



Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender History

Spring 2017 • Vol. 31:1 • <http://www.clgbthistory.org>

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Committee on LGBT History

Co-chairs: Amanda Littauer and Nick Syrett

Book Review Editor: Dan Royles

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CO-CHAIRS' COLUMN Spring 2017

Since our last column, written just after the 2016 presidential election, we have been inspired by the activism, protest, and political mobilization that so many of you have enacted. Through phone calls, emails, faxes, marches, actions, and protests large and small, diverse LGBTQ peoples

and communities are demanding the rights, respect, access, and freedoms that all of us deserve. We are grateful for this community of scholars, teachers, and public intellectuals who are committed to protecting LGBTQ lives in and beyond the archives.

The CLGBTH mini-conference within the 2017 meeting of the American Historical Association was quite successful with eleven sessions, an archive tour, a well-attended business meeting, a lively party at Nick's home, and a reception that we co-sponsored with the CCWH, the Berks, and the new [AHA Committee on LGBTQ Status in the Profession](#). The three sessions honoring the life and work of queer Latino oral historian Horacio N. Roque Ramírez were especially powerful, while the sessions devoted to educating non-specialists about how to include LGBT history content in U.S. and Latin American surveys took a practical approach. Board member Cookie Woolner paired up more mentors and mentees in our mentoring program, which is starting to show dividends in the form of professional collaborations and conference sessions. Watch for an email in October soliciting more participants (particularly mentors).

Also at the AHA, we were pleased to announce the winners of several prizes, details of which can be found on our website. In brief, the John Boswell prize went to Clare Sears for *Arresting Dress: Cross-Dressing, Law, and Fascination in*

Nineteenth-Century San Francisco and Timothy Stewart-Winter for *Queer Clout: Chicago and the Rise of Gay Politics*. The Joan Nestle prize went to Ben Eshelman for his online exhibit "[Trans Rochester Speaks](#)." Thanks to prize committee members Phil Tiemeyer, Carson Morris, and Afsaneh Najmabadi for their hard work. We will announce calls for the 2018 Gregory Sprague Prize for the best article/chapter/paper by a graduate student, Audre Lorde Prize for the best article, and Allan Bérubé Prize for best public history project this summer. Please consider nominating your own or others' work for these prizes.

Speaking of prizes, we are pleased to announce that we are developing a new CLGBTH prize, the Don Romesburg Prize for outstanding K-12 curriculum in LGBT history. Don is a former co-chair of the CLGBTH and the lead author of the groundbreaking report, [Making the Framework FAIR: California's History-Social Science Framework Proposed LGBT Revisions Related to the FAIR Education Act](#), which he wrote about for [Perspectives](#) in 2016. We are thrilled to honor and to extend his work to bring intersectional and research-driven LGBT history content to K-12 students. The prize will be announced in 2018 and awarded at AHA 2019 and then on subsequent odd numbered years. It will be open to K-12 educators in all content areas and educational institutions. We will share the winning curriculum on our website and through our networks with the hope of encouraging teachers around the nation to adapt the content to meet their own objectives and standards. When the time comes, we will ask for your help in spreading the word about this exciting opportunity for recognition and collaboration. In the meantime, if you have ideas about the specifics of the award itself or our efforts to disseminate information about it, please email Amanda at alittauer@niu.edu.

For the 2018 AHA meeting in Washington, D.C., we are looking forward to a robust program of fifteen diverse and varied sessions. We'll publish the details in the fall newsletter, but please plan to join us if you can.

Finally, Amanda would like to publicly congratulate Nick on his new position as Chair of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Kansas. The fall will bring all kinds of exciting changes as our membership elects new co-chairs and board members. If you are interested in running for a position on the governing board, please email Amanda at alittauer@niu.edu or Nick at syrett@ku.edu. Stay tuned for details!

In solidarity,
Amanda and Nick

Announcements

BLOOMINGTON, IN—During its annual meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana, the Organization of American Historians (OAH) presented **Ian Michael Baldwin, University of Redlands**, with their inaugural 2017 **John D'Emilio LGBTQ History Dissertation Award**, which is given annually for the best PhD dissertation in U.S. LGBTQ history.

John D'Emilio LGBTQ History Dissertation Award

"Family, Housing, and the Political Geography of Gay Liberation in Los Angeles County, 1960–1986" (University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Adviser: Professor Marcia Gallo). The committee was deeply impressed by the originality of Baldwin's approach to the history of gay politics in Los Angeles. The dissertation situates the local gay story within the contexts of expanding state services in the 1960s and 1970s and retrenchment and austerity in the period after Proposition 13. Through extensive and thorough research in archives that are often underutilized, Baldwin carefully reconstructs a shift from queer housing and social service initiatives directed at the poor and marginalized toward the gay identity politics and commercial development that characterized the incorporation and gentrification of West Hollywood. The dissertation places these processes within the

larger neoliberal urban transformation within which they emerged. The arguments about the relationship of the social welfare state to gay and lesbian metropolitan citizenship opens new lines of scholarship that ground queer history in local and national political economies.

The award was presented on April 8 by OAH's 2016–17 President Nancy F. Cott and 2017–18 President Edward L. Ayers.

MICHAEL YOUNG is pleased to announce that a new, revised, and enlarged edition of his book, *King James and the History of Homosexuality*, is now available, published by Fonthill Media. King James, the sponsor and namesake of the King James Version of the Bible, had a series of male lovers throughout his lifetime. These relationships were almost certainly sexual. Furthermore, they were distinctly age-differentiated or pederastic. The book thus disputes the highly influential work of Alan Bray who argued that such relationships were merely sexless friendships and supports the contrary views of Randolph Trumbach regarding "Renaissance Sodomy."

