



# Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender History

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## IN THIS ISSUE

Co-Chairs' Column	1
AHA 2016 Full CLGBTH Listing	2
AHA 2017 Queering Historical Scale	5
Book Reviews	6

## Reviews in this issue

Carlos A. Ball, *The Right to be Parents: LGBT Families and the Transformation of Parenthood* [Shane Landrum]

Laura Doan, *Disturbing Practices: History, Sexuality, and Women's Experiences of Modern War* [Averill Earls]

Miriam Frank, *Out in the Union: A Labor History of Queer America* [Katherine Turk]

Raquel A. G. Reyes and William G. Clarence-Smith, eds., *Sexual Diversity in Asia, c. 600-1950* [Howard Chiang]

## Committee on LGBT History

**Co-chairs:** Amanda Littauer and Nick Syrett

**Book Review Editor:** Gillian Frank

**Newsletter Editor:** April Haynes

## CO-CHAIRS' COLUMN Fall 2015

Almost a year into our term as co-chairs, we are grateful for all the assistance we have had from all the members of the board, as well as former

co-chairs Jennie Brier and Don Romesburg. We would like to begin by thanking those board members who are finishing their terms in early January. Tamara Chaplin and Alex Warner have been on the board for three years and in the last year, in particular, Tamara worked on revamping the website and Alex has been instrumental in getting our new mentoring program off the ground. Phil Tiemeyer is finishing a four-year term and for much of that time has been the treasurer and thus the backbone and the institutional memory of the organization. We cannot thank Phil enough for being so organized and so level-headed in any and all situations. After this newsletter we also say goodbye to Gill Frank as book review editor and thank him for his service. No doubt we will hear much more from Gill in his work for the CLGBTH's good friend [\*notches: \(re\)marks on the history of sexuality\*](#).

As board members and officers depart, new ones arrive. First we welcome longtime CLGBTH member Rebecca L. Davis of the University of Delaware, who will take over the treasurer's duties from Phil. We also are excited to have Dan Royles of Florida International University on board as our new book review editor. In a particularly competitive election, we would first like to thank all those who ran for seats on the governing board; when election season rolls around in two years' time we would welcome each and every one of you to run again! The membership has spoken and we are delighted to welcome Emily Hobson, Kirsten Leng, Amy

Sueyoshi, and Stephen Vider as our new board members. All four will be serving three-year terms beginning with the 2016 AHA.

Speaking of the AHA: we are excited about all the queer offerings in store for our members and indeed all AHA attendees. As Nick wrote in a [blog post](#) for the AHA's website, the CLGBTH makes it possible to attend queer panels in all time slots at this meeting, as indeed has been true for the last few years. This year we highlight the overall theme of the annual meeting ([Global Migrations: Empires, Nations, and Neighbors](#)) with seven panels in a track we're calling "Queer Migrations." Panelists will explore trans\* performance, the movement of queer identities transnationally, sexuality and migration in cities, the history of male sex work, and a whole lot more besides. We have also assembled editors from the University of Chicago Press, NYU Press, the *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, and the *Journal of Women's History* together for a panel on publishing in queer history that we think may be of special interest to grad students and junior scholars; there will be plenty of time for questions! We have a panel of historians of marriage who will think about the institution's past in relation to the landmark Supreme Court decision this summer on same-sex marriage. And we especially encourage all members to come out to Thursday afternoon's panel, which will focus on the AHA's LGBTQ Historians' Task Force Report on the status of LGBT historians in the profession. Please also join us for our business meeting on Friday at 12:30 p.m. and annual reception co-hosted with the Coordinating Council for Women in History at 6:30 p.m. the same day. We will award prizes for article, grad student paper, and public history at the reception. A complete lineup of all panels can be found later in the newsletter and on our [website](#) (which has been revitalized and streamlined thanks in large part to board members Tamara Chaplin and Andrew Israel Ross, who has taken over as webmaster).

Also at the AHA, thanks to the work of board members Alex Warner and Cookie Woolner, we will be debuting our brand new mentoring CLBTH Fall 2015

program, which pairs senior scholars with junior scholars and grad students. Our hope is that this mentoring program will become a regular feature of the AHA annual meeting and indeed that the connections fostered there will endure for years as grad students find jobs, plan panels, publish articles and books, and become senior scholars and mentors themselves.

In the weeks to come, look out for further announcements about the theme of next year's CLGBTH-sponsored sessions (detailed later in the newsletter), when the annual meeting comes to Denver! Proposals for sessions and papers will be due on February 1<sup>st</sup> to the CLGBTH. You will also receive a final email from Phil Tiemeyer asking you to renew your membership or, if you are a lifetime member already, make a contribution. [Online dues payment](#) is remarkably easy, and remains as affordable as ever, so we encourage you to renew as soon as you are able.

In the meantime, however, we wish everyone a productive end-of-semester and a wonderful winter holiday. We look forward to seeing you in Atlanta!

