



Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender History

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Committee on LGBT History

Co-chairs: Emily Hobson and Julio Capó, Jr.

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Co-Chairs' Column

What a way to mark 2019! We write this column on the eve of our organization's first stand-alone national gathering: the inaugural Queer History Conference, to be held June 16 through 18 at San Francisco State University. Featuring a keynote by Susan Stryker, 41 panels to choose from, and three receptions, #QHC19 brings together a wealth of scholarship on LGBTQ history across time and place. The program is impressive in its

global scope, and we extend a special welcome to panelists and other attendees from around the world, as well as those from across the United States. We are also excited that, reflecting the growth of LGBTQ history in public schools, K-12 teachers may earn continuing education credits for attending #QHC19. The Queer History Conference truly demonstrates the growth and vibrancy of our field, and we could not be more excited to mark the 40th anniversary of the CLGBTH—and the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall uprising—than with this gathering.

#QHC19 kicks off Sunday evening, June 16 with an opening reception at Jolene's (2700 16th Street, in San Francisco's Mission District. Two full days of keynotes, panels, and lunches follow at the campus of San Francisco State University. We'll cap the days off with evening receptions at the GLBT History Museum (Monday June 17, in the Castro) and the San Francisco Public Library History Center (Tuesday June 18, at Civic Center). Program details and registration are online through the San Francisco State University portal at ethnicstudies.sfsu.edu/content/qhc19.

The conference would not be possible without the support of the GLBT Historical Society, the generous co-host of #QHC19. We thank the

College of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University for graciously providing space, a home for the conference website, and administrative support. We further appreciate the support of the conference sponsors, Gale—a Cengage Company; the James C. Hormel LGBTQIA Center of San Francisco Public Library; the Our Family Coalition; the Queer and Trans Resource Center at San Francisco State University; and the Jamie and Phyllis Pasker Professorship at San Francisco State University. Finally, we extend a huge thanks to the #QHC19 program committee co-chairs—Nick Syrett and Amy Sueyoshi—for all their work in assembling #QHC19, and gratitude as well to the program committee: Howard Chiang, René Esparza, Will Kuby, Amanda Littauer, Kirsten Leng, Víctor Macías-González, Jen Manion, Wendy Rouse, Nikita Shepard, Yorick Smaal, T.J. Tallie, and Sarah Watkins.

At #QHC19, we will make available our first official CLGBTH swag! Keep an eye out for CLGBTH-branded pens, pencil cases, and to top it all off (...so to speak), fanny packs! Thanks to our board member Katie Batza for her hard work securing these items. We hope to see more than a few social media posts featuring our members and CLGBTH gear. Please tag any posts about the conference with #QHC19 and be sure to tag us on Twitter @CLGBTH.

The Queer History Conference represents a new era of growth for the CLGBTH, and we are working to build toward this strong future with fundraising. We are committed to maintaining low-cost entry memberships to the CLGBTH, keeping our organization accessible to graduate students, those in contingent positions, junior and senior scholars with limited support, and those working outside the academy as it is

frequently defined. Additionally, we hope to create a research grant available to students and contingent scholars. Fundraising will aid us in reaching these goals as well as in organizing future conferences.

After the conference, you can expect to hear from us with a fundraising drive for new lifetime members, as well as a major donor campaign. We are currently in the process of building a committee of senior scholars willing to assist in fundraising and outreach for these efforts. If you think you might be interested in such work, please send us (Julio and Emily) an email. We would look forward to working with you.

Beyond #QHC19, we are pleased to announce a rich slate of panels at the 2020 meeting of the American Historical Association. This meeting, to be held January 3-6, 2020 in New York City, is sure to be a dynamic one with large numbers of attendees. The AHA program committee accepted 11 of our panels, on such topics as local LGBTQ archives, queer histories of suffrage, HIV/AIDS, global queer history, transnational trans history, and commemorations of Stonewall. Additionally, we are pleased to forward 6 additional panels as affiliate sessions, touching on topics including lesbian and trans masculinities, 1960s and 1970s queer world-making, spinsters, queer global cities, and more.

As further events during the 2020 AHA, we are organizing a tour of the In the Life archive at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and will hold our annual members' meeting and ever-popular evening reception. If you would like to publicize additional local events to take place during the 2020 AHA—such as book parties, local history talks, or a night out—please feel free to post this to the CLGBTH listserv at

clgbthistory-list@clgbthistory.org or by tagging us on Twitter @CLGBTH.