ORLA EGAN announces the publication of her recent book, *Queer Republic of Cork, Cork's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Communities 1970s-1990s* by [Onstream Publishers](#). In 2015 the Irish people voted in favor of Marriage Equality for same-sex couples, and the Irish government enacted the Gender Recognition Act - two important steps towards equality and rights for LGBT people in Ireland. These developments did not happen in a vacuum, but rather built on decades of activism by LGBT community organizations and individuals. Taking readers on a journey through the development of Cork's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities 1970s-1990s, this book redresses their invisibility and provides a valuable insight into the development of a vibrant and active LGBT community.

Have an announcement to share? Send it to April at april.haynes@wisc.edu.

BOOK REVIEWS

Book review editor: Dan Royles

Melinda Chateauvert, *Sex Workers Unite: A History of the Movement from Stonewall to SlutWalk* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2013).

Sex Workers Unite: A History of the Movement from Stonewall to SlutWalk, Melinda Chateauvert's politically trenchant study of sex workers in the United States and Canada, walks a complicated path. Chateauvert applies her deep understanding of labor and civil rights history to the evolution of modern sex industries, from the late 1960s to current times. The result is a wide-ranging examination of sex workers' campaigns for civil rights, fair compensation, and basic dignity, told within the context of liberal feminism's last half-century.

Chateauvert has chosen a vast topic: sex work in North America (primarily the USA) through six decades of court cases, political controversy and varied attempts at social reform. Her narrative is analytic and urgent as she follows the evolution of criminal codes, police repression and community action.

Chateauvert scrutinizes reforms and organizing efforts initiated, maintained, and sometimes controlled by the workers themselves. Her reporting is reliable, tough, and ethical. She examines workplace organizing and coalition building and evaluates successes, failures, and compromises. Some of stories are humorous, others are tragic, and all are touched by the author's frank attention to the dialectics of sex.

Depending on how civil codes define sex work, the activity can be entirely lawful—or not. The jobs themselves, including work in phone-sex services, peep shows, massage parlors, exotic dance venues, and porn film studios, are not necessarily illegal. However, prostitution itself is cited in the criminal codes of forty-nine states. Boundaries between legal and illegal sex work

can shift from client to client over the course of a day's work. Sexual transactions can also be either a part of normal life on the street or grounds for arrest, depending on location, time of day, and the prejudices of arresting officers.

The first four chapters of *Sex Workers Unite* concentrate on the bumpy history of movement building that sex workers endured before developing their own autonomous formations. Chateauvert first surveys the debates about sex work that rocked mainstream feminism. She then documents the long march that activists took on as they organized themselves through local initiatives.

Modern campaigns to organize sex workers started during the late 1960s, long before the phrase "sex work" was in common use. Early on, the National Organization for Women (NOW) took up prostitution as an organizing topic, recorded national resolutions to affirm decriminalization, and gave the cause its first political home. But the organization's relationship to sex work was fraught.

During those early years of alliance, NOW's well intentioned resolutions on prostitution were offset by palpable prejudice from the general membership. Sex workers and their advocates in the NOW mainstream saw their agenda being steered to the rocky side of sisterhood. Many feminists opposed protecting sex workers' legal status and rejected appeals to support organizing attempts by sex workers. Hostility to sex work was even sharper in the wider feminist movement.

Many men in gay communities of the early 1970s sympathized with women in the sex trades and identified with them as an oppressed sexual minority. But openly queer communities, just then emerging as political entities, were not yet powerful enough to access the kinds of resources that would enable community organizing drives or successful electoral campaigns. Neither sex workers nor gay rights advocates yet had the strategic know-how or the strength to sustain long-term mass campaigns that would protect vulnerable constituents.

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However, the sex worker movement reached a breakthrough with the formation of Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics (COYOTE), a daring project led by sex workers for sex workers that started up in San Francisco in 1973. Sex worker activists wanted to fight the laws that forbade their livelihoods. The witty acronym they chose as a name bespoke creativity, outsider power, and bravado.

Although stability was not COYOTE's goal, the network did sustain strong campaigns in various forms in major cities and some smaller towns. COYOTE's style of loose confederation was ineffective when the movement needed consistency in its political drives. But at its best, COYOTE functioned as a vibrant national activist network that offered pragmatic connections, a low-key self-help ethos, and bracing sass. COYOTE's optimistic early style of open organizing might have moved the cause forward had sexual communities continued their progressive evolution, and liberal reform certainly seemed feasible by the early 1980s. However, everything changed very suddenly with the onset of the AIDS epidemic. Thereafter, "deviant" forms of sex—including sex work—came under scrutiny and were targeted for attack. The Reagan administration's policy of generally ignoring the AIDS crisis surely exacerbated the tragedy.

Throughout the worst years of the epidemic, sex workers united more than ever before, to protect themselves and to defend their fragile communities. Chateauvert's chapter on "the virus of repression" examines critical collaborations in San Francisco, guided by COYOTE and AIDS activists. Together, they fought repressive regulations, such as the mandatory HIV testing sex workers under arrest. By the mid 1990s, AIDS panics in North America were subsiding, as new treatment protocols checked the epidemic's worst ravages and diminished HIV stigma.

Chateauvert's lengthy chapter on sex work in the 1990s provides a stunning and thorough description of radical transformations of sex

economies during the difficult period when capital shifted away from community-based manufacturing centers. With big industries shutting down, small communities whose tax bases depended on those regular jobs deteriorated rapidly. Commerce continued, but weakly, and was no longer as a central force in traditional civic government.

Among the services and social opportunities that disappeared from communities in crisis were the old dirty movie theaters downtown. These places anchored sexual neighborhoods of porn stores, strip joints, gay bars and no-tell motels, all dependable and crucial workplaces where sex workers made their livings.