-Amanda and Nick

## AHA 2016

### **Queer Migrations, Part 1: Transperformance: Historicizing and Theorizing Performative Transgender Acts**

*Thursday, January 7, 2016: 1:00 PM-3:00 PM  
Room 211 (Hilton Atlanta, Second Floor)*

#### **Chair:**

Gabriela Cano, El Colegio de Mexico

#### **Papers:**

Castrati and the Foundations of Pejorative Transsexual Scripting  
*Katherine B. Crawford, Vanderbilt University*

*Female Impersonation and the Queer Circulation of Female Visuality*

Carson Morris, University of New Mexico

Performing the Deconstruction of Gender and Ethnicity through the Art of Punk Drag  
*Frankc Berlanga-Medina, University of Arkansas*

**Comment:**

Gabriela Cano, El Colegio de Mexico

**The LGBTQ Historians Task Force Survey and Report: Where Do We Go from Here?**

*Thursday, January 7, 2016: 3:30 PM-5:30 PM  
Crystal Ballroom B (Hilton Atlanta, First Floor)*

**Chair:**

Mary Louise Roberts, University of Wisconsin-Madison

**Panel:**

Leisa D. Meyer, College of William and Mary  
La Shonda Mims, Towson University  
Mary Louise Roberts, University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Nicholas L. Syrett, University of Northern Colorado

**Before/Outside/Beyond Gay Marriage: New Directions in the History of Marriage in the United States**

*Friday, January 8, 2016: 8:30 AM-10:00 AM  
Room 211 (Hilton Atlanta, Second Floor)*

**Chair:**

Rebecca L. Davis, University of Delaware

**Panel:**

Alison L. Lefkowitz, New Jersey Institute of Technology and Rutgers University-Newark  
William Kuby, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga  
Christina Simmons, University of Windsor  
Nicholas L. Syrett, University of Northern Colorado  
Kristin M. Celello, Queens College, City University of New York

**Publishing in Queer History: A Roundtable with Editors**

*Friday, January 8, 2016: 10:30 AM-12:00 PM  
Room 211 (Hilton Atlanta, Second Floor)*

CLBTH Fall 2015

**Chair:**

Amanda H. Littauer, Northern Illinois University

**Panel:**

Douglas Mitchell, University of Chicago Press  
Clara Platter, New York University Press  
Annette Timm, University of Calgary and *Journal of the History of Sexuality*  
Leigh Ann Wheeler, Binghamton University (State University of New York) and *Journal of Women's History*

**CLGBTH Business Meeting**

*Friday, January 8, 2016: 12:30 PM-1:30 PM  
Room 205 (Hilton Atlanta, Second Floor)*

**Presiding:**

Amanda H. Littauer, Northern Illinois University  
Nicholas L. Syrett, University of Northern Colorado

**Queer Migrations, Part 2: Coming and Going: Traversing Borders and Crossing Boundaries of Sexuality, Race, and Class in the 20th-Century United States and Germany**

AHA Session 136

*Friday, January 8, 2016: 2:30 PM-4:30 PM  
Crystal Ballroom B (Hilton Atlanta, First Floor)*

**Chair:**

Amanda H. Littauer, Northern Illinois University

**Papers:**

A Queer Destination: Postwar Mobility, Migrations, and Vacations  
*Jerry Watkins, Georgia State University*

Movement and Morality: Mass Media and Queer Travel in 1960s and 1970s West Germany  
*Svanur Pétursson, Rutgers University*

"It Takes Only One...": Transgressions of Race, Class, and Sexuality in Sumner Welles' America  
*Chris Parkes, London School of Economics and Political Science*

Picking up the Sheets: Black Bodies and Civil Rights at the Postwar American Roadside  
*Cara Rodway*, Eccles Centre for American Studies, British Library

**CLGBTH Annual Reception**

*Friday, January 8, 2016: 6:30 PM-8:00 PM*  
*Room 309/310 (Hilton Atlanta, Third Floor)*

**Queer Migrations, Part 3: Encounters of Empire: Gender, Sexuality, and US Militarism**

AHA Session 165  
*Saturday, January 9, 2016: 9:00 AM-11:00 AM*  
*Crystal Ballroom B (Hilton Atlanta, First Floor)*

**Chair:**

Judy T. Wu, University of California, Irvine

**Papers:**

Sex, Hygiene, and Public Health: Medicalizing American Militarism Abroad  
*Khary O. Polk*, Amherst College

Gender Troubling the Postwar: Military-Service Activism before Mccarthy, Mattachine, and Montgomery  
*Tejasvi Nagaraja*, New York University

Queer Women in the Service of Empire: Gender, Sexuality, and US Servicewomen in Iraq and Afghanistan  
*Elizabeth Mesok*, Harvard University

**Comment:**

Emily K. Hobson, University of Nevada, Reno

**Queer Migrations, Part 4: Moving People: Unsettling Circuits of Sexual Politics**

AHA Session 193  
*Saturday, January 9, 2016: 11:30 AM-1:30 PM*  
*Crystal Ballroom B (Hilton Atlanta, First Floor)*

**Chair:**

Jennifer Evans, Carleton University

**Papers:**

"A Very Enjoyable Stay in Gay Paree": African American Women Performers and Queer Interracial Circuits in the Jazz Age  
CLBTH Fall 2015

*Cookie Woolner*, Kalamazoo College  
Toward an Intimate Atlantic: Transnational Precursors to Postwar Homophile Activism  
*David Minto*, Princeton University