Looking ahead, the fall of 2020 will bring elections of a new board and the next co-chairs of the CLGBTH. As the current co-chairs, we have learned so much from our time at the helm of the organization and are excited to see what the next generation of leadership brings. If you think that you might be interested in serving on the board or as a co-chair, please don't hesitate to talk to us about the work entailed or the opportunities this role can bring. We welcome your interests and all members' visions for the CLGBTH.

Julio Capó, Jr.
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Emily K. Hobson
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Book Announcements

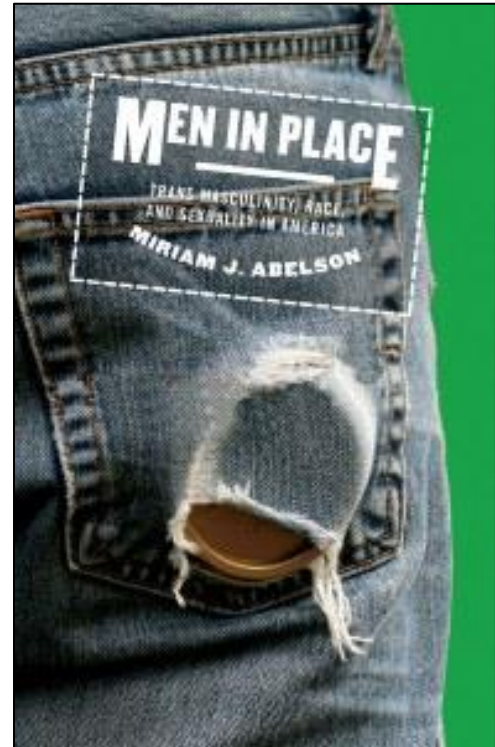
In this portion of the newsletter, we print book announcements in the field as sent to us by presses. To submit a book announcement to the CLGBTH newsletter, please have the press email the newsletter editor, Dan Royles (droyles@gmail.com). Announcements may be adjusted for reasons of space.

University of Minnesota Press announces the publication of a new book:

***Men in Place: Trans Masculinity, Race, and Sexuality in America* by Miriam J. Abelson**

American masculinity is being critiqued, questioned, and reinterpreted for a new era. In *Men in Place* Miriam J. Abelson makes an original contribution to this conversation through in-depth interviews with trans men in

the U.S. West, Southeast, and Midwest, showing how the places and spaces men inhabit are fundamental to their experiences of race, sexuality, and gender.

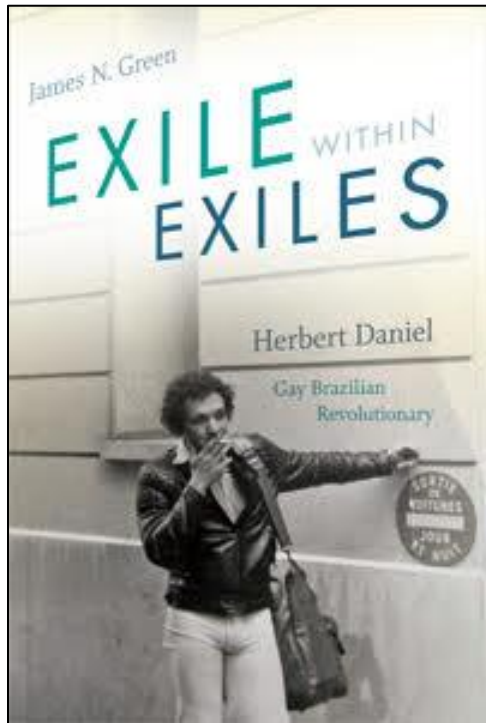


Duke University Press also announces the publication of:

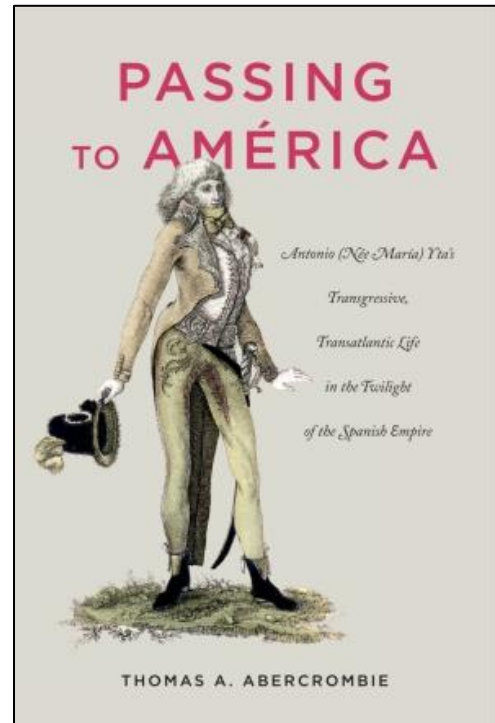
***Exile within Exiles: Herbert Daniel, Gay Brazilian Revolutionary* by James N. Green**