Porn has been one element of the old-time sex industry that has lived on, now typically available online for home viewing. Digital porn is cheap, convenient and exchangeable among neighbors. Everyday porn consumption on home screens has boosted a new and not entirely legal sex-themed service industry that has expanded since the 1990s. Employees in this diversified workforce might be food service workers, brothel attendants, escorts, dancers, strippers or masseuses. Mass-produced digital entertainment is the basic stuff, but there are other shows that thrive in live venues and encourage viewers to connect directly with performers. Demand for these sexual entertainments has been enthusiastic and diverse, and audience interest continues to expand.

Regulation of sex work and sex workers' rights to organize are not items on most union agendas. Conventional labor history pays scant attention to the topic, and sex work has not been a leading subject in most community histories of gender and sex. But union organizers who have surveyed contemporary sex businesses have seen their questions resonate with a young, tired, hungry workforce that is very aware of profits not being shared. Successful union drives have organized sex businesses, including a commercial peep show theater in San Francisco; massage parlors in Ann Arbor, Michigan; and a trio of hip sex toy boutiques in downtown Manhattan and Brooklyn.

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Chateaufort's study of sex workers' public campaigns yields important insights and illuminates a path to progress. She supports sex workers' rights to achieve the kind of representation and protection that employees in conventional service industries can access through union representation. The leap is ambitious and challenging, daring in its range, and passionate in its sympathy. Difficult, for sure—but not impossible.

Miriam Frank
New York University

Kate Fisher and Rebecca Langlands (eds.), *Sex, Knowledge, and Receptions of the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)

In their edited collection *Sex, Knowledge, and Receptions of the Past*, Kate Fisher and Rebecca Langlands are “interested in exploring the processes by which people come to feel that they know something about sex or about the past, and by which knowledge about one affects knowledge of the other” (1). The essays in the volume explore a wide range of subjects, from novels, scientific texts, travel writing, art, and museum displays, to scholarship from 1750 to the present. They demonstrate that the past is used in three key ways to understand sexuality in the present. First, it serves as a tool for identity formation, as with the model of Greek and Roman homoeroticism in the emergence of modern homosexuality. Second, it is used as the starting point for narratives of progress or decline, with modern observers often dismissing sexuality in the past as primitive and uncivilized. Third, the sexual past provides a basis for comparison with the present, fueling well-worn debates between proponents of essentialist and constructionist theories of sexuality.

Even ancient Greek sexuality is contested, according to Alastair Blainshard's “Queer Desires and Classicizing Strategies of Resistance.” Blainshard argues that ancient Greece provides both an Arcadian past in sharp contrast to Victorian strictures and a site of sexological

research. Aristophanes' speech about three sexes in Plato's *Symposium* stood out to Richard Burton and Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, who were particularly fascinated by the hermaphrodite, whereas John Addington Symonds vainly tried to rescue Greek culture from the taint of pathology. Joanna de Groot further reflects on Burton's seminal yet—to modern readers—amateurish "Terminal Essay" with a "Sotadic Zone" of rampant pederastia, reminding us that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, "pornography" and "scholarship" overlapped as publication categories.

For a large audience, museums offer easy access to the past, but Debbie Challis' "Queering Display: LGBT History and the Ancient World" notes that only recently did museums display sex and sexuality, much less explicitly queer content. While the presentation and celebration of a "usable past" is laudatory, Challis cautions against a simplistic approach that explains away sexual constructionism. Instead she recommends that museums offer visitors a "trail," with discussions, questions, and answers by both museum staff and academics, together forming a multidimensional tour of the sexual past.

Kate Fisher and Rebecca Langlands offer an in-depth study of a famous statue of Pan having sex with a goat, preserved in post-Vesuvic Herculaneum. They ask several questions of the piece, including "What kind of culture was it that produced such a sculpture?" (86). Rather than offer an answer, they survey various reactions, from Enlightenment authors' veneration of the confluence of ancient religion and sex in the statue to Catholic apologists' disdain for its pagan decadence. Twentieth century observers, on the other hand, focused on issues of censorship, pornography, and power.

Sometimes the past is so far removed that little can be known about it. Chris Manias, for example, looks at how historians have tried to make sense of the caveman's sexuality. At other times we know so much about the past that it becomes mythic, as with the Victorian era, which Lesley Hall aptly describes as a "kaleidoscope" of sexual histories.

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Several contributors trouble popular clichés. According to Alison Moore's "Androgyny, Perversion, and Social Evolution in Interwar Psychoanalytic Thought," even Dr. Freud conflated biological and social evolution, firmly adhering to a teleological understanding of a past that moved inexorably from anarchy to sexual perfection. Karin Sellberg critiques New Historicism's representations of early modern hermaphrodites, taking to task Stephen Greenblatt, Thomas Laqueur, and Stephen Orgel, who "simultaneously arbitrate the sexual bias of the past, authenticate the sexual position of the present, and ascertain the direction of sexuality in the future" (245).

Jana Funke follows Magnus Hirschfeld's travels around the world to study non-Western cultures. Unlike most evolutionary anthropologists of his time, who observed other cultures that were obviously contemporaneous but relegated them to a barbaric past, Hirschfeld for the most part did not privilege Western sexual customs. Funke notes that "the primitive sexual drive associated with the ancient phallic cults allowed him to provide evidence of the very principle of sexual intermediacy and variability that lay at the heart of his sexological project" (132). Sebastian Matzner thoroughly sifts through the classical readings from which Ulrichs derived his pivotal model of the homosexual as having *anima muliebris virili corpore inclusa*—"a female soul contained in a male body"—with endless subcategories (205).