The Posthumous World Journeys of a Sexologist: Analyzing the Transnational Historiographic Embrace of Magnus Hirschfeld  
*Kirsten Leng*, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Changing Notions of Citizenship and Internationalism in Mexico City's Lesbian and Gay Movement, 1979-91  
*Lucinda C. Grinnell*, University of New Mexico

**Comment:**

Jennifer Evans, Carleton University

**Queer Migrations, Part 5: Rent Boys, Prostitutes, Hustlers: Anxieties and Economies of Male Same-Sex Sexual Commerce in Britain, Ireland, and Canada**

AHA Session 221  
Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History 8  
*Saturday, January 9, 2016: 2:30 PM-4:30 PM*  
*Crystal Ballroom B (Hilton Atlanta, First Floor)*

**Chair:**

Charles J. Upchurch, Florida State University

**Papers:**

Unintended Networks and Tapped Wires: Male Prostitution in the Making of an Information Service Economy  
*Katie A. Hindmarch-Watson*, Colorado State University

"Perfidious Official Guardians": Ireland, the Nation, and Same-Sex Prostitution  
*Jonathan E. Coleman*, University of Kentucky

"For a Few Bob": Rent Boys and the Judicial and Economic Systems of 20th-Century Dublin  
*Averill E. Earls*, University at Buffalo (State University of New York)

“Evil Is in the Eyes of the Beholder”:  
Commercialized Male Same-Sex Sexual Activity  
and Venereal Disease in Vancouver’s Bathhouse  
Debates  
*Richard A. McKay*, University of Cambridge

**Comment:**  
Charles J. Upchurch, Florida State University

**Queer Migrations, Part 6: Sexuality,  
Migration, and Urban Space across the  
Modern World**

AHA Session 252  
*Sunday, January 10, 2016: 8:30 AM-10:30 AM*  
*Crystal Ballroom B (Hilton Atlanta, First Floor)*

**Chair:**  
Carina E. Ray, Brandeis University

**Panel:**  
Saheed A. Aderinto, Western Carolina University  
Clayton Howard, Ohio State University  
Durba Mitra, Fordham University  
Andrew Israel Ross, University of Southern  
Mississippi

**Queer Migrations, Part 7: Traversing  
Boundaries: Sexual Citizenship,  
Trans/National Identities, and Political  
Movements**

AHA Session 281  
*Sunday, January 10, 2016: 11:00 AM-1:00 PM*  
*Crystal Ballroom B (Hilton Atlanta, First Floor)*

**Chair:**  
John Howard, King's College London

**Papers:**  
Migrating Memories: Transatlantic  
Commemoration of the Nazis’ Homosexual  
Victims in West Germany and the United States  
*W. Jake Newsome*, University at Buffalo (State  
University of New York)

“Male Virility Is a Cultural Tradition”: Anita  
Bryant, Miami’s Cuban American Community,  
and the Rise of the New Right  
*Julio Capó Jr.*, University of Massachusetts  
Amherst  
CLBTH Fall 2015

Consensual Kissing Is Not Sodomy: The Policing  
of Homo/Sexuality and the Defense of the  
Normal Heart in Southwest Missouri  
*Elisabeth Frances George*, University at Buffalo  
(State University of New York)

**Comment:**  
Jerry Watkins, Georgia State University



The Committee on LGBT History seeks a special  
slate of panels and roundtables to present to the  
AHA Program Committee for consideration for  
the 2017 conference in Denver. The theme of the  
2017 AHA is [Historical Scale: Linking Levels of  
Experience](#). The CLGBTH is specifically seeking  
panels that will be in a special track entitled  
“Queering Historical Scale.” For more  
information on the CLGBTH, see our [website](#).

We hope that these panels and roundtables can  
engage themes around queering historical scale,  
broadly construed. Like historians working in  
other sub-fields, scholars of queer history  
employ many different spatial, temporal, and  
experiential scales, and have often challenged  
conventions of scalar analysis. Studies range  
from micro- to global, from momentary to  
sweeping, from individual to collective. How  
does LGBTQ history cross, connect, and mix  
scales of analysis? What does it mean to “queer”  
historical scale? How have the experiences of  
some queers stood in for those of others, and  
what problems does this pose for historical  
scale? Given the paucity of sources for some  
regions and periods, how can scholars of the  
queer past connect the micro and the macro  
across space, time, and types of experience? How  
have gay or trans\* identities in one location  
interacted with those in other places, and what  
permutations have ensued? How do concepts of  
space, place, and geography inform practices of  
queer history? We welcome scholarship in all  
geographic areas, and especially encourage  
applications from those working on regions  
outside the U.S. and periods before the 20th

century. Transnational and/or cross-cultural panels are particularly welcome.

The CLGBTH also welcomes LGBTQ panels and roundtables **not directly related to the theme of Queering Historical Scale**, including those that engage with **issues of professional development** (publishing, job market, mentoring, etc.). If you are submitting an LGBT history panel directly to the AHA rather than for the year's special track, please let us know by February 1 so that we can consider sponsoring your submission.