Herbert Daniel was a significant and complex figure in Brazilian leftist revolutionary politics and social activism from the mid-1960s until his death in 1992. In *Exile within Exiles*, James N. Green paints a full and dynamic portrait of Daniel's deep commitment to leftist politics, using Daniel's personal and political experiences to investigate the opposition to Brazil's military dictatorship, the left's construction of a revolutionary masculinity, and the challenge that the transition to democracy posed to radical movements. Green positions Daniel as a vital

bridge linking former revolutionaries to the new social movements, engendering productive dialogue between divergent perspectives in his writings and activism.



understand the sex/gender system within the Spanish Atlantic empire at the turn of the nineteenth century but also explores what Antonio/María and contemporaries can teach us about the complexities of the relationship between sex and gender today.



Penn State University Press also announces the publication of:

***Passing to América: Antonio (Née María) Yta's Transgressive, Transatlantic Life in the Twilight of the Spanish Empire* by Thomas A. Abercrombie**

Passing to América is at once a historical biography and an in-depth examination of the sex/gender complex in an era before “gender” had been divorced from “sex.” The book presents readers with the original court docket, including Don Antonio’s extended confession, in which he tells his life story, and the equally extraordinary biographical sketch offered by Felipa Ybañez of her “son María,” both in English translation and the original Spanish. Thomas A. Abercrombie’s analysis not only grapples with how to

Book Reviews

Myrl Beam, *Gay, Inc.: The Nonprofitization of Queer Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2018)

Beam’s *Gay, Inc.: The Nonprofitization of Queer Politics* is a trenchant critique of the nonprofit sector’s role in altering the landscape of queer politics from the 1960s to the present, more conservative iteration of LGBT nonprofit work. In the last three decades, queer nonprofits have come to imagine themselves as representing *the* very embodiment of queer politics and social justice. Beam argues that the queer nonprofit sector has instead reinforced, even exacerbated,

the social inequities that they seek to alleviate for their clients. Beam's work joins and builds on the work of scholar-activists Dean Spade, Miranda Joseph, Lisa Duggan, and Alexandra Chasin, the anti-violence organization Incite! Women of Color Against Violence, as well as others that have critiqued the role of nonprofit industrial complex and uncritical embrace of it by activists and intellectuals in progressive queer politics.

Through four case studies of queer nonprofits, two in Chicago and two in Minneapolis, Beam brings together oral histories, ethnography, critical theory and archival research to bear on this argument and body of literature. A convincing, thought-provoking, and sometimes wryly humorous study is organized into five chapters that effectively (and affectively) contemplate how compassion, community, crisis, and capital serve as logics and structures that make the queer nonprofit sector possible. These chapters also emphasize how they frustrate dedicated LGBTQ activists that are constrained by the 501 (c) 3 model, and the clients these organizations serve.

The first chapter of *Gay, Inc.* charts the rise of the current nonprofit sector. In 1960, there were 3,000 nonprofits in the United States; by 2015 there were 1,517,689. Beam traces the roots of key U.S. nonprofits to charities based on pity and compassion, which emerged during the 19th century. This smart and succinct chapter challenges the way the U.S. nonprofit model has been naturalized as an inherently good response to social inequality. This chapter sets the stage for the next four chapters, each of which focuses on one of the four organizing logics that shape the nonprofit industrial complex.

The next two chapters suggest that seemingly laudable service projects can become deeply problematic. Chapter two focuses on the history of the services provided by Howard Brown Memorial Clinic, especially its AIDS work. Beam analyzes the Clinic's current relationship to projects with LGBT homeless youth, who are predominantly queer and gender nonconforming youth of color. The third chapter turns to another Chicago LGBT nonprofit, the Center on Halsted. Here, Beam's attention shifts from the affective language of Compassion to that of Community. The Center has produced campaigns, rhetoric, and services that racialize certain segments of the LGBTQ community of Chicago as being deserving of protection (i.e. predominantly gay cisgender white men of middle to upper class standing) while leaving others, such as Black Trans youth, outside of the community. Beam argues that, even as the organizations analyzed in these chapters served marginalized Black queer populations, they also engaged in exclusionary politics of gatekeeping.