Chris Waters' essay "Wilde in the Fifties" offers an exemplary analysis of a much neglected period. In the 1950s Wilde was an unlikely gay model, a "toxic commodity," flamboyant, decadent, effeminate, immoral, and unspeakable (267). In 1954, dignitaries such as Max Beerbohm, Bertrand Russell, Laurence Olivier, T. S. Eliot, E. M. Forster, even John Gielgud—who had been arrested in a public lavatory prior to the event—all turned down an invitation to unveil a plaque in Tite Street commemorating the anniversary of Wilde's birth. Yet this was also the time of incipient homosexual law reform, wide-spread Freudian psychoanalysis,

questioning of Victorian hypocrisy, and newfound freedom with the death of Lord Alfred Douglas in 1945, one of Wilde's most jealous guardians.

Sex, Knowledge, and Receptions of the Past raises interesting methodological questions. The widely disseminated claim that "Socrates was gay" has been dismissed by most historians of sexuality as both anachronistic and unscholarly. But what happens when historians themselves appropriate the past? What does it mean when history, sex, knowledge, and ideology get all mixed up? What can we actually know about the past—especially the distant past? Can we draw a clear line between popular and academic uses of sexual history? But this conjunction of methodological ambiguity and textual exuberance provides an opportunity: its very interdisciplinarity merges professional history with popular approaches, and thus questions the "authenticity" of historical interpretation.

On a more practical level, *Sex, Knowledge, and Receptions of the Past* also has much to offer. Readers will find it useful for its hands-on advice on how to curate an exhibit on queer history, for pointing New Historicism in new directions, for establishing the relevance of the past to contemporary debates, and for filling gaps in knowledge of the history of sexuality.

Nikolai Endres
Western Kentucky University

Susan S. Lanser, *The Sexuality of History: Modernity and the Sapphic, 1565-1830* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

In *The Sexuality of History*, literature and women's and gender studies scholar Susan Lanser traces the relationship between sapphism and modernity in early modern Europe. Lanser notes an unusual prevalence of sapphic or lesbian content in European literature and poetry published between 1565 and 1830, but does not document actual lesbian relationships, nor does she get involved in debates as to who

was or was not a lesbian. Her goal is to identify literary representations of intimacy among women within the broader philosophical and cultural discourse of the early modern era. She argues that the idea of the sapphic contributed directly to Enlightenment discourse and developing understandings of modernity.

Lanser defines sapphic content broadly to encompass literary interactions between women that excluded, replaced, or impersonated males. She surveys a diverse array of texts and genres, including scientific treatises, travelogues, Inquisition records, bawdy poems, serious plays, and philosophical tracts. *The Sexuality of History* is replete with quotations from well-known literary texts, such as Henri Estienne's 1566 *Apologie pour Herodote* and William Wordsworth's 1824 sonnet "To the Lady E.B. and the Hon. Miss P.," but Lanser also includes a plethora of more obscure pieces. The result is convincing and most readers will leave the book agreeing that both male and female authors in early modern Europe appear to have been unusually preoccupied with the sapphic.

For Lanser, this preoccupation raises the question of what intimacy among women meant to early modern authors. She believes sapphic content allowed writers to deal with the increasingly prevalent political, economic, and gender tensions within their societies, which presented "challenges to the predictable workings of the universe" (2). These included the leveling of citizenship rights; challenges to the patriarchal family and to marriage; and the idealization of individuality, independence, and self-interest. For Lanser, sapphic content "served the social imaginary," allowing writers, poets, and thinkers from all walks of life to consider the most extreme imaginable reconstructions of societal norms and their consequences. For many, a society in which women could act as equals to men was the ultimate leveling, the height of imaginable individuality.

In one of the strongest sections of *The Sexuality of History*, "Feminism's Sapphic Subjects," Lanser highlights the work of women authors who used sapphic content to directly challenge the

patriarchal character of marriage and society. Here she reads texts such as Margaret Cavendish's *Convent of Pleasure* (1668) and Katherine Philips "Friendship's Mystery, To My Dearest Lucasia" for their feminist content, challenging Simone de Beauvoir's thesis in *The Second Sex* that women did not "constitute themselves authentically as subjects" within patriarchy. Instead, Lanser argues "for the political efficacy of print... to emphasize the potential of the published word to create a collective female subject, and hence some form of feminist politics" (125). Women writing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, she argues, consciously voiced their discontent with patriarchal structures, and offered a feminist alternative through sapphic representations in their literary work.

To a large extent, *The Sexuality of History* is set within an Atlantic World context. The vast majority of the literature cited originated in France, England, Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands, all empires engaged in trade and encounters with peoples of Africa and the Americas. Lanser notes that all of these countries had "a recent history of strong women rulers; the visible participation of women in vernacular print culture; a coastal and primarily Atlantic geography... and a heavy investment in colonial conquest" (69-71). For Lanser, the seeming fascination with sapphic relationships in early modern European literature expresses the anxieties of a patriarchy challenged by living examples of female independence and alternatives to male-dominated societies. She connects encounters between European, African, and Native American peoples and cultures to "pressures of social leveling everywhere" and proposes "that sapphic subjects may erupt into print when societies need to work out the possibilities—variously dreaded and welcomed—that difference might not be just 'out there' but 'in here.'" Sapphic interest, she tells us, became "a rich site for... imagining the implications of human differences in a colonizing world, or perhaps for even imagining full equality between males" (74).

Each section and chapter of *The Sexuality of History* offers a different analysis, often raising questions that require more research and new types of sources before they can be addressed. In one chapter, for instance, Lanser discusses characteristics of the sapphic picaresque—mobility; overt sexuality; and the antics of the untrustworthy, cross-dressing rogue—as an important development in the history of the novel. Historians might begin here to study the historical origins of stereotypes that still plague lesbians and others who challenge gender norms. In another chapter, Lanser identifies "pornographic" male-authored texts that were "phallogentric in their assumptions" as significant in the rise of sapphic themes in the history of the novel, but concludes unconvincingly that they go beyond titillation to "accord female characters an authority over more than sexual matters" (155). Future scholars might also consider what percentage of European publications across these centuries involved sapphic content, as well as the breadth of dispersal and volume of readership for literature with sapphic themes.