The deadline for possible papers and panels on our special track is **February 1**. While we strongly prefer assembled sessions, we will also build sessions from individual paper submissions as needed. In order to submit a **panel**, please email us the following:

- Session title (of no more than 20 words)
- Session abstract (up to 500 words)
- Paper or presentation titles
- Abstract or description for each presentation (up to 300 words)
- Biographical paragraph or CV summary (up to 250 words) for each participant
- Correct e-mail address for each participant
- Affiliation, city, state, and country for each participant
- Chair (required) and commentator (optional) for the session
- Audiovisual needs, if any

In order to submit **an individual paper**, please provide the following:

- Paper or presentation title
- Abstract or description for presentation (up to 300 words)
- Biographical paragraph or CV summary (up to 250 words)
- Correct e-mail address
- Affiliation, city, state, and country
- Audiovisual needs, if any

All proposals and communications should go to CLGBTH Co-Chairs Amanda Littauer ([alittauer@niu.edu](mailto:alittauer@niu.edu)) and Nick Syrett ([nicholas.syrett@unco.edu](mailto:nicholas.syrett@unco.edu)). All people accepted into CLGBTH programs are required to be current paid members of our organization. You can sign up for or renew membership [here](#).

The final AHA Program Committee deadline is February 15. For details about AHA submissions, see the [AHA submission page](#).

If, for one reason or another, some sessions are not accepted, we can consider including them in our affiliated program, which is submitted after we know the results of the program committee's deliberations.

## BOOK REVIEWS

Book review editor: Gillian Frank

**Carlos A. Ball, *The Right to be Parents: LGBT Families and the Transformation of Parenthood* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).**

Although same-sex marriage has been fully legal in parts of the United States for over a decade, most Americans can easily overlook the much longer history of GLBT people's struggles with family law beyond marriage. Carlos Ball's 2012 book, *The Right to be Parents: LGBT Families and the Transformation of Parenthood*, offers a legal history concerned with parenting by same-sex couples and LGBT individuals between the mid-1970s and the present and addresses a range of issues: child custody, foster care, adoption, and assisted reproduction. In the introduction, Ball explains key legal terms, particularly the longstanding American legal principle that in family-law cases, "the best interests of the child" should guide a court's decision. As Ball demonstrates, the exact nature of these "best interests" has been fundamental to how courts have ruled on LGBT parenting. The book seeks to answer two related questions: In American law, who counts as a parent and on what grounds? How have LGBT adults challenged legal



definitions of parenthood to enable them to gain state recognition for their families?

*The Right to be Parents* contains three major sections. Part I, “What Makes a Good Parent?,” explores child-custody cases in which parents’ openly-lived sexual orientation resulted in loss of custody. The first two chapters, which focus respectively on lesbian mothers and gay fathers, demonstrate that since the 1970s courts have ruled that a biological parent’s choice to live openly with a same-sex partner was intrinsically harmful to children. Ball’s narration of these complex cases is detailed and clear, and the stories he tells are unusually heartbreaking for a scholarly work.

Part II, “Who is a Parent?,” contains three chapters about cases in which the very definition of “parenthood” has been at issue. Unlike Part I, in which litigants are primarily heterosexual ex-spouses of lesbian and gay parents, the cases in Part II frequently involve gay and/or lesbian litigants on both sides. The third chapter examines lesbian mothers who argued in court that particular lesbians or gay men should *not* be legally recognized as parents. Some of these cases involved gay men who served as known sperm donors. Others involved situations wherein one mother provided an ovum for *in vitro* fertilization and surgical implantation into her partner’s uterus. Chapter 4 explores cases related to gay male couples, which also often involved gestational surrogates. Chapter 5 turns to nonbiological definitions of parenthood, focusing on cases where same-sex couples fought state governments for the right to foster and adopt children. The sections about Florida would be excellent background reading for an undergraduate-focused lecture on the New Right as they tell a three-decades-long story of Anita Bryant’s 1977 “Save Our Children” campaign, the resulting state legislative ban on adoption by same-sex couples, the impact of this ban on particular couples and children, and the ban’s defeat in court between 2008 and 2010. Part III, “Gender Does Not Make a Parent,” contains one chapter on courtroom deliberations on whether transsexuality should disqualify a

CLBTH Fall 2015

parent from custody. These cases demonstrate the complexities of LGBT family law, as when the Illinois Court of Appeals used the state’s ban on same-sex marriage to declare that a trans man was legally female, that his marriage was void, and that thus he was not the father of his erstwhile wife’s child. In his conclusion, Ball argues that courts should recognize the qualities of a competent parent without regard to “criteria such as biology, marital status, sexual orientation, and gender identity,” focusing on “the actual relationships between adults and the children whom they care for” (214).

For legal-history scholars and other researchers who study LGBT family law in the U.S., this is an essential work. Ball’s bibliography of cases is outstanding. His text and citations frequently provide an accessible introduction to legal technicalities and relatively arcane matters of LGBT family law. As a reading for a graduate seminar in legal history, GLBTQ history, and/or the history of the family, *The Right to Be Parents* would be a fine choice.

Methodologically, this book is straightforward legal history. Because family law is primarily a state-level matter, Ball’s primary sources are legal cases from a variety of states—wherever the major controversies were happening—augmented with occasional federal appeals records and press accounts. As a professor of law, Ball does not shy away from making normative claims, as when he refers to “early cases” in which judges ruled “improperly” (8). Although this is not a Whiggish narrative, Ball does frequently enumerate what he sees as the evolving logic of trial courts and appeals courts.