The final two chapters present Beam's arguments about capital and crisis. The geographic focus shifts to Minneapolis, where the nonprofits District 202 and Trans Youth Support Network (TYSN) sought to centralize the role of Trans youth in leadership, staff, and client base. These two very strong chapters show how "By and For" nonprofits can fail their clients. Beam emphasizes the constant need for funding and grants from philanthropic foundations that are, at best, problematic in their politics towards superstructures that oppress Trans youth and adults. Beam's ethnography here is vivid, and I found myself feeling irritated and frustrated by the severe lack of support for Trans political agendas and needs from board members of these organizations. Both organizations, unlike

Howard Brown and The Center, are defunct. This ending completes Beam's argument that nonprofits have buttressed the political pursuit of gay marriage and repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell policies, at the expense of other issues of concern to LGBT communities.

It would have been interesting to see more of an engagement with historians' research on the War on Poverty programs and community health centers, such as Annelise Orleck's edited collection *The War on Poverty: A Grassroots History*. Such contextualization might have troubled—or perhaps enriched—Beam's argument that a majority of such programs reinforced social inequality and did not prevent the eventual deconstruction of the U.S. welfare entitlements by the Reagan administration. To be fair, *Gay, Inc.* is not about the War on Poverty and Great Society programs; such a lengthy engagement would be beyond the scope of the project. The specificities and particulars of Beam's project and arguments work very well and are convincing, but they do not engage in open debate with scholars who have taken a different view. Readers may also wish the publisher had included a bibliography to show the extensive research and secondary literature informing this study. These issues, however, do not extend to the chapters focusing on crisis and capital in relation to Trans youth nonprofits in Minneapolis. Of all the chapters these, along with Beam's examination of The Center in Chicago, offer the best example of the great interdisciplinary work that American studies can do by engaging history, theory, and sociological methods.

My critiques are not meant to take away from the importance of this book. Its merit lies in its argument that LGBT nonprofits should not be

confused with queer social movements *en masse*. This book would be an excellent choice for assigned reading in advanced undergraduate seminars in queer studies, women and gender studies, American studies and sociology, as well as graduate seminars on similar topics. The chapters would also work well as stand-alone reading assignments. It would be of particular use in senior seminars or capstone projects that require internships at nonprofits. I took part in such an undergraduate course, and this is a book I wish I could have consulted at the time. Thankfully, today's students will have the opportunity to read *Gay, Inc.* It will benefit those unafraid of having difficult conversations on what transformative social movements and coalitions with and within queer communities look like.

Brendan McHugh
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

Matthew Dean Hindman, *Political Advocacy and Its Interested Citizens: Neoliberalism, Postpluralism, and LGBT Organizations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2018)

In *Political Advocacy and Its Interested Citizens*, Matthew Dean Hindman analyzes the history of LGBT activism from the 1950s to the 1990s through the lens of political science. He clearly states that his book should not be read as a history. Instead, it is a political scientist's account of how neoliberalism and activist culture combined to create an "interested citizen." Hindman theorizes this historical subject as the product of both genuine political advocacy and socioeconomic change. Without producing a disciplinary history, Hindman does narrate the historical construction of the interested citizen in regard to LGBT activism.

The introduction explains the political science theories that shape Hindman's historical interpretation. Three sets of keywords frame the entire project. First, *interested citizens* are defined as citizens of an ideal type, generally created by an advocacy group, who engage financially or actively with the group, movement, or political moment (3). Next, Hindman uses *postpluralist* to express the view that "Americans... view themselves as members of various groups and organize themselves on that basis, though... these organized interests tend to *reflect* and even *perpetuate* long-standing inequalities even as they seek to *redress* them" (9). Finally, he invokes *neoliberalism* as "a concept most basically understood as the drive to reduce the state's role in administering social welfare and 'liberate' the individuating, entrepreneurial ethos necessary for capitalist economic development" (12–13).

Chapter 1 enlarges on the concept of the interested citizen in relation to current scholarship. Hindman gives an overview of the ways in which political scientists have interrogated both neoliberalism and advocacy. This chapter provides an excellent introduction and would make a welcome addition to syllabi for LGBT studies classes, in which students may need a gloss of the current political science scholarship on activism.

Chapter 2 (1940s–1950s) narrates the identity formation that occurred at the beginning of the LGBT movement in the mid-twentieth century. Hindman provides a largely synthetic history of homosexuality in the United States before World War II and the rise of homophile organizations such as the Mattachine Society, Daughters of Bilitis, and ONE, Inc. He chronicles the growth of

the publications *One* and the *Mattachine Review* and how those working for homophile acceptance centered their work around sexual revolution (*One*) and empirical argument (*Mattachine Review*). For Hindman, the significance of these publications was that they signaled the formation of a homosexual ideal-type that could be accepted by the heterosexual majority in the United States. This is ground well-covered by LGBT historians, and Hindman mainly relies on the research of prior scholars. Rather than new findings, he offers conceptual tools for assessing the political impact of LGBT activism.