The Sexuality of History is a brilliant book, drawing connections across centuries of literature in support of a unique and compelling argument. Historians will readily accept that subliminal anxieties about loss of status and control during an era of leveling found literary expression in characters that crossed gender boundaries and challenged patriarchal privilege. They are less likely, however, to be convinced of the centrality of the sapphic to political and social conceptions of modernity. To make this argument, the impact of sapphic content in the broader revolutionary public discourse must be documented, demonstrating that the literary imaginary took on revolutionary political proportions and, in doing so, redefined the ideals of freedom and equality. Perhaps this was the case, but before historians concede the point, they will find inspiration in *The Sexuality of History* for multiple and new avenues of historical investigation.

Pamela C. Edwards
Shepherd University

Laurie Marhoefer, *Sex and the Weimar Republic: German Homosexual Emancipation and the Rise of the Nazis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

The Weimar Republic has been a point of interest both for scholars of modern German history and for historians of sexuality. Germanists have debated whether or not the republic was a failed experiment in democracy in an otherwise “special path” of German authoritarianism that ultimately led to the Nazi regime. Scholars of sexuality have studied the Weimar era because of the atmosphere of relative moral and sexual liberalism that gave rise to a myriad of sexual identities and cultures in Germany’s urban centers. Laurie Marhoefer has written a superb and original book that both bridges and contributes to these two historiographies.

In *Sex and the Weimar Republic*, Marhoefer traces late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century German politics that led to the expansion of certain freedoms for queer subjects in Weimar Germany’s urban areas. Central to Marhoefer’s argument is that the sexual liberty for which the Weimar era has become known was actually a limited and carefully crafted tolerance. This toleration was the result of what she calls the “Weimar settlement on sexual politics.” On a number of issues, including homosexuality, prostitution, venereal disease, and censorship of queer publications, policymakers on both sides of the debates ultimately gave ground to reach a compromise. In each instance, greater sexual freedom and tolerance for most Germans, including sexual outsiders such as gay men and lesbians, was achieved at the expense of a minority who did not conform to prevailing standards of public respectability. For this minority, the compromises of the Weimar settlement resulted in further restrictions.

In Chapters 1 and 2, Marhoefer explores the effect that print media had in formulating gay, lesbian, and trans identities in Weimar Germany. The Revolution of 1918-19 ushered in more

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lenient policies regulating the censorship of media about sexuality. As a result, a wave of publications aimed at queer audiences emerged in large cities across Germany. Even when conservatives succeeded in passing the 1926 Filth and Trash Law, which attempted to reinstitute stricter censorship, they were not successful in banning queer publications altogether. These magazines remained in existence as long as they were not displayed publicly or sold to minors. The move to both decriminalize and restrict homosexual publications also characterized the Weimar approach of compromise when it came to other forms of alleged immorality.

Chapter 3 examines the Weimar settlement on issues of prostitution and venereal disease. This chapter builds on Annette Timm’s concept of “sexual duty” by demonstrating that prostitution was no longer considered a moral issue, but was instead a national public health concern. In an effort to curtail the spread of venereal disease, the government passed a 1927 law that essentially legalized prostitution. Replacing the regime of forced police registration for sex workers, the reform established a system of welfare services in which all Germans “would receive the material support and ethical cultivation they needed in order to make better choices – better for them and better for society” (82). In effect, the law reconceptualized the obligations of citizenship by making it a legal duty for Germans to have “safe sex.” If German citizens fulfilled their new obligation to combat the spread of venereal diseases, the German state would offer the benefits of necessary healthcare. Marhoefer thus not only traces the extension of freedoms offered to Germans to make choices about their sexual lives, but also the expansion of the welfare state in modern Germany.

In Chapter 4 Marhoefer explores the surprising story of just how close politicians in the Weimar Republic came to decriminalizing adult male homosexuality in 1929. Lawmakers from multiple parties voted to strike down Paragraph 175, the national anti-sodomy law, so that it could be substituted with one that would more

harshly suppress male prostitution. This again bespeaks the character of the Weimar settlement in that the replacement of the law would have granted more freedom to a majority of gay men at the expense of the rights and freedoms of a minority who existed outside the bounds of respectability. Replacing Paragraph 175 would have also driven male homosexuality out of the public sphere by ending the very public debates about the law.

In Chapter 5 Marhoefer offers a fresh interpretation of the scandal surrounding the homosexuality of Ernst Röhm, the leader of the Nazi Stormtroopers. Central to this discussion is the question of why Röhm's homosexuality did not inflict substantial damage to the Nazi Party's reputation, especially given its virulently homophobic stances. Marhoefer argues that years of discourse that framed sexuality as a private affair had conditioned government officials and members of the press to regard allegations of homosexuality as a matter beyond public concern. Yet again, the Weimar settlement had far-reaching repercussions:

"[H]omosexuality, if kept private by the person in question, could be tolerated. Ironically, in 1932, this benefited the vehemently anti-homosexual NSDAP" (150).

This conclusion gives credence to Marhoefer's argument in Chapter 6. Here she positions herself against the scholars who have argued that the rightward turn in politics in the late 1920s and early 1930s represented a widespread, conservative backlash against the alleged sexual decadence that had flourished in democratic Germany. Marhoefer instead convincingly argues that Weimar sexual politics did not drive significant number of voters to the Nazi Party, and that the changes in sexual mores in the Weimar years "did not do all that much to help the Nazis take power aside from helping the NSDAP weather the Röhm scandal" (176).

