize committee. I received my Ph.D. in comparative women’s history at Ohio State University in 2005 (under the direction of Leila J. Rupp). In 2008, I published Feminist Coalitions (Illinois), a compilation of 13 original historical essays that examine the second wave of US feminism from the perspective of the hard work of coalition building that feminists engaged among themselves and with contemporary social movement activists. I am currently writing Groundswell: Grassroots Feminist Activism in Postwar America, which will be published by Routledge Press in 2011.

My current research explores how LGBT and women students negotiate sexual violence on residential college campuses, a project that puts me in direct contact with young activists who are pursuing social justice at the intersections of feminism, queer activism, and antiracism. It also allows me to merge activism and academia - my fundamental passion. CLGH, as it was formerly known, was an academic and activist lifeline for me when I was a graduate student. It meant so much to me to be able to connect with other queer and feminist scholars who understood our lives had a history and who sought to document it in interesting and groundbreaking ways. These scholars also taught me through their own examples of the politics of being out in the academy and how important it is to take up space in the curriculum and the classroom, in the archives and academic meetings. Once I took a tenure-track job, I joined CLGH as a lifetime member as a way to thank and support this organization. Serving on the board is a way for me to give back to the Committee on LGBT History as a queer, feminist, and antiracist activist and academic.
Governing Board Elections:
The mission of the CLGBTH Governing Board is to further the goals of CLGBTH and to assist and advise the CLGBTH Chair. Governing Board members are expected to take responsibility for at least one CLGBTH project each year.

Select TWO candidates for three-year terms (July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2013)

______ Thomas Foster

______ Stephanie Gilmore

______ Phil Tiemeyer
The Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History, an affiliate society of the American Historical Association, will award the John Boswell and Joan Nestle Prizes in 2011:

**The John Boswell Prize** for an outstanding book on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer history published in English in 2009 or 2010.

**The Joan Nestle Undergraduate Prize** for an outstanding paper on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer history completed in English by an undergraduate student in 2009 or 2010.

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

Send one copy of the nominated book or paper to each of the three members of the Prize Committee by 31 December 2010. Joan Nestle Undergraduate Prize submissions may be emailed to the committee members.

Prize Committee Chair:
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gilmores@dickinson.edu

Mailed submissions must be postmarked by 31 December 2010; emailed submissions must be postmarked by 11:59pm (Pacific time), 31 December 2010.

*If you have questions about the prizes, please contact the Chair of the Committee on LGBT History, Ian Lekus, at lekus@fas.harvard.edu. Do not mail submissions to the CLGBTH Chair.*
CLGBTH

c/o Christina B. Hanhardt
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