Chapter 3 (1960s–1970s) focuses on activism during the rise of the Gay Liberation movement. Hindman analyzes engagements between LGBT citizens, various advocacy groups, and the government. He narrates the struggles involved in creating large, nationalized interest groups in the wake of Stonewall and other movement milestones. Much of the chapter interprets the *Advocate's* influence on LGBT individuals as it grew larger in the wake of the sexual revolution of the 1960s. Hindman argues that this growth encouraged the creation of an ideal homosexual: one to be presented before white, heterosexual America as the perfect, conforming gay. Importantly, this process also enabled financial gains for LGBT advocacy and interest groups.

Chapter 4 (1970s–1980s) contends that advocacy groups presented two main options to members of the LGBT community: the upright homosexual or the sexually deviant gay. Hindman records the kinds of personal conduct advocacy groups prescribed as evidence for his narrative of the different ideal types formed in wake of various post-Stonewall actions. Yet no behavioral model could have prepared either

group of interested citizens for the coming AIDS crisis. The epidemic completely changed the way LGBT groups interacted with the state, the heterosexual public, and their own interested citizens.

Chapter 5 (1980s–1990s) investigates the integration of these three, core areas of concern—identity formation, political participation, and personal conduct—in ACT UP. Hindman writes that AIDS activists challenged and complicated the idea of an interested citizen, constructing non-dogmatic alternatives to this framework in the process. The chapter’s main intervention is to show that neoliberal political models were never all-encompassing, nor were they unbreakable.

The conclusion ties these threads together with a summary analysis of the significance of Hindman’s interested citizen framework for social movements. He suggests that each stage and variation of LGBT advocacy prepared for, created, or worked with an interested citizenry. The book ends by proposing that the lessons of past LGBT movements—especially the costs of promoting an ideal interested citizen—can strengthen movements now, such as those resisting the Trump Administration, Occupy Wall Street, and Black Lives Matter.

Hindman’s project was to prove political science theories through a retrospective of LGBT activism. His book would have been more generative for historians had it included more explicit conversation with the existing historiography. After a brief statement in the introduction, he does not elaborate on how the concept of the interested citizen could change understandings of LGBT history or what it might contribute to queer theory. Members of the

CLGBTH may find in *Political Advocacy and Its Interested Citizens* a helpful introduction to political theory as it intersects with LGBT activism. However, its main contribution is to the field of political science.

My other qualm is stylistic rather than substantive. Political theory is explicitly connected to history in the introduction, first chapter, and conclusion, but not woven through the body of the book. Hindman expects the reader to connect the dots between the history presented in chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 and the theoretical models that drive his narrative choices. Readers of the conclusion, particularly students new to LGBT history, may struggle to remember the historical evidence presented to support his theories.

Despite these issues, I found the historical presentation and political science argument to be fruitful with pedagogical potential. This book could be especially useful as an entry into the history of twentieth-century LGBT activism in interdisciplinary courses. The political theory is easy to understand, and the historical sections are succinctly and intriguingly written. Hindman admits that *Political Advocacy and Its Interested Citizens* should be supplemented with more robust historical studies in order to present a complete picture of the movements he explores. Even so, this book is an excellent theoretical study of LGBT advocacy in a neoliberal time.

Adam McLain
Harvard Divinity School

Gayle S. Rubin, *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011)

Gayle Rubin is hailed with many laudatory titles including the founder of sexuality studies, the founder of LGBT studies, one of the founders of queer theory, and the preeminent feminist theorist of gender. Rubin rejects many of these designations, as her definitive collection of essays, *Deviations*, makes clear. Throughout *Deviations*, Rubin is careful to contextualize her life's work and to place herself in a genealogy with other scholars who performed similar work and influenced her thoughts, methods, and political commitments. Even with such contextualization, the many and varied portraits of Gayle Rubin and her assortment of singular and extraordinary designations speak to a singular and extraordinary life of scholarship and activism that helped break intellectual and institutional ground for the possibilities of LGBT historical scholarship today.