By deftly demonstrating that the sexual politics of the Weimar era did not destabilize democracy and give rise to Nazism, *Sex and the Weimar Republic* is a significant contribution to the historiographical debates about the continuities
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and ruptures in modern German history. Whereas others have previously cast the Weimar era as one full of sexual scandals and plagued by infighting and indecision, Marhoefer offers a picture of a stronger, more functioning republic in which Germans sought compromises and solutions to longer-term issues. In the end, economic despair caused by the global financial crisis of the late 1920s provided fertile ground for the rise of right wing parties, such as the Nazis, which undercut the young republic through the erosion of democratic processes.

Marhoefer's book is important for scholars studying sexuality in any historical context. She clearly shows how debates about "deviant" sexuality took place in larger discussions of "immorality" in general. Revisions to laws policing homosexuality, for example, were inextricably intertwined with policy changes governing prostitution, censorship, and venereal disease control. This represents a larger shift toward defining sexuality in scientific, rather than moral or religious terms. Ultimately, Marhoefer shows how these discourses and policies fundamentally reshaped the relationship between the state and its citizens by defining the boundaries of citizenship in terms of the health of both the individual and national body.

Sex and the Weimar Republic is an impressive, insightful, and provocative book. The experiences of women and lesbians are often excluded from the history of this period, but Marhoefer gives them equal attention here, which in itself is a valuable contribution to the literature. Through her use of primary sources and mastery of the secondary literature, Marhoefer weaves a convincing argument, while her writing style makes the book a true pleasure to read.

**W. Jake Newsome,
Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for
Advanced Holocaust Studies,
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

The opinions stated in this review are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum or of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council.

Amy L. Stone and Jaime Cantrell, eds., *Out of the Closet, Into the Archives: Researching Sexual Histories* (Albany: State University of New York, 2015).

Embarking on an academic career centered in the field of LGBTQ history can sometimes feel like an act of rebellion. As editors Amy Stone and Jaime Cantrell point out in their introduction to *Out of the Closet, Into the Archives*, scholars of LGBTQ history are recovering “a history suppressed almost as rigorously as gay people themselves” (3). In today’s more inclusive academic environment, it is easy to forget the radicalism of this kind of research. *Out of the Closet, Into the Archives* is most valuable in its ability to remind us of the unique challenges, innovations, and inherently queer nature of archival research in the field of LGBTQ history.

Central to this volume is the claim that archival experience is at the center of ongoing challenges and innovations taking place in within the field. The volume’s editors seek primarily to “situate the queer archival experience within the institution of the archive” (6) while “engag[ing] with [the] affective experience of being in the archive” (11). The volume unpacks four challenges inherent to LGBTQ archival research: materiality, the nature of sources, marginalization (both within the archives themselves and the historical marginalization of the gay community), and the difficulty of cataloging queer lives.

The archive itself is the central character, with each essay expanding both its definition and its functionality. The line between archivist and historian is purposefully blurry and concepts of “source,” “archive,” and “researcher” are deliberately broad. The range of topics covered by the scholars themselves, as well as the diverse nature of their archival experiences, serves to reinforce the general claim of the work: that archival research by LGBTQ scholars cannot be approached with standard academic conventions “because it defies these existing binaries” (9).

Emblematic of the complex relationship between conventional archival practices and LGBTQ research are Whitney Strub’s experiences examining the Gay Male Pornographic Video Collection at Cornell University’s Human Sexuality Collection to gain a greater understanding of gay desire in the midst of the AIDS epidemic. Strub outlines his struggle to locate and gain access to sources. The tapes, for example, were listed as restricted and Strub was initially denied access before managing to fight his way to them. Strub’s experience of archival exclusion reinforces the suggestion that “there are normative forces at work in archives... downplaying the history of some things over others” (8). Even after accessing them, the tapes were most useful due to the work of an anonymous archivist whose “stunningly extensive, even obsessive, indexes, notes, and commentaries” lent true value to the collection. Without such context, the tapes would have been simply “technological relics” (126). In the shadow of the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s, this anonymous bootlegger turned archivist did what the conventional archives of the period refused to do: acknowledge that “queer lives ought to be worth preserving” (7). Strub’s experience serves to illustrate the limitations of conventional archival practices, even as they open the door to more LGBTQ scholarship. Indeed, *Out of the Closet, Into the Archives* acknowledges that archives have evolved and become increasingly hospitable for LGBTQ scholars, who in turn have influenced institutional methodology and archival content. This is the case with Julie Enszer’s experiences with the Minnie Bruce Pratt Papers at Duke University. Enszer suggests that lesbian-feminism is itself an ideology that has “lost its place in contemporary society” (150) and is preserved in archives, where it may be rediscovered. In this way, she sees the archive as a “recipe for revolution” (169) that can lend new life to old or neglected ideas. If the archive serves its purpose in preserving the ingredients that make up this “recipe,” then Enszer suggests that it is the job of the historian to do the cooking.

While acknowledging the integration of queer sources and methodology into conventional

research spaces, many of the essays still grapple with the problems of working in a system within which both LGBTQ history and historians have been marginalized. They bring the field back to the basements and homes that became renegade archives on the margins of historical study. Gay and lesbian community archives are repeatedly used to illustrate how gay lives were disregarded by formal academia, and to address lasting limitations this has created for the field of LGBTQ history. Craig Loftin's experiences in the Archives of *ONE Magazine* illustrate the often-blurry line between archivist and researcher, as seen in the example of James Kepner, a foundational but neglected figure for both the magazine and for gay history. Kepner was a formative voice advocating for the value of gathering and preserving sources of that history, he also suffered the unlucky fate of living "ahead of his time" (59), and died in poverty. Like Kepner, Loftin asserts that "historical awareness and personal liberation went hand in hand" (53). For Loftin, the community archive was a place of self-discovery, both for himself and for an entire minority population attempting to place themselves and their desires in the context of a larger history.