Ball’s engagement with queer critiques of marriage and heteronormativity is essentially nonexistent. Although he asserts that “courts should be open to the idea that more than two individuals can share parenthood” (132), this flows from a longer discussion of surrogacy and known-donor insemination, not from cases of ongoing non-monogamous relationships. Ball argues that GLBT parents should be and have been incorporated into the “best interests of the

child” standard for custody, but he does not interrogate the cultural processes by which the figure of “the child” became persuasive as a tool for legal change. Given the extent to which childrearing couples have featured prominently in media campaigns for “marriage equality,” a plausible argument could be made that the social performance of “being parents” has played a key role in gaining public support for same-sex marriage. Ball does not make this argument explicitly, but he lays the groundwork for scholars who wish to do so.

This book's many strengths are also its chief weaknesses, especially as assigned reading for undergraduates. In his detailed explanations of legal reasoning used by litigants and courts, Ball gives short coverage to the social movements, cultural activism, and media publicity, which changed Americans' views on LGBT people and parenting. Finally, faculty who want to teach works with an explicitly intersectional approach will not find that here. Explicit discussions of the impact of litigants' race, gender, class, or religion on case outcomes are brief and rare. None of these exclusions are, in themselves, flaws in this very fine work. However, most faculty who teach undergraduate GLBT history courses will want to assign textbooks with wider subject coverage. Individual chapters would teach well to advanced undergraduates. Chapter 1 (“Mothers on Trial”), which has a strong narrative, would work well alongside readings on, for example, lesbian-baiting within the National Organization for Women. Chapter 6 (“Can Transgender People Be Parents?”) would also be useful for introducing undergraduates to the legal challenges faced by trans parents with more ordinary lives than Caitlyn Jenner. Overall, this is an excellent book worthy of a wide readership among historians of gender, sexuality, and law.

- Shane Landrum, Florida International University

**Laura Doan, *Disturbing Practices: History, Sexuality, and Women's Experiences of Modern War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).**

In *Disturbing Practices*, Laura Doan examines the use of sexuality as a category of historical analysis. Doan critiques the way “queer” history has been approached to date, focusing on tensions between lesbian and gay social history and new queer cultural history. She takes issue with a tendency among historians to focus on creating “genealogies” of sexuality, by which she means the search for familiar sexual identities in the past. These projects are valuable in their own way, she claims, but limit the applicability of sexuality as a category of analysis. Instead, Doan advocates for greater employment of a combination of critical history and queer theory in examinations of the past to disrupt linear historical narratives of sex and sexuality.

*Disturbing Practices* is divided into two parts. The first, “The Practice of Sexual History,” is a theoretical exegesis critiquing the historiographies that stem from genealogical projects. In the second half, titled “Practicing Sexual History,” Doan applies her methodological combination of critical history and queer theory to case studies of women during and after World War I in Britain.

The first section begins with “An Uncommon Project: The Discipline Problem Reconsidered,” a chapter in honor of Lisa Duggan's 1993 article of a similar name. Doan discusses the challenges of sexuality studies, including the rigidity of the disciplines, and the de- or undervaluing of non-academic sexuality studies. She argues that LGBT scholars need to overcome these divisions so that a more productive conversation about queer methodology can enter the scholarship. In Chapter Two, Doan identifies and critiques two academic enterprises, which she dubs the ancestral genealogy project and the queer genealogy project. Each project, Doan argues, enables the evaluation of sexual identities in the past, but also make assumptions about the past, namely that sexuality is linkable to identity.



Doan proposes the integration of critical history because it exposes “that nothing in the past is visible until we in the present make it so” (89). In effect, it is the action of the historian interpreting the “evidence” of the past that renders sexual identities discernible. Critical history, Doan avers, demands that scholars must question their role in the construction of narratives of the past.

The first part of *Disturbing Practices* usefully outlines some of the historiographical traditions in sexuality studies. The second section, however, is where Doan showcases the application of the methodology she advocates. Through a close reading of print and popular culture as well as legal and literary texts, Doan models how to study the past without searching for a genealogical record of sexual identities. From these sources she is able to consider how sex and sexuality informed and shaped the ways that British women understood their place in society, and how British society understood women’s roles, sexuality, and identities during and after World War I. In so doing, Doan dismantles the assumptions about the development of lesbian identities in World War I.

In the third and fourth chapters, Doan seeks to clarify the usefulness of queer theory for historical investigation by questioning the language of sexual and gender categorizations, or “taxonomies.” Looking specifically at the dialogues surrounding “mannish” and “Amazonian” women between 1914 and 1919, Doan examines cartoons and government documents to consider whether it is useful to understand WWI female ambulance drivers as lesbians. Her close reading of cartoons with social commentary of the period reveals that certain behaviors—exuding authority, dealing with maintenance issues around the house, failing to readily take up flower arranging for the dinner table—would not have been understood in 1919 as code or euphemism for a sexually deviant identity. Gender was not necessarily tied to sexuality. Unfortunately, Doan’s ongoing defense of her methodology overshadows the more interesting aspects of her analysis, particularly her contextualization of these

images and texts in the larger social and sexual culture of Britain during World War I. Doan successfully destabilizes the linear narratives of sexual identities, but she could just as easily have achieved this goal without continuously returning to her theoretical framework.