Deviations is a collection of fourteen essays authored by Gayle Rubin that were published over a span of 35 years. Expectedly, Rubin's two landmark essays are included. In her 1975 essay "The Traffic in Women," Rubin coined the term "sex/gender system" to show how sex and gender are produced through culturally-specific kinship systems and, importantly, produced differently across time and space. Rubin famously stated that "feminism must call for a revolution in kinship" to dismantle and reorganize the sex/gender system and to liberate forms of sexual expression and the human personality from "the straightjacket of gender" (58). Rubin's essay "Thinking Sex" synthesized a great deal of historical material on the policing and regulation of sexual dissidents in the 19th

and 20th centuries and introduced a conceptual vocabulary that revolutionized thought on sexual hierarchies, sexual morality, and emphasized the study of sexuality as a historically specific and distinct social practice. Both essays refused to treat gender and sexuality as universal or as subject to pathological perversions and instead connected gender and sexuality to political, social, and economic processes.

While these two essays are rich and vibrant in their own right, one might be tempted to think that the essays are somehow dated or overtrodden territory. However, Rubin places both essays next to a series of newer essays in which Rubin historically situates and elaborates upon her major texts. It is a rare treat to reflect back with the author herself on the original essays. This has the effect of rendering both essays as exceedingly fresh and makes the texts useful to historians as an archive of discourse that marks what was sayable at particular moments in feminist and LGBT history. As Rubin notes, her essay "The Traffic in Women" was a "profoundly local product" that had "the accidental quality" of being written while Rubin was taking a class at the University of Michigan on the anthropology of women at a time when Lévi-Strauss's work on kinship and Althusser's article on Freud and Lacan were freshly translated and hot off the press (13). "Had I taken the same class a year or two earlier, neither would have been available. Had I read them later, the possibilities they presented for feminist thought would have already been extracted, digested, and articulated by others," Rubin states (13). Rubin also notes that one important factor that shaped the essay was "the availability of the historically specific concept of gender" (13). Thus, the reader develops a reverence for the contingencies and conjunctions of history that had to align for this set of essays

to exist and develops an attentiveness to the profoundly historical and contingent nature of our own, present-day analytics and concepts.

Other essays in the collection have appeared in disparate, out-of-print sources due to the fact that many of the pieces were written before the institutionalization of women's, gender, and sexuality studies and because many of the essays were written by Rubin in the spirit of the independent public intellectual and pamphleteer. Rubin presented many of the essays at conferences, in reading groups, or as public testimony and circulated the essays as photocopies to informal networks of friends throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The essays were only later published (or republished) in a wave of feminist theory anthologies and gay and lesbian studies readers that appeared in the 1990s.

Thus, on the one hand, *Deviations* is an archive of primary sources from significant, even watershed, moments in LGBT and feminist history. "The Leather Menace" was first published in *Coming to Power: Writing and Graphics on Lesbian S/M* in 1981 by Samois, the first lesbian S/M group that subsequently fought a number of battles in the San Francisco Bay Area against the feminist anti-pornography organization Women Against Violence in Pornography and Media (WAVPM). "Thinking Sex" was originally presented at the infamous 1982 Scholar & Feminist Conference at Barnard that was almost shut down by Women Against Pornography (WAP). "Misguided, Dangerous, and Wrong: An Analysis of Antipornography Politics" was first written as testimony for the National Organization of Women's hearings on pornography in 1986 to counter the U.S. Attorney General's Commission on Pornography

(better known as "The Meese Commission"). As primary documents, the reader of *Deviations* can feel immersed in the sexual politics of the 70s and 80s.

On the other hand, *Deviations* is an extended meditation on the history of LGBT history. Several of Rubin's essays judiciously detail the formation of sexuality studies and LGBT history as academic fields. Many of the essays contain personal reflections on Rubin's struggle as an undergraduate student to find books or even bibliographies on lesbian studies and later struggles to find and access materials for her doctoral dissertation on the early history of gay men's leather and motorcycle culture. Across several of the essays, Rubin discusses the evolution of LGBT and sexuality archives from humble origins in amateur historians' garages, basements, and apartment floors to more stable institutional sites with air-conditioned rooms and paid staff librarians and archivists. One gains an appreciation for the institutional and economic challenges (and routine underemployment) that the early LGBT historians and archivists faced and the paucity of support and encouragement for graduate students who dared study LGBT people.