By exploring queer experiences in both conventional and unconventional archives, the reader is reminded that while we can enjoy our new avenues of conventional accessibility, LGBTQ scholars are still challenged by past archival exclusions. Moreover, Cantrell and Stone argue that this means research in LGBTQ history often work "with objects that do not fit into conventional archives" (10). With this in mind, the contributors offer diverse perspectives on the question of what constitutes a source. Emblematic of this is Strub's work, which used pornography as a cultural text in place of missing conventional resources. A second strong example is found in Greg Youman's exploration of the garden of Elsa Gidlow, and the understanding of her autobiography that "grew" from his exploration of this physical space.

Out of the Closet, Into the Archives offers insight into the non-conforming archival practices and experiences of various scholars, alongside

examinations of the archive's unique place in LGBTQ history. In this way, the volume is an inspiration for any emerging scholar daunted by the silence of sources in the field.

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Andrew Wackerfuss, *Stormtrooper Families: Homosexuality and Community in the Early Nazi Movement* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 2015).

In *Stormtrooper Families*, Andrew Wackerfuss uses the history of the Hamburg stormtroopers (*Sturmabteilung* or SA) to tell the larger story of the connections between homosociality, homoeroticism, and homosexuality, and the broader Nazi movement. He follows the development of the unit from its roots in nineteenth-century German culture through to extant links between homosexuality and violence in recent neo-Nazi movements.

The book begins by tracing the political and social history of Hamburg from its independent status as an economic powerhouse to the Nazi era. The Hamburg in which the stormtroopers came of age was marked by ruptures due to both the growing power of the working class and the outbreak of the Great War. In the chaos of the early Weimar years, the younger generation of men who had fought in the war sought to create a "hypermasculine 'community of the trenches'" (36). However, the homosocial bonding that formed the basis of the stormtrooper community opened the men to charges of homosexuality. Wackerfuss explains how Magnus Hirschfeld's research on sexuality during the war, Hans Blüher's theory of the *Männerbund* (a society founded on the erotic bonding between males), and the revelation of SA leader Ernst Röhm's homosexuality affected the ways in which the stormtroopers' relationships were understood. From early on, the public imagination linked between homosociality in the SA and homosexuality within its ranks.

Two scandals demonstrate how the SA dealt with homosexuality. In September 1928, a stormtrooper's sexual relationship with a Jewish man became public knowledge as part of a trial in which the SA man was accused of murder. Although he was not convicted of the charge, the episode crystallized the popular belief that homosexuals thrived among the stormtroopers. In December of that year, Ferdinand Bruckner's play *The Criminals* premiered in Hamburg. According to Wackerfuss, stormtroopers repeatedly interrupted performances of the play, which defended homosexual men, as a way of distancing the SA from homosexuality.

The street brawling stormtroopers of the 1920s also tried to remake their image into one of acceptable, muscular masculinity by portraying themselves as protectors of women and children. This domestic community offered haven in a time of economic and political chaos. However, for those stormtroopers who were too young to fight but had lost fathers and brothers in the Great War, the SA has come to serve as a kind of ersatz family. This familial organization grew to provide wide-ranging social services for its members, such as living assistance, health insurance, and legal aid.

The tension between the idealized heterosexual family and the deep bonds among Stormtroopers again opened the SA to "accusations of homosexuality—especially once the fact of some stormtroopers' homosexuality became a matter of national conversation" (175). When Röhm returned from Bolivia and was appointed by Hitler as head of the SA in January 1931, he placed many of his old comrades in authority positions. Here Wackerfuss makes an important point: "Contrary to popular belief, both then and now, however, he did not surround himself only with fellow homosexuals" (176). The leftist press tried to use Röhm's sexual orientation, made known through publication of his private correspondence, to discredit the SA and the Nazi Party. These efforts failed, but homosexual stormtroopers realized they needed to hide their desire if they were to remain in the SA.

However, the problem of homosociality with Stormtrooper ranks came to an end by the summer of 1934 thanks to a surge in SA membership, which resulted from the Nazi seizure of power. With so many men, the unit no longer functioned as a pseudo-family. Homosocial bonding as a fundamental aspect of the stormtrooper's life had come to an end.

The summer of 1934 also brought another turning point in the history of the SA. On June 30, 1934, Adolf Hitler ordered the execution of the stormtroopers' leadership in the Night of the Long Knives. Although only Röhm and two other murdered SA leaders are known to have been homosexual, Hitler later justified the killings by claiming that the unit's upper ranks were composed of homosexuals who preyed on innocent young stormtroopers. Nazi leaders then mobilized moral panic to remove power from the SA, which by 1937 had waned in power and in membership. Wackerfuss concludes that "[t]he Night of the Long Knives... destroyed the homoerotic family in favor of the heteronormative one" (323).

The book's epilogue describes the demise of the SA during the war, and in the final section Wackerfuss traces the "gay Nazi" trope from 1945 to the present. He calls our attention to the prurience and ahistoricity of Luchino Visconti's 1969 film *The Damned* and the "pink swastika" propaganda of Scott Lively. He also provides a thought-provoking analysis as to why the myth of the gay Nazi persists, describing its attraction to a subset of conservative gay men .