Chapter Four examines categorizations of three women: the one-time leader of the Women’s Royal Air Force Violet Douglas-Pennant, and two ambulance drivers, Mairi Chisholm and Elsie Knocker. Doan studies these women in order to interrogate the shifting boundary between sexual acts and identities. Doan’s goal is to write a history that doesn’t select evidence to narrate the emergence of lesbian identity. Rather than seeing the actions of the women or the perceptions of the women by others as evidence or non-evidence of lesbian identities, Doan contemplates what questions or problems emerge when either the language for sexual identities does not exist or the subjects themselves refuse to self-categorize. She is less interested in whether Douglas-Pennant identified as a lesbian and instead interrogates why her contemporaries asked, “Is she a lesbian?” and what that meant about conceptualizations of female sexuality and British society between 1918 and 1931. This chapter is perhaps the most accessible of the book, the least mired in theory and historiography. By interpreting the self- and external perceptions of these three women, Doan demonstrates how to think critically about the shifting moral regimes, gendered identities, and sexual behavior of Edwardian Britain.

In Chapter Five, Doan shows that “normal,” “norms,” and “normativity” are historically contingent. The sexuality of the women in the case studies in this chapter cannot be read as “sexually deviant” because sex and sexuality in British society in the 1920s were anchored by a moral regime, not a normal/deviant binary. Deviance would not enter the sexual discourse until mid-century. This intervention is significant because it diverts from the tendency to impose modern sexual identities onto early twentieth-century people. Doan sets aside categorical

assumptions about these women and their interactions with their worlds; in so doing she is able to comment on the nebulous and ever-changing sexual system of wartime Britain.

This study offers an invaluable bridge between queer theory and critical history, but Doan's sustained theoretical and historiographical arguments detract from the book's accessibility. A single, streamlined, and stand-alone chapter or article might have better served scholars of sexuality. Still, Doan's work challenges all historians to think critically about how we "do" history. This important question forms the center of her first two chapters, and should not be overlooked. Further, Doan deftly navigates the nuances of sexuality in Britain during WWI and asks significant questions about historical contingency. *Disturbing Practices* should inspire other scholars to think more seriously about just how deeply anachronisms infect our approaches to the past.

- Averill Earls, SUNY-Buffalo

**Miriam Frank, *Out in the Union: A Labor History of Queer America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014).**

Although relatively young, the field of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender history is well-established and expanding. Historians of women and gender writing in the same years that saw its rise have emphasized work—both waged and unwaged—as an essential engine of identity formation and social difference. But queer labor histories have been largely absent. Miriam Frank's volume demonstrates just how much we were missing without it. An account of LGBT workers and their unions between the 1960s and the present, *Out in the Union* makes a strong case that labor—as both a constellation of experiences and a site of discrimination and the advancement of rights claims—has been an essential aspect of LGBT history. The book also demonstrates that struggles over sexual expression on the job and demands for queer civil rights have shaped the labor movement.

In part a primer on LGBT labor history, *Out in the Union* opens with a timeline that marks a half-century of highlights and turning points. Foreshadowing the book's interweaving of broad national developments with local stories, the timeline features relatively familiar milestones in queer labor history such as the Coors Beer boycott of the 1970s. But it places these alongside lesser-known stories of pioneering individuals such as Joni Christian, a General Motors assembly line worker whose union supported her 1975 employment discrimination suit when she encountered harassment at work following her sex reassignment surgery. As the timeline suggests and the rest of the book bears out, it took national campaigns and personal efforts alike to push LGBT worker rights from the periphery to the center of organized labor's agenda. The timeline also advances one of *Out in the Union's* central arguments: that while queer unionists have faced setbacks, their history is marked by undeniable progress.

The book's chapters form the building blocks of three thematic sections. The first section, "Coming Out," explains how the changing social climate of the 1960s and 1970s convinced many queer unionists to come out in their workplaces and pursue positions of union leadership. As Frank explains, convincing the labor establishment to accept out LGBT members was an uneven process. In 1972, AFL-CIO President George Meany publicly chided the gay rights provision advocates sought to add to the Democratic Party platform. But in other unions, "fair treatment for gay workers was no joke." (6) The American Federation of Teachers, for example, viewed attacks on its gay members as bound up in broader employer campaigns to erode workers' rights. The second section, "Coalition Politics," reveals how LGBT workers gained respect and influence within the labor movement through the strong and often unlikely coalitions they forged with queer activists and other union members. Section Three, "Conflict and Transformation," considers how unionists have "organiz[ed] the gay unorganized" (135) in workplaces such as AIDS service centers. Throughout, Frank reminds readers that queer

unionists' concerns—which often overlapped with but sometimes diverged from other workers'—were rooted in their experiences on the job. *Out in the Union* pays careful attention to the struggles of lesbians who faced double discrimination as queer women in male-dominated trades; to the gay men who often sought to perform female-typed work with dignity and good working conditions; and, to a lesser extent, to the transgender workers who sought financial and emotional support from their unions and employers.