Throughout *Deviations*, Rubin also critiques the stories that LGBT and queer studies scholars tell about their past and interrogates either the canonization of or amnesia around academic figures and texts. For example, Rubin scrutinizes how Foucault's influence on the formulation of the social construction of sexuality is over emphasized in historical literature. Rubin suggests that Foucault was part of a broader epistemological turn that included many other scholars working before or at the same as the publication of *History of Sexuality Vol. 1*. The

historical studies of Jeffrey Weeks, Jonathan Katz, and Judith Walkowitz also exhibited the social-constructionist turn, but Rubin is quick to point out that Weeks was influenced primarily by sociologists like Kenneth Plummer and Mary McIntosh who, in turn, were influenced by an entire sociological tradition that included folks like Simon and Gagnon (328-333). Rubin also points to the importance of homophile organizing and early gay-liberation scholarship as an important condition of possibility for LGBT historical scholarship today (198, 349). Rubin's suggestion of an alternative and much expanded citational universe for the heritage of queer studies is not simply to correct historical errors. Instead, she demonstrates how forms of storytelling and narrative resources are connected to organizational structures and institutional resources that "guarantee the conservation, transmission, and development of queer knowledges" or that otherwise forget and destroy queer knowledges (355). These mediations into the history of LGBT history make *Deviations* the perfect primer for new graduate students looking to understand the history and contours of the field.

In the age of #MeToo, many people are revisiting the work of Catherine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin. Any queer reevaluation of MacKinnon and Dworkin's work should be read closely with *Deviations*. One should not simply read Rubin because she represents the "other side" of the feminist sex wars. Rather, *Deviations* exhibits how the narrative tropes of "two sides" diminishes the theoretical and political richness of lesbian and feminist movements in the 1970s and 1980s. Rubin is often narrated as writing "Thinking Sex" directly to and against MacKinnon. A close reading of "Thinking Sex" shows that Rubin was concerned with many

issues beyond the regulation of pornography. Additionally, according to Rubin, MacKinnon was a latecomer to pornography debates, and "Thinking Sex" was mostly written before she became a visible figure in the antiporn movement. As Rubin notes, "[Mackinnon's] fame tends to eclipse the early history of the feminist antiporn movement, which is better represented by the anthology *Take Back the Night*" (284). Rubin's nuanced details about the 1982 Barnard Conference and its pre- and post-history present an account in which many different people occupied many different sides. Further, a history that assumes a pro-sex/pro-porn side and an anti-violence/anti-porn side defuses Rubin's own concerns about the violence, harassment, and criminalization that sexual and gender minorities face. Michelle Goldberg recently stated in the *New York Times* that "it's precisely because Dworkin lost the sex wars so decisively that we can now see beyond her most extreme rhetoric." If Dworkin lost the sex wars, why is it so hard to teach "Thinking Sex" to undergraduate students without students accusing Rubin of sympathizing with child molesters? And, why hasn't a major LGBT history book or LGBT history dissertation been written about NAMBLA? Rubin gives us clues that the sex wars aren't over because there was no single or final side to win. The stakes and challenges of doing queer history are still high.

Kevin A. Henderson
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Esther Newton, *My Butch Career: A Memoir*
(Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018)

Esther Newton and I are nearly the same age, and our academic careers—founding early Women's Studies Programs at our academic

institutions (SUNY Purchase for her, Appalachian State University for me), mentoring young lesbian students (even before being “out”), dealing with antagonistic students and faculty, participating in early disciplinary feminist organizations (anthropology and history)—are also similar. We both had significant European experience, as second wave feminism was taking hold in Amsterdam and Paris, Berlin and London. But since much of Newton’s book deals with her parents and her own early life in school, graduate school, and first job, there our stories diverge. Newton’s memoir reminds us of the importance of recent LGBTQ history for academics.

Newton’s greatest success in this memoir is in narrating a history of lesbian and sexuality studies in the midst of her own life’s story. That project was one Newton was always implementing, as she was continually worried about how to combine her work with her life. In fact, the issue of professorial personal revelation (how much, when, does it matter?) was an important one for feminists during the 1970s. She grew up knowing she was different, but not knowing what she was, not until college. Continuing through graduate school and first jobs, she was not out of the closet: it was too dangerous in academe. Newton’s introductory chapter lays it all out: what butch meant in the fifties and sixties and how she negotiated costume, hair style, and walk, even while the roles of butch and femme were changing.

As in most memoirs, Newton’s early chapters narrate her parents’ stories. Her mother Virginia was born in San Francisco to a conservative military family. Virginia’s rebellion included arrest in a leftist student demonstration at the University of Chicago, an abortion, then marriage

and early widowhood. After moving to New York, she decided not to abort her second pregnancy, her lover having abandoned her for not being Jewish. That puzzle about the identity of her biological father was not solved for Esther Newton until much later. She grew up with Saul as her father, although he divorced her mother early on. Throughout, as a good anthropologist, Newton comments on her story’s meaning, from her much later perspective. The most gut-wrenching time in Newton’s early life was when her mother abruptly decided to move to Palo Alto, California; Esther, at age eleven, had to leave her school friends at the lower Manhattan leftist Downtown Community School, as well as ultimately losing her beloved dog.