The problem in writing the history of gay stormtroopers is that almost none of these men are known to have left diaries or memoirs. Their stories are told through scraps of information about them, from court records, official reports, and the statements of men who opposed homosexuality. Wackerfuss weaves these sources together to better understand the function of the stormtroopers within German fascism, and provides many new insights in this very readable book. Again, the myth of an SA run by gay men has persisted since the 1930s. Wackerfuss reveals instead that homosociality in

the unit answered the psychological and material needs of young men cut adrift from family structures in the Great War and ensuing depression. Homoerotic bonds between Stormtroopers both grew out of the homosocial atmosphere in the units and existed between some men who did feel same-sex desires. These men found in the SA a social space in which they could live out such desires, albeit in secret.

This book is an engagingly written and well-researched study that debunks persistent myths about Nazi history. Since these myths are used today to articulate dissatisfaction with sexual diversity and equality as well as to promote the idealized image of the heteronormative family, Wackerfuss' work has significance for public as well as academic audiences.

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Jonathan Zimmerman, *Too Hot to Handle: A Global History of Sex Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

Too Hot To Handle is an immensely readable and impressively researched survey of the history of sex education. In just over 150 pages, Jonathan Zimmerman takes us through the twentieth century. While the United States and Sweden figure most prominently in his account, Zimmerman also illustrates his arguments with examples from nations as diverse as Mexico, Uruguay, Poland, the United Kingdom, Ghana, Kenya, India, Japan, and Australia. He organizes the story into four chapters, each covering a distinct era: from the turn of the century to the start of World War II, when a movement for sex education in schools begins; the Cold War era; the "sexual revolution" of the 1960s and 1970s; and the AIDS epidemic, from the 1980s into the twenty-first century.

The book begins in the early twentieth century in the United States, where medical professionals and social reformers, working through

organizations like the American Social Hygiene Association (ASHA), began to press for the inclusion of sex education in the schools. Their chief motive was the fear that sexual behavior in an urban society promoted the spread of venereal disease, which was intensified by World War I and the opportunity it gave men in the military to have sex outside marriage. The chief message of the early sex education movement was that sex should take place only within marriage. Despite the conservative intentions of its advocates, sex education quickly aroused vocal opposition from both parents and faith communities, who saw their authority being challenged by the schools. Sex education received enough public attention in the early twentieth century that in 1929 Pope Pius XI issued an encyclical expressing clear opposition to it.

In the Cold War era, most advocates still conceptualized sex education as a way of bolstering a sexual ethic based on sex within marriage. However, in the United States sex education proponents moved away from a framework that emphasized sexual danger. Instead, they claimed that sex education, which they renamed "family life education," would make for more fulfilling and stable marriages. These advocates took their message abroad, as ASHA provided information about "family life education" to several dozen countries, as well as international agencies. Meanwhile, Sweden emerged as another strong proponent of sex education, but from a significantly different perspective. Supporters there presented sex education as an essential element for individual happiness, without specifying the form that should take. In 1956, Sweden became the first nation to mandate that sex education be taught in its public schools.

The "sexual revolution" of the 1960s and 1970s provoked significant change in the behavior and expectations of a younger generation in many parts of the world. Although some blamed sex education for what they saw as the decay of moral values among youth, Zimmerman contends that little had changed in either the content of sex education, or in the arguments

that advocates mobilized in support of it. U.S. sex education organizations such as the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States also continued their work abroad, sponsoring many outreach efforts in the Global South. Meanwhile, Sweden found itself playing host to large numbers of visitors from abroad who came to learn and experience its version of sex education. Despite these lines of international communication, there proved to be in these decades very little governmental support for sex education in most of what was then referred to as the “Third World.”

The global spread of AIDS in the 1980s and 1990s surrounded sex education with a new urgency, and the need to contain the deadly epidemic weakened sexual taboos. However, AIDS also strengthened the tendency among many sex educators, going back to the early part of the century, to see sex as dangerous. As a result, many emphasized the core message that sex should be restricted to marriage. This proved to be especially the case in much of the Global South. It was also in these decades that population-control advocates, who were also proponents of sex education, shifted from an emphasis on family planning to advocacy for reproductive rights.

If there is a central argument that permeates *Too Hot To Handle*, it might be that the more things change, the more they remain the same. No matter what rationale proponents mobilized in support of sex education, parents saw such efforts as endangering their authority over their children, while religious leaders saw them as promoting sexual immorality. In the post-1960s decades, this opposition became global in scope, as alliances formed between opponents of sex education in the United States and Western Europe and their counterparts in the Global South. The passions aroused by the prospect of sex education in the schools has united opponents across religious lines, with Christians and Muslims working together to obstruct its implementation. Working through the World Congress of Families, sexual conservatives from around the world met at international

conferences in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

A second continuity that stretches across both the century and the globe is the insufficient sex education preparation that teachers received. Almost universally, teachers reported that they lacked the training necessary to teach sex education. As recently as 2006, [ninety90](#) percent of teachers in Sweden, the supposed paragon of enlightened sex education, claimed to be unqualified to teach the material. Combine this with the hostility that those given the responsibility to teach sex education might face from parents and community, and one finds educational professionals in nation after nation unlikely to become advocates or defenders of sex education.

All of this leads Zimmerman to end the book with a set of—at least for this reader—grim, if reasonable, conclusions. “A century after modern sex education started,” he writes, “its dilemmas remained largely the same: whose values were right for children and adolescents, who would decide, and why” (143). Almost everywhere, “sex educators were stymied at every turn by dissident parents and communities” (145). Despite laws mandating sex education and the efforts of those in authority, the sporadic and diffuse efforts to implement programs have resulted in little evidence that sex education has had much impact. “Children,” he concludes, “learned more about sex from their peers—and from mass media—than they did from teachers, parents, or any other authority figures” (151). As a final note: the compact size, the readability, the clarity of the argument, the broad scope, and the extensive research that underlies *Too Hot To Handle* all make it very suitable for the undergraduate classroom. If I were still teaching, I would find ways to incorporate it into my courses on the history of sexuality.

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