Much of the narrative unfolds through case studies. While Frank draws substantially from archival material, the book's main source base is a remarkable cache of more than one hundred oral histories. Frank uses this evidence to introduce us to previously unknown protagonists of queer labor history. Their stories discredit the myth that union workplaces have consistently been sites of forced sexual conformity. In one such example, we meet workers at Barney's Department Store who also belonged to the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Workers (UNITE). Barney's in the 1990s was, according to Frank, "the gayest union workplace ever." (43) "The whole store was out," recalled Irving Smith, who worked in the children's clothing department. (44) Smith described how he performed in drag with his coworkers each year at the employee breakfast that kicked off the Christmas season. Smith was also a member of UNITE's negotiating team that sought to protect the workers' contract as Barney's entered bankruptcy. "We are the people that make Barney's what it is," he said. (45) Through job actions that included sales floor displays of solidarity, pickets and a fashion show, the workers won domestic partner benefits once new management took over in 1996. These oral histories flesh out textured stories with evidence that researchers would be unlikely to find elsewhere.

By fusing labor and LGBT histories, Frank reshapes narratives in both. Reinterpreting LGBT history as it unfolded through the labor movement reveals how important class

solidarity has been to queer workers. Union protections have been critical to shoring up dignity and personal security at work, especially where legal protections has fallen short. Further, Frank demonstrates that workplaces have been important and overlooked sites of queer identity formation and revelation. Union members took different paths to coming out on the job, with each of their journeys shaped by "the quality of support they could expect from their unions, by the culture of their workplaces, and by their personal situations." (21) *Out in the Union* also offers a new twist on recent labor history. Gay people forged powerful networks within their unions that bent those institutions toward their interests. These same networks in turn gave critical strength and direction to their unions. Thus, far from a passive constituent group that tacitly derived benefits from collective labor protections, the alliances queer workers built with union leaders enabled them "to confront countermovements determined to weaken them both." (72)

*Out in the Union* tracks "the survival of unions and the survival of queer communities." (13) But these histories have mostly moved in opposite directions, with queer identities becoming more accepted as working class identities have declined. As of a few years ago, only twelve percent of American workers belonged to labor unions. (11) Frank might have further probed the relationship between these dynamics. Are they merely coterminous, or have developments in one area paved the way for changes to the other? As Frank notes, both of these histories are still unfolding, with notable victories won by marriage equality campaigns and working-class efforts that have circumvented formal bargaining processes. A lens that incorporated union and non-unionized labor might have provided a more complete, if unwieldy, portrait. But in light of the tremendous evidence Frank has uncovered—as well as the book's remarkable accomplishments—the author deserves to cast its contents in a positive light.

-Katherine Turk, University of North Carolina

**Raquel A. G. Reyes and William G. Clarence-Smith, eds., *Sexual Diversity in Asia, c. 600-1950* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012).**

This thin but ambitious book is a collection of seven essays that claims to cover almost one and a half millennia of history in 160 pages through the lens of “sexual diversity.” While few of the contributors are recognizably regular interlocutors in the field of the history of sexuality (Tamara Loos, Timon Screech, and the volume coeditor Raquel A. G. Reyes), nearly all of them are highly esteemed scholars in their respective area of specialization. The rest of the team include Daud Ali, a specialist in court culture in early medieval India, Peter Boomgaard, an economic and environmental historian of Southeast Asia, Vivienne Lo, a historian of Chinese medicine, Penelope Barrett, a specialist translator and Lo’s long-term collaborator, and William G. Clarence-Smith, the volume coeditor and an editor of the *Journal of Global History* who specializes in Islamic history. The result of this collaboration is a volume rich in discussions of Southeast Asia and historical evidence on sodomy, but on the whole raises more questions than answers about doing the history of sexual diversity in Asia.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I, “Texts,” provides large-scale accounts of transgressive sexual acts and identities as documented in pre-modern Chinese, medieval Indian, and post-1400 Islamic Southeast Asian textual sources. The opening chapter, coauthored by Lo and Barrett, combs through medical documents, Daoist religious texts, bedchamber manuals, and fictional works to show competing Chinese visions of the pleasure, significance, and problems of anal intercourse before the rise of the Qing empire (1644-1912). While the coauthors should be lauded for highlighting the motif of social hierarchy in a vast array of textual evidence, as well as for their careful resistance to conflating erotic acts with sexual subjectivity, the chapter could have benefited from a more detailed contextualization of the sources examined. Throughout the

chapter, the social and historical implications of the radically different source genres consulted (usually corresponding to distinct historical periods) warrant more thorough explorations to better explicate their conclusions about the meaning and practice of anal sex across a huge swath of Chinese history.

In contrast, the second chapter on India by Ali is more focused in scope, even as it claims to look at primary sources that span over one thousand years. The chapter draws on two broad categories of materials, *śāstra* and *kāvya*, the former being more prescriptively and normatively oriented and the latter more literary and representational in nature. Ali’s analysis unfolds around three focal points: the danger of sexual liaisons across caste boundaries, the common representations of oral sex in sculptures, and the historical origins of a character known as the “third-nature” (*trtiyāprakṛti*), which has served as a controversial backdrop to contemporary debates on homosexual and transgender identities in contemporary South Asia.