Esther Newton is clearly a New Yorker: except for the school years in California and her college and graduate school days, she retained an absolute connection to the gay and feminist community in the metropolitan New York area. Thus it was in New York that she had her academic positions, lived with several different lovers and finally came out. She experienced Stonewall and was part of the early second wave of the women’s movement (watching the Miss America drama in Atlantic City, helping found the Upper West Side WITCH [Women’s International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell], participating in early consciousness-raising groups). In New York, she participated in the first programs in gender and sexuality studies, and, with her French girlfriend, made early connections to French feminism.

Throughout, her memoir is often salted with pieces from her journals, giving her earlier perspective, as well as archival photos of her parents and various lovers. Her first year in graduate school at the University of Chicago, for

example, was dreadful. She knew no one, was not out as a lesbian, and the weather was worse than her undergraduate days at the University of Michigan. When she took up with Kenyan student John, she was able to experience “Bronzeville” in Chicago. Her view of Hyde Park from her journal is telling: “In the midst of this morass of human misery and privation sits the smug U of C, openly discriminating (it is the biggest slum landlord in the area) and its ulcer-ridden faculty, grimly turning out badly written joyless little academic exercises of minor interest” (105). She had not yet met her mentor nor the gay male friends who became so important: up to that point, the University of Chicago was appalling in every way, including its own discriminatory policies.

Newton’s choice of topic for her dissertation at Chicago (a study of female impersonators) was ground-breaking for anthropologists, who in the mid-1960s were supposed to do foreign field work. She had actually managed to become affianced to a fellow graduate student, who was off to Fiji to do his field work; she would join him later. But she had become interested in gay culture and female impersonators, making gay friends who helped her meet performers for interviews. When she showed her graduate advisor her notes and ideas, he suggested that this should be the topic for her dissertation. Her mentor/advisor David Schneider was able to make “the paradigm shift that made the field [of gay and lesbian studies] possible... [F]emale impersonators... were a group of human beings and so necessarily had a culture worth studying. The insight that gays were not just a category of sick isolates but a group, and so had culture, was a breathtaking leap whose daring is hard to recapture now” (113). This work, which she began in the late 1960s, was truly innovative.

The book which resulted from the dissertation, *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America*, has recently been reissued, still in print.

For queer historians, Newton’s memoir gives a detailed narrative of what the academic situation was like before the 1980s for “othered” instructors and professors. Newton grasps the problems of academia in terms of how tenure is gained, how young Ph.D.’s learn how to teach (they are not taught!), how curricula are arranged and approved. She sees through it all. Now of course most Ph.D.’s are mentored as teaching assistants, given help and advice during the whole graduate school process. But in the sixties, women in general, let alone queer women, were not welcomed, mentored, or given much help of any kind. My first graduate school advisor at Boston University told me that women should not get Ph.D.’s, that I should stop with the M.A. Then later at Emory University I had to deal with three different dissertation advisors because “she probably would not finish.” That horror was in one professor’s recommendation in my own job file. A quota system at Emory University for fellowships stated that only 25 percent could be awarded to women (“who only got married and quit”). That issue became my first activist protest. Even though Newton had completed and was publishing her dissertation, *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America* (1979), in 1970 Newton was denied tenure at Queens College in a split decision. There was no possibility of appeal; the final decision was made by the chief academic officer, based on recommendations from the department’s tenure committee. Newton has come to see the American academic system as corrupt and prefers the French system, “public and unionized, where if you publish X number of

essays and pass certain standardized tests, you are automatically promoted” (142).

Newton’s honesty about sexuality—what she wanted for herself, what she put up with, how butch-femme operated and changed over the years—is one of the strengths of this memoir. The process by which she merged her own sexuality and academic work is the climax of the book. It began with the second wave of feminism, meeting Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and the feminist historians of New York, helping found the gay anthropologists’ group, meeting the French feminists of *MLF* and *psych et po*. When she published her first academic article on the history of sexuality, “The Mythic Mannish Lesbian: Radclyffe Hall and the New Woman” in *SIGNS*, the women’s studies peer-reviewed journal (*Signs* 9, no.4 [Summer 1984]: 557-75), Newton understood exactly where her place was: “I had found a way to integrate my love of women, my female masculinity, and academic writing into one functioning, coherent person” (246). We can wait with bated breath for the next volume of Newton’s memoir.

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