Next, Clarence-Smith’s chapter surveys the history of non-normative gender and sexualities in Islamic Southeast Asia. A key objective of this chapter is to sustain a more nuanced explanation for the ways in which homosexuality and transgenderism have been repressed in modern Southeast Asian Islam over time. By casting light on the significance of Islamic reform movements since the eighteenth century, Clarence-Smith offers a magisterial historiographical treatment of the subject, arguing that initial enthusiasms of Islamic conversion may have led to growing gender and sexual oppression in Southeast Asia. For instance, modernists’ endeavor to uphold the sexual morality of the shari’a contributed to such oppression as much as, and perhaps even more so than, European colonial legislations. This insight provides a sorely needed corrective to the work of anthropologists who have tended to jump straight from early modern Islamic tolerance to the liberalism of contemporary queer movements.

The next two chapters by Loos and Screech together form the second part of the book, titled "People," and focus on the homoerotic affairs of politically elite single males. Both chapters provide refreshingly close, biographical history without losing sight of broader historiographical debates on male same-sex sexuality. Loos adds greater nuance to the historiography of non-normative sexuality in Southeast Asia by delving deeply into Siam's history. Whereas most accounts have considered suspicion of treason solely responsible for Siam's Prince Rakronnaret's 1848 execution (as ordered by Rama III), Loos makes a compelling case for why this interpretation is misleading. She shows that such cause for execution is inseparable from accusations of improper sexual acts on the part of Rakronnaret, who maintained erotically charged relationships with male members from his acting and dance troupe. Screech's chapter on Japan uses the cross-cultural sexual encounter between Inoue Masashige and Olof Eriksson Willman, Swedish servant to the resident head of the Dutch East India Company, to map the evolving configurations of cross-cultural and sexual norms in the decade of the 1650s. The chapter invites wider engagement with the historiography of (homo)sexuality in Japan and transnational Asia.

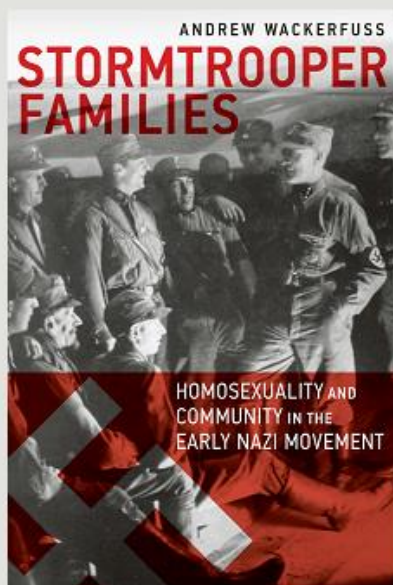
Reyes and Boomgaard conclude the book with a focus on "Crimes and Sins," the title of Part III. Each of their chapters analyzes a single court case to make broad claims about sodomy in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Manila (Reyes) and early modern Indonesian Archipelago (Boomgaard). In Reyes' chapter, the protagonist is a Chinese mandarin from Taiwan named Lousu, whom the Spanish authorities in the Philippines sentenced to death in 1670 by for committing the crime of sodomy. After the colonial authorities received a plea from Pangsebuan, the Governor General of state and arms of Taiwan and a cousin to the "King" of Taiwan, the Spanish released him. Reyes

attributes this chain of events to the colonial authorities' interest in maintaining good friendship with neighboring elites in Taiwan. In the last chapter of the volume, Boomgaard uses the 1644 death of Joost Schouten, member of the Council of the Indies in Batavia to examine differences in criminal punishments for sodomy between the Dutch Republic and the Dutch East India Company courts of law in the Indonesian Archipelago. Boomgaard's chapter juxtaposes the *reasoning* behind sodomy punishments inflicted on Europeans in Asia against indigenous *attitudes* toward same-sex behavior. This approach calls attention to the different nature of the crimes to which death by drowning was applied in the larger Dutch empire: male-male sexuality and bestiality by the Dutch and incest by the Indonesians.

In sum, the book is at its strongest when challenging existing historiographical lacunae, such as the privileging of gender pluralism in the anthropological literature on Southeast Asia and the Eurocentric burdens of Foucauldian approaches to the history of sexuality. While the book presents a goldmine of information on early modern Southeast Asia, there is an overwhelming emphasis on men and male sexuality (chapters such as the one by Clarence-Smith is less vulnerable to this critique). In addition, the materials generally do not do justice to the chronological end date indicated on the cover of the book. It is also curious that the introduction frames the volume's intervention through offsetting an "Orientalist imagination" of sexual diversity in Asia, since the theme of Orientalism disappears altogether after page three. These minor reservations notwithstanding, *Sexual Diversity in Asia* is a valuable teaching tool and a pioneering book that brings together scholars of different regions to forge a rare and stimulating discussion about queer Asian pasts.

- Howard Chiang, University of Warwick

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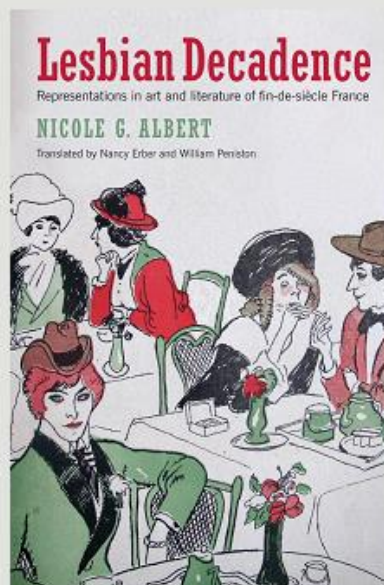
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